

13 Between the Local and the International

Enrique Gómez Carrillo and Antonio Aita at the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation¹

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What was the relationship of Latin American intellectuals with Europe during the interwar period? What were their ideas on intellectual internationalization? How was Latin America perceived by European and Latin American intellectuals?

We aim to approach these questions from the perspective of the founding and activity of the Argentine National Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, as part of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IICI), which operated in Paris between 1925 and 1946. We will examine the profiles of the most prominent actors involved in the Committee, focusing mainly on the work of Argentine representatives Enrique Gómez Carrillo, delegate at the Argentine Legation from 1926 to 1927, and Antonio Aita, secretary of the Argentine National Committee from 1936 to 1940. We review their positions on the concepts of “intellectual cooperation”, “internationalism”, and “Americanism”,² as well as their relationship with national and foreign literature, based on an analysis of documents from the IICI archives kept at the UNESCO library in Paris.

International Intellectual Cooperation

International intellectual cooperation began to take shape in 1922 with the founding of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (Commission internationale de coopération intellectuelle, CICI), a League of Nations organization based in Geneva that aimed to foster collaboration between countries and coordinate work and international relations in the fields of science and culture. CICI members included figures of the stature of Henri Bergson, Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, and Gilbert Murray. The Argentine poet Leopoldo Lugones was the only Latin American to be part of this distinguished group of intellectuals.

Due to practical difficulties at the CICI, such as the infrequent work sessions or the lack of personnel and funding (Lemke 2007, 204–205), a new organization was set up in 1925 and officially opened in Paris

in 1926, named the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation. The IICI was founded at the suggestion of the French government, which also financed its operations with an annual contribution of two million francs. The Institute was conceived as an executive organ of the CICI for the purpose of carrying out the projects commissioned by the Committee, and it functioned as a “bureau d’administration internationale”.³

The IICI engaged with different aspects of intellectual work, studying topics such as copyright, the international organization of bibliography and the international exchange of publications, the circulation of books, publishing, and university exchange initiatives for lecturers and students.

The IICI existed for almost 20 years, until 1946, although it ceased operations between 1940 and 1944 due to World War II. After the war, the functions of the Committee and the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation were inherited by UNESCO. In 1939, at the start of the war, the Institute cooperated with over forty national committees. In this chapter, we follow the steps that led to the consolidation of the Argentine Committee, which was a pioneer in establishing dialogue between Europe and Latin America.

Enrique Gómez Carrillo, Forerunner of Argentine Cultural Internationalization

Discussion over the Argentine representation at the IICI and possible forms of intellectual collaboration began early. In its first month of activity, November 1925, the president of the IICI, Julien Luchaire, contacted the Argentine Embassy in Paris (as well as the diplomatic representatives of other countries) to discuss initiatives that the country could undertake in the field of intellectual cooperation. Throughout 1926, correspondence between Luchaire and different representatives of the Argentine government became more frequent until the names of the Argentine delegates to the IICI were finally confirmed in September 1926.

The relationship between the Institute and a Hispanic country was not unique within the Ibero-American context. Shortly afterwards, in 1927, the Spanish delegation was established with Júlio Casares as representative, followed by Mexico, represented by Alfonso Reyes, in 1931.⁴ This almost simultaneous acceptance of the three initiatives should be understood as an effective response to a proposal made by the Institute itself. At the meeting of the Latin American delegates at the IICI in Paris on 13 May 1927, it was agreed that the creation of national committees in the different countries should be encouraged. These committees would function as a link between the cultural and scientific institutions of each country and the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation in Geneva (Herrera León 2009).

In the Argentine case, during the year 1927, the Guatemalan poet and diplomat with Argentine citizenship, Enrique Gómez Carrillo (1873–1927),

was responsible for carrying out the functions of representative for the Argentine delegation. He was chosen by the Argentine president, Hipólito Yrigoyen, for his outstanding position as an intellectual in Paris. Indeed, Gómez Carrillo had travelled to Europe for the first time with a scholarship to study in Madrid in 1890 but instead headed to Paris, like so many other Latin American writers who saw the French capital as the “Republic of Letters” where they would gain recognition (Casanova 1999). There he met Paul Verlaine, Leconte de Lisle and Oscar Wilde, among other writers, and embraced the life of the intellectual bohemia. In addition to writing narrative and essays, such as *Literatura Extranjera* and *La nueva literatura francesa*, he excelled mainly in Spanish-language journals as a chronicler for Argentina (*La Nación*, *La Razón*), Cuba (*Diario de la Marina*) and Madrid (*El Liberal*, *Blanco y Negro*, *La Esfera*, *Pluma y Lápiz*, *El Imparcial*, *ABC*), hence receiving the nickname “el príncipe de los cronistas” (the prince of chroniclers).

In June 1926, Gómez Carrillo informed Julien Luchaire, president of the IICI, of Argentina’s interest in participating in international cooperation:

Quelques confrères argentins, desireux de voir leur pays figurer parmi les nations représentées officiellement à votre Institut, ont eu l’idée de demander à leur Gouvernement de me désigner en qualité de délégué à cette Commission Intellectuelle.

Pour le cas où le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères de Buenos Ayres prendrait en considération ma candidature, je vous serai très obligé de bien vouloir me faire communiquer la marche qu’il faudrait suivre pour être agréé comme Délégué officiel, en me disant si cette délégation est compatible avec mon poste de consul à Paris.⁵

Luchaire responded positively regarding the compatibility of the post of delegate with that of Argentine consul and clarified that the appointment depended only on the national governments and would be free from interference by the Institute of Paris. Finally, Gómez Carrillo was elected as delegate by the foreign minister, Ángel Gallardo.

For his part, Luchaire, on behalf of the IICI, was flattered by the election of Gómez Carrillo as an Argentine representative, given his cosmopolitan character, considering him “un homme représentatif de la culture de la langue espagnole, bien qu’au cours de ses longs séjours en Europe le français fût devenu pour lui une seconde langue”.⁶ Luchaire also proposed to him the creation of an “Argentine Library” with “the best authors” (which would be a precursor to the Ibero-American Collection).

During his time as delegate, Gómez Carrillo promoted the Institute and defended international intellectual cooperation. His letters to the director of the Institute reveal that in 1927 he published articles on the IICI in the Argentine newspapers *La Época* and *El Diario*, as well as in the Spanish newspaper *ABC*. These publications, of course, were well received by the

director of the Institute, Julien Luchaire, who considered that “le terrain se prépare très bien là-bas et nous pourrions, l’année prochaine, y recueillir des fruits intéressants”.⁷

The terrain was also being prepared at an institutional level. In July 1927, the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a note to Argentine universities and the Argentine Scientific Society with a report by Gómez Carrillo stating the need to create a national committee on intellectual cooperation. And indeed, the University of Buenos Aires, the National University of La Plata and the Argentine Scientific Society supported the idea of founding an Argentine committee, while Gómez Carrillo’s enthusiasm left the impression at the IICI that an Argentine National Committee was about to be formed. Unfortunately, this project was suspended due to Gómez Carrillo’s premature death only a few months later, in November 1927.

