



Culture in language: Bilingualism and identity in the poems of American-Hungarian poets

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Today, when there is a revival of examining and understanding bilingualism, we often conduct research on bilingual education while scrutinizing the effect of the phenomenon on the individual and the society. Most research aims to highlight how a foreign language can be acquired and how it forms a 'bilingual pair' with L1. However, there is less exploration into the other direction, i.e., how L1 behaves in a foreign context and how identity is re-structured in a new setting. It is not only a linguistic but a social question as well that can especially be reflected in literary works. This year, when we celebrate the sixty-sixth anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, this paper intends to commemorate the many poets who emigrated to foreign countries as a result of this conflict by examining aspects of their language usage and cultural identity.

Keywords: bilingualism, biculturalism, emigration, identity, acculturation strategies

Introduction

In the history of East-Central Europe, the year 1989 is a dividing line. Due to the political shift from state socialism to democracy, not only were political systems re-organised, but also social and cultural relations had to be revisited from a different angle. Examining this shift is valid to literary history as well because this year marked the introduction of previously unknown poets and writers while it also negated literary works once viewed as 'fundamental' according to the old canon.

Hungarian literature is in a special situation given that it is formed by three main categories of authors: the first group comprises those who live within Hungary's borders. The second consists of those who have remained in their native country as members of Hungarian minority groups and write in Hungarian yet live beyond Hungary's borders. This paper examines the third group which includes those writers who emigrated to nations that are culturally and linguistically distinct from Hungary. While authors from the first two categories are generally well-known in Hungary, the names of the authors who emigrated to the West still have to be (re)learnt. It is also necessary to give a definition of what is a Hungarian or an emigrant writer. In his *Lexicon of Hungarian Emigrant Literature*, Csaba Nagy defines all those born within



the historical, pre-1920 territory of Hungary as Hungarian. He defines an 'emigrant' as a person who emigrated from Hungary's territory (Nagy, 1990).

Emigration from Hungary to the New World is usually categorised into five waves that were caused by economic and political changes or conflicts following the years of 1848, 1919, 1938, 1945, and 1956. Until the end of the twentieth century, very little was known about the literary works, organisations, periodicals, and events held by those who tried their 'luck' on the American continent. The debate regarding their classification surrounds the question of whether they have been accepted by Hungarian main-stream literature as active participants or have been excluded from enriching the literature of the Western diasporas. Béla Pomogáts (2002) states that 'Western Hungarian literature has not been integrated properly, at least not in the way it would deserve'.

Demolishing borders does not automatically mean that only the works of the best literary and aesthetic values will arrive in Hungary from Western emigrants. This fact is well-known fact by the editors of anthologies who feel it their mission to introduce twentieth-century emigrant literature. 'But ... we also need courage to show the voice of not only the greatest but the small poets as well, even if they are a little childish, stumbling or express themselves in a strange way. Do not condemn them: "funny" might also be interesting' (Horváth, 1998, p. 7–8).

The aim of this study is to find not only the 'funny', but also the characteristic elements in the anthology entitled *The Creed of American and Canadian Hungarian Poets*. The anthology was edited by Calvinist pastor and priest, Loránd Horváth, in 1998. The analysis will be done from the special linguistic and literary aspects of bilingualism and identity.

Themes

All the poets of the anthology contributed to the literature of the twentieth century and were welcomed to the North American continent¹. Although most settled in the USA or Canada, a few emigrated to South America (Brazil, Argentina).

The title of the volume, *Amerikai és kanadai magyar költők hitvallása* (*The Creed of American and Canadian Hungarian Poets*), already suggests the themes which, from a solid religious perspective, confess about the lost versus the new country, forced emigration, the power of the Hungarian language, and outstanding historical personalities and moments. Beyond these topics, religious holidays and the landscape of the lost land (including discussion of the host country's landscape, to a lesser extent) are mentioned. Above all, the "characteristic" emigrant life is introduced through human fates: a hundred and five poets' *ars poetica* contained in thirteen chapters. While topics might change, the root remains the same: experiencing emigration in either a state of resignation or rebellion. When examining the volume, two special spheres of thought interweave throughout the whole volume, namely the question of languages and identity. The anthology expresses a perpetual search for them.