Despite his brief tenure as delegate, it is still interesting to highlight the internationalist ideas of Gómez Carrillo, which he himself exhibited in his article on the IICI published in the Madrid-based newspaper *ABC* on 2 November 1927. Right from the beginning of the article, he points out the peripheral, albeit advantageous, position of Argentina as a country of the “New World” with respect to Spain in terms of intellectuality and cooperation. It is worth noting that in the same year a famous dispute about Madrid as the “intellectual meridian” of America was launched in *La Gaceta Literaria* by Guillermo De Torre as an attack on, above all, the declared Latin American Francophilia. This annexationist, though apparently fraternal, proposition of De Torre was met with a virulent response from, among others, the Argentine avant-garde magazine *Martin Fierro*. The magazine rejected Spanish primacy over Argentina in intellectual matters and suggested the literary recovery of the oral language of Rio de la Plata blended with foreign languages (Sarlo 1997, 211–268).

Gómez Carrillo opened his article by pointing the finger at Spain: “Every time there is talk of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, Spanish Americans ask: ‘Why has Spain remained outside this Association?’” And he went on to reply that Argentina, as a young country, had understood the role of the IICI better than Spain: “And it is that the Latin countries of the New World have understood, from the beginning, the importance of this Assembly of nations that march at the vanguard of progress for the moral propaganda of the peoples who speak Castilian. There, indeed, we can fraternize, without difference of ranks, with France, Italy and the British Empire”.

And he added that “even in countries that at first sight seem inaccessible to European culture, intellectual centres have been created with the support of the great universities that adhere to our principles”, that is, to the principles of the IICI. Although Spain had received the support of the Junta para la ampliación de estudios (Board for advanced studies) and

the University of Barcelona, Gómez Carrillo judged this support as “a small thing”: “And to think that it would be so easy to occupy a position of the first order there, at that centre, which is the most important one of universal intellectuality”.

In fact, for Gómez Carrillo, Spain had lagged behind in intellectual matters and needed to recover its central place vis-à-vis Latin America. This concern of his can be seen from his encouragement for the country to join the institute despite having withdrawn from the League of Nations, since being a member of one was not a requisite for forming part of the other. Therefore, the hostility against Spain that seemed to surface in his first lines later became more nuanced in its virulence. At the end of his article, the diplomat considered Latin America to be in the subsidiary position of a “daughter” since, in his opinion, for it to reach the spiritual domination of the “Great Motherland” of the Castilian language, it was imperative for “Spain to appear next to her transatlantic daughters”.

Finally, for Gómez Carrillo, this exercise of cooperation would unite the American continent with Spain and, more generally, with Europe, so that educational, bibliographical, scientific and archaeological networks to “inventory the treasures of the world” could be woven and “normal research methods” established. A “real network of publications” for distributing everything would need to be created as, in this way, “the practical results of the Institute’s activities” could be seen. Gómez Carrillo was also aware that international cooperation was based on the recognition of the reciprocity of peoples: “One day or another, in effect, those who yesterday reached out, asking us for instruments of intellectual work, will offer us the fruit of their labours so that, through us, other countries in need can then take advantage of them”, he stated in his article for *ABC*, not knowing that this would be the destiny of Argentina with the onset of the wars.

Gómez Carrillo’s early ideas on cooperation between Europe and Latin America can be compared with the later words of Antonio Aita, who would institutionalize the national committee.

Antonio Aita and the Institutionalization of Argentine International Cooperation

After his death, Gómez Carrillo was succeeded by the new consul in Paris, Joaquín de Vedia. In fact, the Argentine representation before the IICI continued to be via diplomats, as the Argentine consul of the embassy in Paris continued to be assigned as delegate. This changed with the creation of the Argentine National Committee in 1936. Prior to that year, there had been a period of limited activity and collaboration between the Argentine government and the IICI. The only exception was the subsidy granted by Argentina for the translation and editing of the

book *Facundo* by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in the Ibero-American collection.

A more active exchange began in September 1935 when the secretary of the PEN Club of Buenos Aires, the writer and critic Antonio Aita (1891–1966), suggested to the director of the IICI, Henri Bonnet, that an *entretien* be held in Buenos Aires to coincide with the PEN International Congress of 1936 being held in the same city. Thus, in July 1936, in the midst of the preparations for these two events, the Argentine National Committee finally emerged.

Unlike Gómez Carrillo, Aita was not part of the diplomatic corps, nor was he a prominent journalist or writer, although his production of essays on Argentine and Latin American literature was not insignificant.⁸ Despite his low profile, Aita moved with ease in the cultural field and adopted French as the language for his epistolary exchange with Europe. It could be argued that his work was that of a cultural mediator interested in promoting intellectual relations between Europe and Latin America and earning him the nickname of “Tony Agita” (Tony Agitates) from Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares in one of their stories signed under the pseudonym Bustos Domecq.

However, Aita did not rub shoulders only with local writers, as his friendship with Borges and Bioy Casares or his connection with the magazine *Nosotros* (which published some of his books) testify: he also had access to the higher government echelons of the time, together with other nationalist intellectuals, such as Carlos Ibarguren or Juan B. Terán, who formed part of the National Committee. This is how he informed the IICI of the steps he had previously taken with respect to the government in order to create the Committee:

Monsieur Nogueira, pendant son séjour à Buenos Aires, m’a parlé de ce sujet et je m’en suis intéressé avec Monsieur le Président de la République, qui m’a fait l’honneur d’accueillir avec grand intérêt mon initiative. Par la suite et d’accord avec les suggestions de Monsieur le Ministre de l’Instruction Publique j’ai fait quelques remarques sur le rôle développé par l’Institut à Paris et mes informations ont servi à cimenter les considérations du décret.⁹

It should be noted that Aita had direct access to the Argentine president at the time, Agustín P. Justo, who approved the creation of the Committee. A participant in the so-called “infamous decade”, for its succession of conservative and unpopular governments, Justo had taken power fraudulently in 1932 with the support of the military that had overthrown Hipólito Yrigoyen, the democratic president from the Unión Cívica Radical (Civic Radical Union) party. Later, Aita himself referred to his personal contact with the president and his own influence in creating the national committee, explaining:

I have accepted the Secretariat of the Committee because I have contracted a personal debt with President Justo, who, following my kind suggestion, created the Argentine Committee. This acceptance obliges me to rally my efforts in favour of an increasingly closer cooperation with cultural institutions abroad.¹⁰

The Argentine National Committee on Intellectual Cooperation was founded on 14 July 1936 by presidential decree. The decree was noticeably general in character and in no way specified any political or economic conditions; however, the justification for the decree did highlight the interest that existed in positioning Buenos Aires among the “main cities of the world” that made up the network of “spiritual cooperation”. This network was understood as a broad exchange of knowledge—not restricted only to education—to enrich a “universal culture” shared among peoples through specific contributions from a national culture.