¹ Originally, the poems were written in Hungarian. Here the English translation is provided by the author of this essay.

Languages

Bilingualism

In case of emigrants, it is necessary to analyse the usage of the mother tongue and the language of the receiving country in a parallel way. Emigrants face the phenomenon of *diglossia* at a very early stage. In emigrants' lives, the mother tongue (the code used before emigration) becomes 'degraded', i.e., it loses its prestige in the new environment. Institutions (schools, offices) which used the mother tongue cease to exist: their language is new to the emigrant. The two categories introduced by Ronald Wardhaugh describe this phenomenon in the following way: the mother tongue slips from high variety (H) to the low (L). In the case of emigrants, a new code has to be learnt. The two codes often interfere with one another, therefore emigrants, similarly to other bilingual speakers, switch codes. Code-switching is often involuntary and may depend either on situations (situational) or on topics (metaphorical) (Wardhaugh, 2006). According to Poplack's (2001) classification it might appear beyond the sentence, between sentences, and in the sentence.

Literary bilingualism shows genre-specific features. Novels and plays might be written in a foreign language (the Polish Joseph Conrad wrote his novels in English, the Roman Ionescu his dramas in French), yet it is difficult to find an example of poetry written in a foreign language. No example of this can be found in *The Creed of American and Canadian Hungarian Poets* either. Poems were written in Hungarian, although bilingualism is indirectly present between the lines. There is only one exception, a poem by Anna Bedőné Tóth, who writes about code-switching in a humorous way. She emigrated to Canada in 1966 and collected her impressions about this linguistic phenomenon in Nanaimo, in 1994. Mixed languages have their own names: for instance, the mixture of English and French in Quebec is called *Franglais*, or the combination of English and Mexican Spanish in Texas is called *Tex-mex*. Similarly, *Hunglish* is the special name for mixing Hungarian and English.

The poem, *What Have You Become, Our Mother Tongue? (Mivé lettél édes anyanyelvünk?)* is a thesaurus of examples for the Hunglish language. The text is crammed with words used in everyday life. These must be the words and expressions which emigrants meet already at the very beginning of their new life. They are connected with family life (*kids, holiday, piano lesson*), household (*shopping, grocery store, vacuum*), traffic (*car, insurance, speed*), and the names of food (*Irish stew, turkey, Chinese food*).

English words are emphasised in the poem with capital letters. They become even more alien by giving them Hungarian suffixes in the original Hungarian version:

I didn't FEEL GOOD, I even MISSED CHURCH, My head HURT badly.	Nem FEEL-eltem GOOD-ul, El-MISS-oltam a CHURCH-öt is, A fejem HURT-ölt vadul.
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Mixing the isolating English language with the agglutinating Hungarian shows clumsiness. However, by using this technique much humour is stressed: after

three pages of Hunglish, readers obviously feel the homelessness mirrored in the capricious switching of languages.

As we have already mentioned, in the case of bilingual speakers code-switching is often involuntary, just as a trilingual German–French–English speaker asserts, ‘In theory I refuse code-switching, because it causes the loss of ethnicity. In practice, however, I often switch without noticing’ (Navracsics, 1999, p. 29).

Paradoxically, it happens to the poet herself, who criticises code-switching:

In Canada we often eat TURKEY
at EASTER-TIME,
and cholesterol gets HIGH
because of smoked ham.

Kanadában TURKEY-t eszünk
Gyakran EASTER-TIME-kor,
HIGH-ra megy a koleszterol
A füstölt sonkától.

She probably does not notice that in Hungarian, cholesterol is not known as *koleszterol*, but rather as *koleszterin*. This detail reveals another aspect of how widely known loan words can cause further confusion as they cross languages, even though one would think that their form and meaning would remain international.

This poem is obviously not worth our attention because of its aesthetic values. Yet, it focuses on an important question: *Is there a limit to code-switching?* The poem presents a snapshot of the process of *code switching* → *language shift* → *linguicide*. The speaker is in a stage of bilingualism wherein the mother tongue is beginning to be forgotten, yet the speaker has still not acquired a proper level of skill in the foreign language, as is shown by the combination of English basic vocabulary + Hungarian suffixes. This transition period is called *semilingualism* (in Swedish original: *halvspråkighet*). Although the phenomenon is not at all new, the term only came to be in use in 1968 when a Swedish linguist was conducting research among the Finnish minority in Sweden (Hoffmann, 1991).

Indeed, semilingualism easily leads to neglecting, then losing the mother tongue if speaker does not act on it consciously. Semilingualism can be found risky from two aspects as it has an effect in two directions. Firstly, it will result in uncertain mother tongue use in everyday practice. Secondly, it will also hinder the process of learning the new (foreign) language due to mother tongue intrusion. Even bilingual speakers acknowledge the trap of code-switching: ‘it can also be dangerous to switch too often, when someone is already forced to switch in order to be able to speak at all’ (Navracsics, 1999, p. 29).

If code-switching is broadened into an unlimited process by the speaker (or a speakers’ community), language shift will take place, resulting in the ultimate death of mother tongue. This outcome can often be observed among second- or third-generation immigrants. Fear of this phenomenon is present in the poems of the anthology which are not bilingual but are about bilingualism.

In his poem entitled, *Question and Answer (Kérdés és felelet)* Endre Haraszti gives an account of a conversation between father and son. The son represents the second generation with his simple question:

If we are in this land
and I spend my days among English people.
Why do I have to learn Hungarian?

Ha már itt vagyunk e földön
S napom angolok közt töltöm.
Magyarul tudni mért kell nékem?

Before answering, the father draws his son's attention to the previous two generations by recalling the revolution of 1848 ('hussars,' 'The National Theatre' – 'huszárok,' 'Nemzeti Színház'), his own schooldays ('Bocskay² cap' – 'Bocskai-sapka'³), and, through the family's female members, the continuance of mother tongue ('cradle song' – 'bölcsődal'). As a contrast to mother tongue usage, rationality plays the main role in gaining a command of the foreign language: 'English word is useful to you' ('Az angol szó fontos tenéked'). In the Winnipeg autumn, the Hungarian flag appears as the metaphor of Hungarian word. Finally, the boy's reaction to the explanation manifests in the form of an accepting handshake.

Bertalan Mindszenty uses bilingualism on the pretext that he could write about homelessness in his poem, *Fata Morgana in Pennsylvania* (*Pennsylvániai délibáb*). The narrator is daydreaming about the 'miracles of childhood' ('gyermekévei varázsát') while walking in the forest, using the foreign language in a situation:

They greet me: "How do you do."
I answer: "Fine. How are you".

Rám köszönnek: "How do you do".
Én felelek: "Fine. How are you".

In this example of bilingualism, the new language is only the symbol of formal politeness. In contrast, the 'melody of mother tongue' ('anyanyelv muzsikája') can be heard from across the ocean.

Not everybody in South America can familiarise themselves with the new language either. In his poem, *Those Whom God Wants to Punish* (*Akit az Isten büntetni akar*), Ferenc Pintér for instance is terrified of losing mother tongue in his poem:

A bird on a twig
is singing in a foreign language.
Your heart is broken:
your grandchild has spoken to you
in a foreign language....

Madár az ágon
Idegenül dalol. Szíved elborul,
Idegen nyelven szólt hozzád
unokád....

Mother tongue

Whether emigrants learn the language of the receiving country or not is not a cardinal question in the poems. The new language is seen from a practical point of view. Poets are much more worried about how they will manage to preserve their mother tongue in the foreign environment. Most of the emigrant authors are very carefully and consciously striving to keep their mother tongue. They feel they have to meet double requirements: they have to learn the language

² Written with a 'y' by the Americanised author instead of the original Hungarian 'i'

³ A 'Bocskay cap' was used as a part of the school uniform for boys until the end of the Second World War; 'Bocskay' refers to the name of a prince of Transylvania who was a leading figure in the anti-Habsburg uprising between 1604-1606

of their new homeland while both maintaining and developing their mother tongue far away from home. Sometimes writers find very inventive methods to keep mother tongue alive. György Ferdinandy, for instance, who originally published his works in French before returning to writing in Hungarian, then became fluent in Spanish upon emigrating from France to Puerto Rico, 'was reading books, while consulting his dictionary, about mushroom-growing, goose-feeding and information technology, because this was how he could develop his vocabulary' (Erdélyi & Nobel, 1999, p. 214).