The first article of the decree detailed the Committee’s objectives, which were: “to promote the development of intellectual relations with foreign countries and cultural exchange, receiving the contribution of scientific, literary, philosophical, educational and artistic knowledge of other peoples and bringing together, organizing and disseminating those produced through internal intellectual activity”. These objectives showed that cooperation was understood in terms of equal and harmonious circulation of knowledge between countries, where knowledge seemed to be considered a spiritual element, free of material constraints. Likewise, thanks to this network of international reciprocity, local production was able to become part of a greater, “universal” cultural production; that is to say, according to this conception, the universal did not oppose the local or national, but rather enhanced and incorporated it. Past and future wars, however, showed the darkest face of rivalry between European nations.

The second article explained the Committee’s organizational chart, which was composed of “nineteen honorary members, appointed by the Executive Power, whose mandate lasted five years and who could be re-elected”. The committee would appoint its president and vice president and propose to the Executive Power, through the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction, the appointment of an external permanent secretary with a monthly salary of three hundred pesos—the national currency. This was precisely the position that Antonio Aita occupied from 1936 to 1946.

The third article published the list of Committee members and their public positions and included experts in law, literature and sciences, professors and deans and members of scientific academies. It is striking that the members came mostly from the well-off classes or from the country’s power circles, including, for example, Bernardo Houssay, journalist and member of the Academy of Medicine and the Argentine Academy of Letters; Juan B. Terán, member of the Argentine Academy of Letters

and minister of the Supreme Court of Justice; Ricardo Levene, historian, president of the Board of History and Numismatics, and former president of the National University of La Plata and Adolfo Bioy, lawyer and former minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship.

Notwithstanding this governmental decree, there is little doubt that the act that gave real existence to the Committee was a specific event: the “*Entretien Europe—Amérique Latine*” of the IICI, which took place in Buenos Aires between 11 and 16 September 1936. Due to the scale of the event and thanks to its secretary, Antonio Aita, who was also secretary of the PEN Club of Argentina, the Committee gained greater prominence and projection. Since Aita had participated in the organization of the PEN International Congress that was to take place in Buenos Aires in 1936, he knew how to take advantage of the visits by world-renowned writers to organize an *entretien* under the auspices of the IICI, the first in a Latin American country and thus to give more visibility to the Institute and Latin American intellectuals.

It should be noted that the meeting was financed by the Argentine Government and not by the PEN Club. This made it possible to take advantage of the presence of the writers invited to participate. In this respect, Aita clarified: “That is why the PEN Club, which has facilitated the possibility of this meeting, as well as President General Justo, with whom I was able to discuss the IICI’s plans, have shown themselves to be keenly interested and willing to collaborate so as to ensure its success”.¹¹

Correspondence regarding the preparations of the *entretien* revealed an intense debate between Antonio Aita, Henri Bonnet and Dominique Braga as to the organization of the meeting, as well as to the subsequent translation and editing of the communications that took place in 1937.

In the extensive correspondence, it should be noted that the proposal by Aita to organize the first South American *entretien* was celebrated by Bonnet, since the previous meetings had taken place in Europe. The choice of subject, however, led to more discussion, since Aita initially thought of addressing the role of the PEN Club in international culture. Bonnet rejected this proposal because it was too specific and focused on a non-state institution, and pointed out that it would be better to adopt a more general topic regarding the role that writers should play in contemporary life. After much correspondence, in which Bonnet handed over the management to Braga (the former would not be able to attend the meeting, but the latter would), an agreement was reached to address the intellectual relations between Europe and America from two angles:

- a. La littérature européenne en Amérique. Tendances et orientations de la littérature et de la pensée européenne. Problèmes qui se posent à elle. Influence de la pensée et des lettres européennes sur la pensée américaine. Rôle des valeurs culturelles européennes en Amérique dans le passé et le présent.

- b. Influence dans l'avenir de la littérature ibero-américaine dans la pensée mondiale. (Ce point est la contrepartie du précédent). Originalité de l'esprit américain. Ses points de vue sur les principaux problèmes de culture mondiaux, par exemple, machinisme, nouvel humanisme. Les apports nationaux américaines à la culture universelle.¹²

One European representative and one Latin American representative would tackle each of the two questions at two opening addresses. Likewise, it was agreed that some contributions would be previously requested in writing so that they could be distributed among the different attendees. As for the number of attendees, after an initial proposal of fifty participants by Aita, the number was eventually reduced to twenty. Bonnet and Braga preferred a greater Latin American presence and a proportional number of figures from Europe. The list of proposals was as follows:

- European writers: France 2; England 2 (Wells, Huxley); Spain 2 (Madariaga, Ortega); Italy 1; Germany 1; Central Europe or the Balkans 1; Northern or Eastern Europe 1 (Karel Čapek).
- American writers: USA 1; Mexico 1 (Alfonso Reyes); Puerto Rico 1 (Pedro Henríquez Ureña); Colombia 1 (Baldomero Sanín Cano); Perú or Chile 1; Uruguay 1; Argentina 3; Brazil 1 (Afranio Peixoto).¹³

The French participants, however, were the ones to attend the meeting in greater numbers. In contrast, it proved difficult to engage English-speaking participants. Although several options were considered (H. G. Wells, G. K. Chesterton, Virginia Woolf and Aldous Huxley, among others), they refused for different reasons. Despite this situation, Aita asked for written communications from Waldo Frank (who would decline the invitation), Aldous Huxley and Count von Keyserling so that they could be shared for discussion with the other participants.¹⁴ Eventually, the English delegates to the PEN International Congress, Ralph Hale Mottram and William J. Entwistle, took part in the *entretien*. However, there is no indication that any representatives of the United States attended the meeting. The meeting was therefore finally entitled “Europe—Latin America”.

Although Braga and Bonnet missed a greater representation of writers from Europe and the United States, Aita saw no need to insist on this point. The absence of English-speaking writers would demonstrate, in his opinion, the lack of interest, especially on the part of the writers from the United States—whom he derided as “Yankees”—in the intellectual discussion on cooperation, since they always tended to position themselves as a people superior to the rest of Latin America. This rejection was broadly related to the “arielista” current, which, following the *Ariel* essay (1900) by the Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó, regarded the United States as the cradle of the utilitarian and materialist Caliban, and Europe

as the heart of the European humanist tradition (Pernet 2007, 66). In this respect, according to Aita, the *entretien* would represent an opportunity to break with the relationship of domination by the United States and recover national sovereignty. And he put it bluntly in a letter to Bonnet:

Je vous avouerai que déjà depuis nombre d'années je lutte contre cette politique d'infiltration yanquee qui cherche à dominer les peuples hispano-américains et je suis souvent préoccupé par cette question que je considère très grave puisqu'elle tend à nous isoler de l'Europe. Je me suis entretenu à ce sujet avec Monsieur Madariaga et si la Société des Nations manque de prestige et de popularité dans cette partie du continent américain nous le devons en grande partie à cette tactique tendencieuse et habilement déployée par la Maison Blanche.¹⁵

As for the quest for representation of the different European countries, as suggested by the IICI, Aita insisted that pursuing this principle would mean entering the field of politics, which he felt intellectual life should not “fall” into:

I have always believed and still believe that intellectual life has nothing to do with politics, and I believe that even in the absence of English writers, it [the *entretien*] is not in danger, as you think, since there will be eminent figures of contemporary literature and thought. Otherwise, it would fall into politics. It is not possible to fight against the indifference of the English writers toward everything that means an exchange with their colleagues from other countries. We have invited Wells, Chesterton, Huxley, Joyce, Walpole and Virginia Wolf [sic] to participate in our congress. Some of these gentlemen have declined the invitation for various reasons, others have answered simply with their silence. Now, tell me frankly, if, in these conditions, one can talk about cooperation.¹⁶

Counter to the meager English presence, France acquired more prominence and became the compass to guide the Latin American writer. We can see that Francophilia was widespread at that time, as noted in Carlos Reyles's review in his article “Ecos del congreso argentino de los Pen Clubs”: “There are Hispanic Americans willing to jump from the sphere of the particular to the sphere of the universal as resolutely as the French delegation, which showed the way”.¹⁷

After much toing and froing with the invitations, the attendees at the *entretien* were finally Pedro Henríquez Ureña (Dominican Republic); Luis Piérard (Belgium); Enrique Díez Canedo and Joan Estelrich (Spain); Fidelino de Figueiredo (Portugal); Baldomero Sanín Cano (Colombia); Emil Ludwig (Switzerland); Afranio Peixoto (Brazil); Alfonso Reyes

(Mexico); Carlos Reyles (Uruguay); Giuseppe Ungaretti (Italy); Stefan Zweig (Austria); Alcides Arguedas (Bolivia); R. H. Mottram and W. J. Entwistle (England); Georges Duhamel; Jules Romains and Jacques Maritain (France) and Carlos Ibarguren, Francisco Romero and Juan B. Terán (Argentina).¹⁸ In the report on the *entretien*, read at the Second General Conference of the National Committees on Intellectual Cooperation (July 1937), Aita evoked the spirit that guided the meeting and its main ideas on cooperation.¹⁹ Cooperation between America and Europe would be based on three activities: the dissemination of scientific knowledge (“disseminate scientific research efforts of a large group of specialists in public and private institutions”), the promotion of higher education (“pedagogy highlighting the efforts of governments to boost secondary, technical and university education”) and the promotion of translation (“it would ultimately promote the translation of literary works by contemporary authors”). In the opinion of the secretary of the Argentine Committee, the mutual exchange of knowledge was crucial for a “coopération féconde” and to achieve it, writers could not remain isolated or confine themselves to what was merely local:

Quels peuvent être les apports de notre continent à ce problème vital, dont la solution préoccupe les esprits les plus perspicaces de notre époque? Il ne s’agit pas ici de prononcer des phrases pompeuses sur l’“autochtonisme” de notre culture; cette idée a amené bien des esprits à préconiser l’isolement comme remède à nos erreurs politiques, et ainsi a dirigé l’inspiration de nos écrivains vers une tradition locale. La remise en honneur d’une tradition peut être féconde, si elle contient les éléments qu’exige l’intelligence, à un moment de crise des valeurs tel que celui que nous traversons.²⁰

Advocating against the defense of an exclusive national tradition, Aita advocated that the American peoples got to know each other better, but that did not mean adopting the formula “America for the Americans”. Quite the contrary, Aita believed that, as secretary of the Committee, he had to ensure the universal spirit of the IICI and not the regionalism of the Committee.²¹ And he openly targeted American “provincialism”: “Beaucoup d’esprits simples s’obstinent aveuglément à vouloir une Amérique pour les Américains, persistant ainsi à répondre par un provincialisme mesquin à l’indifférence que nous manifestèrent les Européens pendant de nombreuses années”,²²

Aita maintained the opposition—common at the time and already observed in Gómez Carrillo—between the Old and the New Worlds, but instead of claiming a certain subsidiarity of the latter with respect to the former, he demanded that the Old Continent finally get to know America: “Connaissance sérieuse et directe de nôtre Continent que l’Europe a regardé avec une certaine froideur”.²³ Aita agreed that the “Old World”

was the cradle of civilization; but the “New World”, younger and less knowledgeable, would, on the other hand, have greater creative capacity due to its curiosity. In this respect, he described Latin Americans as “peuples à l’imagination féconde” (peoples with a prolific imagination) who “occupent de vastes territoires, dont la curiosité est toujours en éveil” (occupy vast territories and whose curiosity is always awake). For Aita, even if his tradition of knowledge was lesser (“même si sa culture était des plus superficielles”), the American man—Aita was speaking of the Latin American—possessed an “esprit sensible à toute entreprise idéaliste. Romantique par atavisme et plein d’un noble détente” (a spirit that is sensitive to all idealistic endeavor, romantic by atavism and full of noble selflessness). In other words, the features of the American man were quite idealized in his writings: a romantic man who embraced with disinterest and curiosity any idealistic undertaking. In contrast, the European was described as belonging to a people of adventurers who depopulated and repopulated America. Likewise, Aita recognized the unequal relationship between America and Europe, not only referring to the *Conquista* (pointing a finger at Spain) but also to the disparate knowledge that some peoples had of others: America knew Europe (referring especially to France and England); Europe remained indifferent to America.

That being said, Aita recognized that the intellectual field was less developed in America (“un milieu qui n’a pas encore atteint ce niveau supérieur où prennent toute leur valeur critique la signification et la puissance que possède dans la vie sociale de la collectivité l’effort de l’esprit”). For this reason, the writer there did not enjoy the same prestige that he would have in Europe. For Aita, the fight for the rights of the Latin American writer was crucial and, through the PEN Club, he asked the Argentine government to protect them:

Dans notre Amérique où l’écrivain n’a pas de hiérarchie sociale, il lui manque aussi les moyens de défense pour protéger la propriété de son effort intellectuel, et par le manque d’une législation avisée, l’écrivain est exposé à toute espèce de pirateries de la part d’éditeurs sans scrupules.²⁴

He also asked the IICI to take a stand to defend writers’ rights by creating unified international legislation that would protect authors from onerous contracts imposed by the publishers. He argued that an international framework of this kind would put more pressure on the Argentine government. It should be noted that intellectual property law 11.723—still in force in Argentina—dates back to 1933.

Another of the events organized by Aita—which was supported by Dominique Braga and the IICI—was the Exhibition of Argentine books, inaugurated at the National Library of France in Paris in November

1938. For the occasion, Aita brought in around 2000 volumes of national literature (novels, stories, poetry, theatre, criticism and essays), textbooks, books on science, law and social sciences, history and geography and the fine arts, as well as a selection of cheap books, another of luxury books and a selection of books translated and published in Argentina.²⁵ For the exhibition, he also edited the bilingual volume *Le Paysage et l'âme argentine. Descriptions, récits et légendes du terroir* (1938). The exhibition was accompanied by a series of speeches—the inaugural address was read by Paul Valéry—and also showcased examples of Argentine paintings and graphics, again brought for the occasion by Antonio Aita.