Linguistics and its related fields approach the concept of mother tongue from several different aspects. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1984), it is not enough to take origin as a criterion into account. Competence, function, and attitudes are also important criteria. As far as attitude or identification is concerned, it is worth distinguishing external and internal identification, i.e., which language one identifies with as well as based upon which language the individual is thought of as a native speaker. The poems of the anthology designate Hungarian as the mother tongue. If we follow Skutnabb-Kangas's classification (1984), in the case of first-generation emigrants not only origin but also internal identification counts. This phenomenon can be observed in László Bónis's poem, *Hungarian Refugees' Litany (Menekült magyarok litániája)*, which also identifies mother tongue as the language of the nation:

Save us [from the fate]
that our children forget
their Mother's language,
the Homeland's language!

Hogy gyermekeink elfeledjék
Édesanyjuk, a Haza nyelvét,
Ments meg minket!

How much emigrant poets fear of the death of mother tongue is shown in a poem which was written in the USA and worries about the language left behind in Hungary. Gyöngyi Péterffy is different from the other poets in the sense that she did not emigrate because of political or economic reasons. Neither did she leave home with the classic emigration waves, but rather because she followed her husband to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1993. As a member of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, she is very sensitive to the political changes in the Carpathian Basin and follows the region's changing language policies with special attention. In her poem, *Screaming (Kiáltó szó)*, she protests against the Slovakian and Romanian education laws which are unfavourable to minority communities. As a member of this minority, Péterffy is 'homeless' from two points of view, as state that leads her to expressing herself passionately and with dramatic punctuation:

For whom and for what means
Can this **linguicide** serve a purpose?!

Minek, kinek használ
Ez a **nyelvgyilkosság**?!⁴

Indeed: 'If an animal species is endangered, people organize movements. If, due to violent assimilation, a language becomes extinct, who will shed a tear?', asks Zsolt Lengyel (2006).

⁴ Bold type in the original text.

Immigrants also have to face the different language policies of North American countries. Although dominant groups are made up of native speakers of English both in the USA and in Canada (core-English speaking countries), the approach to multilingualism and monolingualism is quite different. At the same time, both nations are receiving countries where the relationship among languages, because of immigration, can never be static (Phillipson, 1992).

Canada seems to take the fact of constant immigration, from the point of view of languages, into account to a greater extent. As far as linguistic rights are concerned, the French language has successfully rivalled that of English in the recent fifty years; currently, members of indigenous groups receive compensation from the Canadian government.

In the early history of the United States, diversity of languages, i.e., multilingualism, was regarded as a value. By the end of the eighteenth century, language policy changed into a different direction according to which one language, the English language, was supported, i.e. the USA demanded that newcomers speak English. The established powers preferred 'to found a New Eden rather than a New Babel' (Barron, 1996, para4), and thus sought to compel its immigrant to acknowledge the rules and regulations of their new state. In 1981, a proposed English Language Amendment⁵ was voted down (Barron, 1996) and the United States still does not have an official language. English, however, is considered the *de facto* national language.

If in the question of mono- and multilingualism the USA keeps its well-known 'melting pot' position, Canada enforces the 'mosaic-principle'. However, this does not mean that majority language policies keep immigrants from organising their own literary or artistic groups and circles. As can be seen in the case of the volume under current discussion, writers can also publish in their own mother tongue.