Beyond its significance in recognizing Argentine book production in France and Europe, the exhibition also planted the seeds of a conflict within intellectual circles in Argentina. During the opening act, Paul Valéry praised Victoria Ocampo, director of the influential magazine *Sur*, as—in his opinion—the utmost advocate of French culture in Argentina: “[. . .] there is no more enthusiastic and knowledgeable interlocutor for European literature in Argentina than the publisher of *Sur*” (Comisión Argentina de Cooperación Intelectual 1939, 53). Ocampo, a famous writer and translator who came from a family of the Argentine oligarchy, had chosen French as her language of literary expression and enjoyed privileged access to European culture through her frequent travels and numerous intellectual friends and artists (Sarlo 2007, 75–148). Not long after Valéry’s compliment, she was invited to join the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation in 1939. It should be noted that Ocampo had known of the work of the Institute for some time, since her friend Gabriela Mistral, the Chilean representative before the IICI between 1926 and 1939, had invited her to visit it a decade earlier. In a letter dated 22 March 1929, the Chilean poet said:

Admired Victoria Ocampo

Greetings—only yesterday I learnt you were here. And it is very painful for me to leave without meeting you. I leave on Monday. Could you do us the honour of a visit to the Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, 2 rue Montpensier? Mr. Levinson has been notified in case you grant us the time and this grace.

(Mistral and Ocampo 2007, 43)

Ocampo’s appointment to the International Committee in Geneva upset Antonio Aita. Aita was not related to the *Sur* magazine group, as he viewed it as a publication that disdained national literature in favour of that of Europe and North America. His disagreement with that decision was such that he presented his resignation as secretary of the Argentine National Committee to the IICI. In no uncertain terms, Aita reproached

Bonnet for ignoring the Argentine National Committee in appointing Ocampo as a member of the Committee. Although he had nothing “to object personally to Mrs. Ocampo”, Aita considered that she was:

[. . .] a writer who does not gravitate in the spiritual life of Argentina, who has never given her collaboration to undertakings of cultural exchange, who in her books does not reveal any concern for Argentine problems, who has never believed in the existence of Argentine literature, much less in the existence of an Argentine culture, and who has been designated precisely to represent it [Argentine culture] in the organization in Geneva.²⁶

Aita suggested that it would be more appropriate to appoint Carlos Ibar-guren, president of the national committee and member of the Academy of Letters, or men of science such as Bernardo Houssay or Alfredo Sordelli, both members of the national committee. Aita eventually rebuked Valéry—who proposed Ocampo’s designation—for a sin of gallantry, asserting that “the gesture of courtesy is a precious instrument in human relations, but terribly baneful when applied to critical or historical analysis”, since “from our May Revolution to the present day there has been a great number of Argentines to whom French culture is more indebted than to Mrs. Ocampo for its dissemination and evaluation”.²⁷ In response to Aita’s anger, Dominique Braga sent a letter, with a broadly personal tone, in which he acknowledged the mismanagement of the International Committee in appointing Ocampo and asked him earnestly not to resign because they still had work to do together:

C’est avec une grande prudence, vous l’avez constaté, que nous procédons au choix de nos livres, des préfaces, des traducteurs, en consultant toujours les personnalités qualifiées. En ce qui concerne l’Argentine, nous sommes d’accord, nous nous sommes séparés bien assurés du programme que nous voulions réaliser, de la mission que nous incombait, à vous en Argentine, à moi ici. Vous ne pouvez pas nous quitter, Aita, vous ne le devez pas. Nous avons entrepris en commun une oeuvre, il faut que vous soyez avec nous jusqu’à ce que nous l’ayons menée à son terme.²⁸

Aita did not eventually resign, but he warned that if a similar situation were to occur again, the links between the Argentine National Committee and the Institute would be damaged forever:

All these circumstances have made me abandon the decision I had made, following the appointment of Mrs. Victoria Ocampo; but I want to point out that this designation has not only been poorly received among those in this country who ply this trade, but that it

has also affected some American commissions [. . .] I think I have understood in one part of your letter that the initiative of Mr. Ozorio de Almeida, aimed to cause an exchange of correspondence on current issues, invites the members of the International Committee to obtain the respective replies from their countries. If this happens, with respect to Argentina, a delicate situation will again be produced, a situation which could have the consequences already indicated, for Mrs. Ocampo is completely disconnected from the Argentine Intellectual Cooperation, and any action that she takes, by indication of this organization, will be interpreted as an act of disregard towards ours.²⁹

Exactly the same situation that Aita referred to had taken place earlier, in the same year that Ocampo had been invited to participate in the preparation of the volume *Pour une société des esprits*, part of the *Correspondences* series of the IICI. The volume compiled opinions of various intellectuals responding to a letter from Miguel Ozório de Almeida, president of the Brazilian Committee, who asked, shortly before the beginning of World War II, if the return to barbarism was inevitable in Europe and suggested that the “moral armament” of nations such as France or England should be supported.³⁰ For Latin America, Henri Bonnet, at the suggestion of Paul Valéry, had asked Ocampo to divulge the contents of Ozorio de Almeida’s letter and gather answers from writers who she deemed relevant (the IICI had already requested the collaboration of Alfonso Reyes from Mexico, Gabriela Mistral from Chile and Baldomero Sanín Cano from Colombia). Ocampo gladly carried out this work among writers who were “amis de la France”: “Soyez persuadé que si je puis vous rendre service et rendre service à un pays que j’aime comme le mien, c’est moi qui vous serai reconnaissante de m’en fournir l’occasion”.³¹ And after a brief negotiation, Bonnet allowed her to publish the Latin American responses in her magazine *Sur*, with the exception of Ozorio de Almeida’s letter, which was not published in that particular volume. Indeed, the responses were published in issue 61 of the magazine (Ocampo 1939, 115–121), dedicated to the War. The hypothetical situation that Aita was denouncing had already been caused by the International Committee, placing him in another situation which could lead to his potential resignation from the National Committee. In the end, the resignation was not made effective, since Aita and Braga continued to communicate throughout 1940 regarding the publication of a new issue of *Correspondance*, this time at the proposal of Aita.

Aita did not welcome the publication of these responses in *Sur*, not because of the content, but because of the way in which the initiative had been undertaken. On his part, he undertook the project of a new volume of *Correspondance* dedicated to analyzing the Europe-Latin America *entretien* (advancing an idea of the Spanish poet Salvador de Madariaga),

which would be published by the Argentine National Committee and translated into English and French by the IICI. It would be a volume with contributions from Latin American intellectuals who were not present at the *entretien* of Buenos Aires but who could analyze what had happened at the meeting. Aita pointed out that he was not looking for a discussion about “politics or countryside passions”, nor for geographic representation—as was the case at the *entretien*—since it would not be necessary for all countries to be present but only the names necessary for the “study of the culture of our times”. The initial letter was entrusted to Peruvian diplomat Francisco García Calderón. The first answer was given by Aita and the second by the Argentine writer Ricardo Rojas. The volume would include other contributions, such as the ones of Uruguayan writer and philosopher Carlos Vaz Ferreira, the Ecuadorian writer and diplomat Gonzalo Zaldumbide, the Bolivian writer and politician Alcides Arguedas, the Chilean story-writer and playwright Eduardo Barrios, the Brazilian writer and politician Tristán de Athayde and the Venezuelan writers and politicians Rufino Blanco-Fombona and Arturo Uslar Pietri. Later, because he had taken part in the *entretien*, Aita considered replacing Arguedas with the Bolivian writer and politician Adolfo Costa du Rels or with the Cuban poet Mariano Brull.

It seems that the volume was left incomplete and unpublished, but we can still get an impression of the views of those who participated in it. The ideas put forward in Aita’s letters completed his conception of cooperation, Americanism and internationalism. García Calderón’s ideas were outlined in a letter from Ricardo Rojas: “It seems that in this direction”, says Calderón, “the two worlds can continue collaborating in a safe and trusting friendship, without denying America its attitude of a disciple and with Europe considering with interest and sympathy how its norms and tutelary creations return to it from overseas with new vigor, and how its idealism survives in noble romantic lands”. What did the other two correspondents respond?³² On the one hand, Aita maintained the topic of “peoples of the New World of a romantic nature” who have “older brothers” in Europe, that is to say, he maintained that “attitude of disciple” of one continent towards the other, suggested by Calderón. He pointed out that “America is nurtured by Europe”, but added that it already had the foundations for creating an American culture that could be separate from the European one: “In America the foundations already exist, in technique, art, literary expression and philosophical understanding of life to advance a culture that will not be its own nor exclusive, but that will increasingly tend to separate from the European one without ignoring it”. Aita nuanced the tutelary relationship described by Calderón, considering that it was time to develop an American culture, albeit nurtured by the European one. At this point, he rejected the regionalist ideas that he had labelled “isolationist”, as we saw earlier, and he pointed out that, faced with Europe in crisis, “that theory of America for the

Americans' was fallaciously created and was later substituted by another, more romantic and universalist theory of 'America for humanity.' These two principles are antagonistic, but equally rhetorical". In short, for Aita, the key lay in mutual understanding, above all, on the part of Europe towards America. The ideal of knowledge ("the faith in the spirit") would nurture both "the old cultures" and "these new forms of intelligence that flourish on our continent amid frantic struggling"; that is, the romantic aspect (the love of ideas) prevailed again over the material constraints.

On the other hand, Rojas did not take long to respond with much more virulence to Calderón's statements. The Argentine writer judged Calderón for holding a "European rather than American" view on the matter, typical of the nineteenth century but anachronistic in the mid-twentieth century. Rojas considered that, in the first place, it was necessary to define what is meant by "Europe" and "America". He believed that for Calderón, "Europe" was reduced to France and England and perhaps by extension to "Spain and the Mediterranean". On the other hand, Calderón seemed to be unaware of the vital impulse sweeping through America. So, Rojas condemned the "tutelary attitude" that Calderón welcomed because it was precisely this attitude that "has sterilized us intellectually and subjected us economically". He urged Americans to "take possession of our land and our mind, which is also colonized". Rojas considered that Europe had always maintained a relationship, not a harmonious one, as Calderón and even Aita believed, but rather one of domination: "Europe has not looked towards it [America] other than as a field of exploitation or influence. The dilemma we face in the future consists of knowing whether we Americans should resign ourselves to that destiny or should aim towards our plenitude of life. The current crisis in Europe makes the dilemma more agonizing". And in that sense, he argued that the crisis was an opportunity to break with European tutelage ("not [to] have masters or guardians. And it is necessary to develop the skills for it") and especially with Spanish tutelage, since it was against Spain that "our America wages its war of emancipation". And although there was rapprochement due to speaking the same language, the "spiritual reconciliation" with Spain would respond—for Rojas—rather to an interest in "reviving the original essences of our history", where the indigenous, the Creole, as well as the European and the Spanish would re-emerge. Finally, Rojas did not consider there to be a common culture between Europe and America based romantically on the "faith in the spirit", as Aita suggested. While there could be an understanding of what happened in each of the two, the culture was particular to each of them, "it is not transplanted", "it is the spiritual creation of each people".

Unfortunately, it seems that the discussion did not continue with other writers, but this first exchange is useful, as it shows us how Aita maintained his ideas about an America intellectually indebted to Europe, but which was also in the process of becoming autonomous and developing

its own identity. His moderate vision is not as Eurocentric as that of Gómez Carrillo or that of the “amis de la France” writers, who responded to Ocampo’s call to support France in the war and break with neutrality. For Aita, it was time for Europe to look at America as an adult, although he still recognized the civilizing force of Europe, even if at the time this force was fatally threatened by totalitarian regimes. In short, far from the social-economic approach of Rojas, who spoke plainly of domination, Aita maintained a more idealistic and even romantic vision of the relationship between peoples, based on a faith in understanding hatched in minds that were unburdened by material constraints. He also defended the peculiarity of Argentine culture and its literature, without falling into “provincial” or “isolationist” reductionism. The unique identity was woven in dialogue with other identities, hence his trust in cooperation, which was based on the production of knowledge, teaching and translations.

On this last point—the translations—it is worth mentioning another of the IICI’s projects in which Aita collaborated, namely the Ibero-American Collection, which introduced representative works of the different nations, “traductions des textes notoires”, in the words of Henri Bonnet,³³ marking the willingness to set up an Ibero-American canon.³⁴ The translation and publication of the volumes in the Ibero-American Collection were funded by each country. In the case of the Argentine translations, the Argentine government extended a grant of 700 pounds sterling (or 8,008.18 Argentine pesos at the time of the grant), decreed in May 1928. In exchange, it demanded 500 copies for distribution in public institutions such as schools, universities and libraries. The rest of the supposedly larger print runs of about 1,500 copies were commercialized and the profits invested in the publication of other works for the same country. The selection of titles for translation was made by a publication committee that had been specially designated for the collection and was agreed with national academies. During the whole process, it seems that the involvement of the Argentine National Committee was limited to assisting with logistical issues (e.g., procuring reference works for the translators). The first volume of Argentine literature, Sarmiento’s *Facundo* (translated by Marcel Bataillon), had already been published in 1932, before the creation of the National Committee (1936–1945). It was followed by *Las montañas* by Joaquín V. González (1937, translated by Marcel Carayon) and *Martín Fierro* by José Hernández (translation by Marcel Carayon, a bilingual edition with a preface by Ricardo Rojas). The publication of this last volume was in peril due to the increased costs of publishing in France and the specific format of the volume. The organizers wanted to publish the translation along with the original text and a line-by-line literal translation. On that occasion, Antonio Aita managed to obtain an additional sum of 3,500 French francs from the Argentine National Committee to secure the publication. Aita also set

about looking for funding for a fourth translation, for which *Los indios ranqueles* by Lucio Mansilla was considered. By indication of Dominique Braga, about 30,000–35,000 French francs would have been necessary for that volume; however, the archive holds no further information as to its destiny. Another volume, *Facundo (Juan Facundo Quiroga)* by Ramón José Cárcano (translated by Charles-Vincent Aubrun), was also prepared,³⁵ although outside of the collection, as it was not considered a classical work and its author was still living.