To maintain the mother tongue is a key issue among Hungarian immigrants in America, too. The anthology dedicates a separate chapter to this topic, entitled *Mother Tongue, Our Eternal Home* (*Örök hazánk az anyanyelv*). The central topic of the poets is the unconditional insistence on mother tongue, which is described in ecstatic images:

words are becoming holy (Zoltán Noéh: <i>Involved in Secrets and Wonders</i>)	a szavak szentekké lesznek (Noéh Zoltán: <i>Részese titkoknak és csodáknak</i>)
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János Sömjén, who lived most of his life in emigration, puts his uncertainty into words at the beginning of his poem:

I don't yet know where to seek the word and in which language will my last word be born. (<i>To My 85th Birthday</i>)	Még nem tudom, hol kell keresni Milyen nyelven fog megszületni Az utolsó szavam. (<i>85 éves születésnapomra</i>)
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The interdependence between language and homeland and the equal sign placed between the two does not simply refer to the language as such. Poets place emphasis on the connection which proposed English language as the only official language of the USA.

additionally confess about their views of life, their attachment and affection, in one word: about their *identity*.

Identity

Identity has different aspects in psychology, sociology, and history. In this literary-linguistic examination we focus on *national-cultural identity* and how it is mirrored in the poems of the Hungarian emigrants of the discussed volume.

As we have noticed above, emigration results in a necessary bilingualism. At the same time, we must not forget that 'language is always used within a cultural environment' (Hoffmann, 199, p. 28) which leads to *biculturalism* as well. What makes the analysis subtler is the fact that bilingualism is not automatically accompanied by biculturalism. Therefore, in our case it is important to explore what the emigrant poets' attitude to their old and new culture is.

With the encounter of the cultures personal attitude (rooted in history, traditions and customs or outside circumstances) will decide how the individual adapts to a new culture. Acculturation strategies can be followed in the table below. (*Table 1*)

Table 1

Acculturation strategies on the basis of Berry (2008)

	High value on one's own culture +	Rejecting one's own culture -
High value on majority culture +	integration	assimilation
Rejecting majority culture -	segregation/ separation	marginalization

The table will help analyse the question of identity.

Old identity

When observing the poems closely, it becomes apparent that these poems are much more about the old home with its landscape, people, values, and historical figures compared to the new land. Poets carry the image of the old country wherever they travel or settle down. Mostly they do this with a very intense sense of nostalgia:

As a child I lived there under a blanket of poverty. Yet looking back, it was as soft as velvet, and I cherish its memory in absolute purity.” (Olga Titonelli: <i>Thoughts on Home</i>)	Ott éltem mint gyermek, a szegénység takarója alatt, de visszaemlékezve oly puha volt mint bársony, s így emlékemben tisztán őrzöm azt. (Titonelli Olga: <i>Hazai gondolatok</i>)
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The longer the distance becomes, the stronger the positive emotions are toward the country poets had to leave. The authors tend to neglect what happened to them in the old home or why they had to flee. Their sense of Hungarian identity has deep roots that interweave the personality and keep it enclosed in a set of different strata that settle and imprison the self like ‘the shirt of Nessus’ as Iván Béky-Halász describes this feeling in his poem, *You Are Hungarian*.

Fidelity is a self-explanatory value that is embedded in the personality and which poets do not want to get rid of. They write about it bashfully as if to a lover:

I have never been disloyal to you I carry you within Eternal Hungary (Ida Bobula: <i>Song of Exile</i>)	Sohasem lettem én Hűtelen tehozzád Hordozlak magamban Örök Magyarorszáig. (Bobula Ida: <i>Bujdosók éneke</i>)
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Or:

Like the gusty wind carries the kisses of meadows, I have taken you with me, my Land. (Tamás Tüz: <i>My Land</i>)	Mint zúgó szél a rétek csókját, hazám magammal hoztalak. (Tüz Tamás: <i>Hazám</i>)
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The ‘Holy Trinity’ of *fidelity*, *mother tongue*, and *identity* appear as pure synonyms in the poets’ interpretation: these are the values that must be kept. Moreover, they have to be passed on to the next generation.

Identity is often described with heroic elements (‘if necessary, I will die for the Land’ – József Kovácsy: *Ars poetica for the Homeland*) and lifted up to celestial heights (‘Your name is gilt bright/ by Archangelic orders’ – Ádám Makkai: *On the Name of Hungary*).