The epistolary communication regarding the publication of these volumes treated other more material issues, such as the delayed payment of the Argentine subsidy, the request for more financial help, the increase in the cost of publishing in France, the type of paper and the number of pages. The discussions also concerned who should write the prefaces (which aimed to help the French reader) and who should do the translation (usually university professors with a recognized academic track record in Hispanic literature). Translators were concerned with advances, copyright terms, deadlines and some translation issues, especially the vocabulary of the *gauchos*.

With regard to the titles themselves, it is interesting to see that the canonical list of Hernández, Sarmiento and González was joined by the book of the historian Ramón José Cárcano, a multifaceted politician, who occupied many positions such as professor of law and history, dean of the Higher Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine, member of Parliament, governor of Córdoba, ambassador in Brazil and member of the Academy of Letters and History, among others. As a curious fact, it should be pointed out that at that time, in 1939, the post of Argentine ambassador in Paris was occupied by his son, Miguel Ángel Cárcano. Nevertheless, the translation of Cárcano's book was included largely due to the success of Sarmiento's *Facundo*³⁶ and the interest in “un ouvrage historique qui éclairerait la période de la vie argentine où Sarmiento a puisé le sujet de son ouvrage classique *Facundo*”, as Henri Bonnet explained.³⁷

Conclusions

This chapter has chronicled how the Argentine Committee on Intellectual Cooperation took shape, first with the representation of Enrique Gómez Carrillo and later with that of Antonio Aita, who organized the *entretien* in Buenos Aires in 1936. We can consider both Gómez Carrillo and Aita “cultural mediators”, active agents “across linguistic, cultural and geographical borders, occupying strategic positions within large networks and being the carriers of cultural transfer” (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018, 3). Both were interested in forging ties between Europe and Latin America and saw the League of Nations (and specifically the IICI) as an opportunity to strengthen the bond between both continents. Both

conceived Europe as the cradle of civilization and agreed in thinking of Latin America as the “New World”, as “a young nation”, conceptualized in quite romantic terms, which would draw on the “Old World” to achieve its modernization.

Nevertheless, differences also existed in the way that this relationship was conceptualized. On the one hand, Gómez Carrillo displayed a more marked Eurocentrism than Aita, describing the American nations as being in a subsidiary relationship as “transatlantic daughters” of the “Great Homeland”. For Aita, on the other hand, Europe needed to regard America on more equal terms and get to know it in depth rather than from a sense of mere picturesqueness. According to the Argentine delegate, Latin America had entered adulthood and should be explored and known beyond its exoticism. Aita also recognized the lesser degree to which the artistic field was institutionalized in Argentina and Latin America. The lack of legislation on writers’ rights, among other concerns, accounted for an intellectual field that was not yet consolidated and was less professional than its European counterpart. For Aita, therefore, America was rather in the process of forming its own identity, and while the continent recognized the strength of the European tradition (especially the French one), it was also becoming autonomous from Europe and incorporating its own problems, such as those of the indigenous peoples. As for his own country, Aita tried to portray Argentina as in its adulthood (continuing the analogy of the young nation), while still relating it to the European humanist culture (although not its policy, which had brought confrontation to the continent) and, on the other hand, staying clear of the culture of the United States, regarded as merely utilitarian.

Furthermore, Aita believed that it was possible to achieve a spiritual community of intellectuals whenever men of letters left politics aside. It should be noted that this was suggested precisely in times of strong politicization of the cultural field, due to both the Spanish Civil War and World War II, which was in the making. In other words, the intellectual was not supposed to join one of the sides that separated the countries but transcend them in a more ecumenical community, guided by ideas of intellectual cooperation and cultural actions of a transnational nature, as seen in the translation of Latin American works for the Ibero-American Collection of the IICI. It is clear that at a time when Argentine works were being promoted internationally, a canon of “national” literature to be read in Europe was being prepared, based on a type of *gaucho* literature.

It has been demonstrated that the ideas about national literature pitted Aita, more inclined to nationalism, against the *Sur* group and against its highest representative, Victoria Ocampo, who was considered by the Argentine nationalistic side as favoring the foreign and as indifferent to local reality. Now, at this point, we should qualify this opposition since, on the one hand, *Sur* was also concerned with American identity and, on the other, Aita defended the national culture, although not in a way that

was closed in on itself. In fact, he opposed what he called “isolationism” or regional “provincialism” and found in intellectual “cooperation” the key to the international relationship that would lead to the modernization of the American continent. It was a cooperation based on the spirituality of minds, which made up the “palace of thoughtful humanity”, in the words of Gómez Carrillo, but also one that was detached from political-economic dimensions, a view criticized by, among others, Ricardo Rojas, who was more aware of the material constraints that allowed or restricted the circulation of ideas, either locally or internationally.

The description of the Argentine delegation between 1926 and 1940, before the IICI, showed how the links between the Argentine, Latin American and European intellectuals were woven—sometimes in the spirit of cooperation and at other times in evident confrontation. It is clear that the interwar period was the appropriate time to propose a new relationship between Europe and Latin America in the hope of forming an international vanguard of reason that would put a brake on the looming Second World War. Unfortunately, this hope came to an end when the activities of the IICI and the respective committees were suspended in 1940.

Notes

1. This chapter is part of the R&D project “Mapping Hispanic Modernity. Cross-border Literary Networks and Cultural Mediators (1908–1939)” (FFI2016–76055-P), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness and the ERC Starting Grant “Social Networks of the Past. Mapping Hispanic and Lusophone Literary Modernity (1898–1959)” (803860).
2. Consistent with the spirit of Gómez Carrillo and Aita, America and “Americanism” are used in this chapter in the broader sense referring to the American continent and, consequently, all and every people or nation on the continent, rather than to the United States and its people, as is usual in the English language.
3. Julien Luchaire, “La S. d. N. et le gouvernement français ont fondé l’Institut international de coopération intellectuelle”. *L’Europe nouvelle*, 16 January 1926, pp. 76–77.
4. See Herrera León (2009) and the archives of both national committees (UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-III-27 and A-III-48).
5. “Several Argentine colleagues, eager to see their country among the nations officially represented at your Institute, had the idea of asking their government to appoint me as a delegate to this Intellectual Committee. In the event that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Buenos Aires takes my candidacy into consideration, I would be very much obliged if you would inform me of the procedure that should be followed to be approved as Official Delegate, and to tell me if forming part of this delegation is compatible with my post as consul in Paris”. Enrique Gómez Carrillo to Julien Luchaire, 5.6.1926, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-I-133.
6. “[A] man representing the culture of the Spanish language, although during his extensive sojourns in Europe, French became a second language to him”. Biographical note of Gómez Carrillo, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-I-133.

7. "The terrain is being very well prepared there and next year we will be able to reap some interesting fruits". Julien Luchaire to Enrique Gómez Carrillo, 14.9.1927, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-I-133.
8. Aita's publications include: "Retratos imaginarios" (1917), "Notas al margen de la poesía argentina" (1929), "Aspectos de la literatura argentina" (1930), "La literatura argentina contemporánea 1900-1930" (1931), "La literatura y la realidad americana" (1931), "Expresiones" (1933), "Indagaciones" (1934), "Itinerarios" (1936), "Comentario" (1938), "Cuatro ensayos" (1939) and "Relatos del tiempo viejo" (1955).
9. "Mr. Nogueira, during his stay in Buenos Aires, spoke to me about this subject and I addressed it to the President of the Republic, who did me the honour of welcoming my initiative with great interest. Subsequently, and in agreement with the suggestions of the Minister of Public Instruction, I made some remarks on the role played by the Institute in Paris and my information served to cement the considerations of the decree". Antonio Aita to Henri Bonnet, 15.7.1936, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-III-37.
10. Antonio Aita to Dominique Braga, 28.5.1937, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-VI-5, doc. 86.
11. Antonio Aita in an interview with *La Nación*, a copy of which was sent to Henri Bonnet, 8.4.1936, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-I-1-1a, doc. 239-242.
12. "a-European literature in America. Trends and directions of European literature and thought. The problems they are facing. The influence of European thought and letters on American thought. The role of European cultural values in America in the past and present.
b-Influence on the future of Ibero-American literature in world thought. (This point is the counterpart of the previous one). Originality of the American spirit. Its views on the main problems of world culture, for example, mechanization, new humanism. American national contributions to universal culture". Dominique Braga to Antonio Aita, 4.4.1936, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-I-1-1a, doc. 244-246.
13. *Ibid.*, adapted by the authors.
14. The volume dedicated to the *entretien* and published the following year by the IICI includes Keyserling's contribution but not Huxley's due to a supposed oversight by Braga.
15. "I will confess to you that for many years I have been fighting against this Yankee policy of infiltration, which seeks to dominate the Hispanic-American peoples, and I am often worried by this question, which I consider very serious, since it tends to isolate us from Europe. I discussed this matter with Mr. Madariaga and if the League of Nations lacks prestige and popularity in this part of the American continent, we owe much of it to this tendentious and skillfully deployed tactic by the White House". Antonio Aita to Henri Bonnet, 8.4.1936, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-I-1-1a, doc. 239-242.
16. Antonio Aita to Dominique Braga, 4.6.1936, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-I-1-1a, doc. 191.
17. *La Nación*, November 1936.
18. The Spanish volume of the *entretien*, translated by E. M. S. Danero for the Argentine National Committee, includes the opening addresses by Georges Duhamel and Alfonso Reyes, along with communications from Enrique Díez Canedo, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Carlos Ibarguren, Keyserling, Afranio Peixoto, Louis Piérard, Carlos Reyles, Francisco Romero, Baldomero Sanín Cano and Juan B. Terán.

19. This chapter focuses on the events organized by Aita for the Argentine National Committee based on material from the IICI archives held at the UNESCO archives. For an analysis of the content of the communications read at the *entretien*, see Pernet (2007) and the chapter 7 in this volume “The 1936 Meetings of the PEN Club and of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation in Buenos Aires” by Alejandra Giuliani.
20. “What can the contribution of our continent be to this vital problem, the solution of which worries the most perceptive minds of our time? It is not a question here of uttering pompous phrases about the ‘autochthonism’ of our culture. This idea has led many minds to advocate isolation as a remedy for our political mistakes, and so has led the inspiration of our writers towards local traditions. The recovery of traditions can be fruitful if it contains the elements that intelligence demands at a time of crisis of values such as the one we are going through”. Antonio Aita, “La Coopération intellectuelle entre l’Amérique et l’Europe”, report to the Second General Conference of the National Committees on Intellectual Cooperation, July 1937. UNESCO, FR PUNES AG 1-IICI-A-21, 1.
21. Antonio Aita to Jean-Jacques Mayoux, 2.8.1945. UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-III-37.
22. “Many simple minds blindly persist in wanting an America for the Americans, thus continuing to respond with petty provincialism to the indifference shown by the Europeans for many years”. Antonio Aita, “La Coopération intellectuelle entre l’Amérique et l’Europe”, report to the Second General Conference of the National Committees on Intellectual Cooperation, July 1937. UNESCO, FR PUNES AG 1-IICI-A-21, 2.
23. “True and direct knowledge of our Continent, upon which Europe has looked with certain indifference.”
24. “In our America, where the writer has no social stature, he also lacks the means of defense to protect the property of his intellectual effort, and through the lack of sound legislation, the writer is exposed to all kinds of piracy by unscrupulous publishers”. Antonio Aita to Henri Bonnet, 8.4.1936, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-I-1-1a, doc. 239–242.
25. Antonio Aita to Henri Bonnet, 3.3.1938, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-III-37.
26. Antonio Aita to Henri Bonnet, 24.5.1939, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-III-37.
27. *Ibid.*
28. “You will have noticed that it is with great care that we proceed in choosing our books, the prefaces, the translators, always seeking expert opinions. As far as Argentina is concerned, we agree that we have diverged from the programme that we wanted to achieve, from the mission that we had—you in Argentina, I here. You cannot leave us, Aita, you must not. We have undertaken our work together; you have to be with us until we have brought it to an end”. Dominique Braga to Antonio Aita, 7.6.1939, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-VI-5.
29. Antonio Aita to Henri Bonnet, 19.10.1939, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI A-III-37.
30. Miguel Ozório de Almeida to the IICI, 16.9.1939, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-II-1-3, doc. 308–316.
31. “Rest assured that if I could provide service to a country that I love as my own, it would be me myself who would be very grateful to you for providing me with the opportunity to do so”. Victoria Ocampo to Henri Bonnet, 30.9.1939, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-II-1-3, doc. 281–282.

32. A copy of Aita's and Rojas's responses is enclosed in a letter sent from Antonio Aita to Henri Bonnet, 9.5.1940, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-II-2.
33. Henri Bonnet to Antonio Aita, 6.4.1939, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-VIII-1.
34. For further information about the Ibero-American Collection, see Roig-Sanz, "The International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation: Translation Policies in the Interwar Period (1925–1946)". In Christopher Rundel (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook on Translation History*. London: Routledge, forthcoming.
35. This volume was actually sent to print in April 1940, just a couple of months before the German occupation of Paris. The last letter in the archive folder of the volume dates from 27 April 1940. We have found no record of the book in the catalogue of the National Library of France and assume that it never left the press.
36. As Dominique Braga reminded Antonio Aita, "[. . .] Ainsi que l'indiquait notamment M. Ronze, Secrétaire général du Groupement des Universités et Grandes Ecoles de France pour les relations avec l'Amérique latine, *Facundo*, publié par nous, donne lieu à des conférences en Sorbonne et la traduction de Marcel Bataillon, lui-même professeur de littérature espagnole à la Sorbonne, fait l'objet des travaux des jeunes étudiants en France". Dominique Braga to Antonio Aita, 22.12.1938, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-VI-5, doc. 16–17.
37. "A historical work that would shed light on the period of Argentine life in which Sarmiento has set the scene of his classical work *Facundo*". Henri Bonnet to Antonio Aita, 6.4.1939, UNESCO FR PUNES AG 1-IICI F-VIII-1.

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