To show cultural continuity poets gladly insert well-known, sometimes sacred, literary texts (here: lines from poems of old times) into their *ars poetica*. Thus, we find a paraphrase of Vörösmarty’s *Appeal* in Irén Négyessy’s poem, *To Thy Country Be Faithful*:

To thy demolished Country be faithful even when you are dead, Hungarian.	Légy híve még holtodban is tépett Hazádnak Magyar.
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Sharing the same history is also a part of national identity. The volume deals with two major events of Hungarian history: the Revolutions of 1848 and 1956. As the former does not figure among these twentieth-century poets’ first-hand memories, we will instead focus on the poems connected with the 1956

experience. In his poem, *Hungarian Students in '56*, Ferenc Mandalik pays tribute to the young people who took part in the revolution. First, he focuses on Hungary before widening his image to include all the students of the world who, in his opinion, should celebrate Hungarian young people as martyrs of both the homeland and those citizens of the world who long for freedom. Roller (2001) remembers the revolution in the following description: 'In Budapest, the unarmed marching youth, (secondary school and university students and Workers) marching for freedom, was a heart-warming phenomenon of the emerging revolution' (Roller, 2001, p. 36).

In parallel with *celebration*, another topic, *accusation* appears in the poems. László Segesdy issues a charge against the West in his poem, *Listen, Nations*:

There was not a heart that would have
beaten for us.

Nem volt egy értünk dobbanó szív is.

Poets view the 1956 Revolution not only as the issue of a small European country, but also as an instance of liberty and an opportunity to abolish the two different world orders, thereby bringing about the end of the Cold War. Whether these charges are true or not, taking them into consideration will lead us closer to understanding why Hungarian emigrants found it very difficult to leave their country and why it was not easy for them to integrate into a new society either in Europe or beyond.

If we look back to the Table of Acculturation (*Table 1*), we will notice that emigrant poets put a high value on their own culture. Whether they managed to become integrated (according to the evidence found in the poems) or lived in separate enclaves is the issue of the next chapter.

A New Land

Before examining the related poems, it is worth examining some basic statistical data about Hungarian emigration (Hungarian, 2021). It can be declared that Hungarians live throughout the entire continent of North America, even if a significant number have only been counted in six countries. According to a census taken in 2018, 1,396,000 inhabitants declared themselves Hungarian in the USA, which shows a decrease in comparison to 1980 when the number was 1,776,902. At the same time, this declaration of identity does not mean that they all speak Hungarian at home. The number of Hungarians is lower in Canada (348,085), Argentina (40–50,000), Brazil (80,000), Venezuela (4,000) and Uruguay (3,000).

The question about Hungarians' characteristic features might arise. According to Zoltán Dávid, historian and demographer those individuals display their affiliation with a Hungarian identity who 'declare themselves a user of the Hungarian mother tongue, feel that they are Hungarian, speak the Hungarian language in their family, and are members of the Hungarian cultural community' (Kósa, 1991, p. 71).

Although this paper does not examine the history of emigration or immigration, it is interesting to recall the words of St. John de Crèvecoeur

(1989) who, in 1782, wrote the following words about immigrants' homeland: 'A country that had no bread for him...with jails and punishments.... No! Urged by a variety of motives, here they came" (Crèvecoeur, 1989, p. 119). In the case of Hungarian emigrants, the 'variety of motives' can be seen from history. As was previously discussed, many felt strong ties to their homeland in spite of their equally strong reasons for leaving it. At the time of leaving home and arriving in a new country, the following questions might arise, *What does the new land mean to the emigrants? Can they become Americans? Can they find their place in this 'teeming nation of nations'?* (Whitman, 1885) Or we can quote Crèvecoeur again: '*Ubi panis ibi patria*'¹ is the motto of all emigrants (Crèvecoeur, 1989, p. 120). *Is this true in their case too?*

As regards their country of origin, when examining the poems in the volume under discussion, it can be observed that the poets appear to be in a state of transition. Within this state, they experience different forms of homelessness, loneliness, dispersion or even a feeling of exile. They are 'between two homes' as Irén Négyessy confirms in her poem, *I Thought (Azt hittem)*.

As was observed before, poets want to experience their Hungarian identity in a continuum. To maintain their cultural identity, they often quote or paraphrase from Hungarian literature. This is also the case when they write about their situation in the new country. In *The Song of The Thrown-Away Stone (Az eldobott kő dala)* Sándor Domokos uses the motif of the stone known from Endre Ady's *The Thrown-Up Stone (A föl-földobott kő)* and *The Ballad of Kőmíves Kelemen's Wife*. Wass Albert alludes to the *kuruc* 'hiding era', thereby making it clear that history repeats itself and what happened to Hungarians during the Rákóczi War of Independence in the eighteenth century (i.e., exile) has happened to the Hungarians in the modern age as well.

After these bitter parallels and intense feelings toward the old homeland, one might not expect a positive image of the new land the emigrants have settled in. The picture is critical indeed: although poets admit to the beauty of the American continent, not much positive emotion is shown while describing it. The image by the poet, Sándor Petőfi, regarding the Carpathians comes to mind: 'I may admire you, but I cannot love you' (*The Great Plain*). The description of the dramatic beauty of the Niagara Falls and the Cruz del Sur of South-America or the jolly stereotypes of hard-working farmers in Texas and Canada are overshadowed by the very harsh critic of consumer society where Mammon, the dollar-God (József Csinger: *Jonas in Ninive*) reigns in the form of Mercedes cars and haughty skyscrapers.

The harsh difference between old and new home seems to be settled in two ways. On one hand, Albert Wass offers a solution in his poem, *The Creed of Homelessness (A hontalanság hitvallása)*, wherein he overcomes the difficulties caused by emigration with an overall belief in God, human beings, and general values:

¹ From Latin: "Where there is bread, there is (my) country".

I am homeless,
because I believe in Good, Truth, Beauty,
in every religion and every folk,
and in God who overcomes.

Hontalan vagyok,
mert hiszek a jóban, igazban, szépben,
minden vallásban és minden népben
és Istenben, kié a diadal.

As Miklós Tamási suggests in his poem, *Totem Poles (Kopjafák)*, death may provide both peace and a solution. He finds similarity in the two symbols, the Indian totem pole and the ancient Hungarian, carved headboard (*kopjafa*). While Loránd Horváth describes a frightening *danse macabre* in the pulsating rhymes similar to the Kalevala (*Kopjafa – Totem Pole*) and the contrast between cultures becomes extremely sharp ('Magyar babák festett lázban/ Áttáncolnak angol házba!' – 'Hungarian dolls in painted fever/ Dancing over to English houses!'), Tamási combines the ancient symbols in a gentler picture which gives more prospect: 'vallani és vállalni/ maradtál itt' – 'you have stayed here to confess/ and to undertake things'.

As far as the problem of integration versus separation is concerned, the poets in this volume experience separation in both their everyday life and their inner thoughts. The question is, *How much do they manage to keep the values of the left land with this attitude of separation?*

Confrontation

This volume offers ample evidence of how strongly the poets cling to their Hungarian identity, how much they desire to preserve their values and pass them on to succeeding generations. At the same time, this insistence might be an obstacle to integration as well. With this attitude, emigrants unavoidably come into conflict with the culture of the host country.

There are a lot of poems about the sharpening contrasts, very often in a simplified form, as if it were not worth altering the change of fortune provoked by emigration, as if the only way were to live a new life according to predestination:

Your life has fallen on a foreign ground,
where it cannot reach fulfillment.
(Ernö Németh: *Prophecy*)

Idegen földre hullott életed
Nem juthat el a beteljesülésig.
(Németh Ernő: *Prófécia*)

What remains is the lingering longing for the lost home. Homesickness is a leading motif in these poems as there is no end to recollections of the Hungarian landscape, family, and memories, all of which are shown from a very positive aspect. In the poets' eyes the new land, even in the best-case scenario, can only be emotionally indifferent.

The memory of my homeland/
has excluded all other beauty from my eyes
(József Csinger: *Faded Wind-Rose*)

Hazám emléke szememből/
minden más szépséget kizárt
(Csinger József: *Hervadt szélrózsa*)

Confrontation, however, is not only limited to the contrast of new and old home. It is even more interesting to see how emigrants, fighting fiercely to keep their Hungarian identity, are gradually losing their own homeland. Therefore, it is also to speak about a *double confrontation* composed of, on the one hand,

the contrast between the old home and the host country and, on the other hand, the difference between the home they left and the home in the distance that has changed with the passage of time.

Most of the generation that left their home after the war was given the chance to return after the political changes that occurred in the 1990s in Eastern Europe. Nowadays some emigrants lead a double life by commuting between the old and the new home; others remain alone with their bitter memories of a single visit to their ex-home. The sense of alienation can be overcome neither by the guest nor the host:

I have been longing to come home for long years, but at home I have rights no more! Homesickness brought me home and it still tortures me! I feel hospitality almost a burden! (József Csinger: <i>As a Guest in My Country</i>)	sok éve már, hogy hazakívánkozom, de idehaza nincs már többé polgárjogom! Hazahozott a honvágý s itt is tovább emész! már-már tehernek érzem a vendégeskedést! (Csinger József: <i>Vendég hazámban</i>)
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The sense of homelessness experienced by emigrants is similar to semilingualism: they have not managed to integrate in the new home, but the old home belongs to them no more.

Conclusion

The anthology can be considered a representative survey of bilingualism and identity as manifested among Hungarian emigrants. Using the Hungarian language and belonging to the Hungarian culture does not cease to exist on the other side of the ocean. On the contrary: based upon these poems, insistence on maintaining the mother tongue and Hungarian identity is emphasised.

The major reasons for this can be observed in the following facts:

1. The measure of *cultural*² *distance*. The simple formula, according to which the bigger the distance between the mother country and the target country, the more difficult integration is, seems to be justified in this case, too. If we take Burchell's and Homberger's (1989) conclusion into consideration, it can be observed that out of those who emigrated to the United States³, people from the British Isles were in the least difficult situation, a circumstance that was at least partly due to the common language.

2. *The history of the mother country*. Hungarians, who, compared to Americans, have a long history, are bound to their country and its culture, language, and literature by a thousand strings (See section entitled *Old identity*). This circumstance can be regarded as a fact that makes integration more difficult and separation easier in the new country.

² Besides cultural differences linguistic, political, religious, and economic differences should be taken into consideration as well.

³ This does not refer to pioneers, but emigrants who went to the United States later, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

3. The fact of *forced emigration*. It can be considered the most relevant reason, the root of integration failure which results in a sense of homelessness. As we observed, most of the poets of the anthology did not leave their home voluntarily. Until the 1990s, most of them did not (as a voluntary choice) or could not (due to political reasons) return to their country. Some were even charged as war-criminals or dissidents. It must also be understood that a great number of emigrants did not intend to stay abroad for a long time: ‘We did not want to leave our homeland forever. The hope of returning lived in our hearts and minds. This hope slowly vanished...’ (Roller, 2001, p. 40). Whether the eagerly awaited return meant that emigrants ‘regained’ their home or it only made a brief visit paid to a greatly loved, but no longer familiar land, this contrast clearly lingers between the lines of the poems.

Obviously, this anthology cannot provide a proper and overall answer to the questions of emigrants’ bilingualism and identity. It is also important to note that the poets who ‘confess’ belong to the first generation of immigrants whose life and career is always more difficult compared to their children’s. Due to these facts, we might address the questions regarding language and identity with the help of a few lines by Albert Wass contained in the anthology:

<p style="text-align: center;">Our roots are preserved by a superstitious magic in the East and in this foreign spring fading will slowly kill me. (Albert Wass: <i>In a Foreign Spring</i>)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Gyökerünk keleten őzri valami babonás varázs s ebben az idegen tavaszban lassan megöl a hervadás. (Wass Albert: <i>Idegen tavaszban</i>)</p>
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