



Research Article

Cultural Thought in the Caribbean? Arts' Theory in Cuba, and Its Epistemic Status from a Historical Sociology of Scientific Knowledge Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Although History of Art studies within academia, began in the late thirties of the Twentieth Century, Arts' Theory in Cuba has been an underdeveloped discipline. For this paper, we use the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge in its historical perspective, as a tool for analyzing Jorge Mañach's cultural thought. This was one of the most important Cuban intellectuals of his time, who wrote some of the most notorious essays of Cuban Literature. We analyze his cultural essays, and also, the cultural institutions, intellectual initiatives and networks that supported his theoretical ideas. Essentially, the early Cuban 20th century reproduced some of the colonial matrix of power but, surprisingly, the Mañach's theories featured relative epistemic autonomy and, therefore, decolonial thinking features yet to be studied. Therefore, we place the focus on the social conditions and cultural structures that might have enhanced the Cuban cultural thought in order to show its epistemic status.

Keywords: Cultural Thought, Decolonial Thinking, Intellectual Networks, Intellectual Initiatives, Sociology of Scientific Knowledge, Arts' Theory

1. Introduction

Around the 1940s, an interesting development of theoretical reflections about history of art and artistic culture takes place in Cuba. This is easily

evident that the reflexive range remarkably raises in theoretical statements. Equally important, it can be appreciated a persistent interest in disquisitions that eluded the merely classifying or descriptive intentionality. Philosophy of Art¹ (Notes)^[1], by Luis de Soto y Sagarra (1893-1955); History and

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verifiable in the diversity of serial publications -or sections of magazines and journals- dedicated to art in its most varied manifestations. It becomes

¹ Filosofía del arte (Apuntes)

Style^{2[2]}, by Jorge Mañach (1898-1961) and American Expression^{3[3]}, by José Lezama (1910-1976), are some of the most notable examples printed between 1943 and 1957.

The above mentioned, along with many other intellectuals wrote mostly about Cuban and Latin American artistic culture on a high reflexive standard and, creatively took into account German, French and Spanish influences for their studies, we call this, Cuban Cultural Thought^{4[4]}. Although extensive areas of Cuban thought have been investigated from disciplines such as History or Philosophy, the exegetical perspectives are not exhausted yet.

The present statement aims to reveal not only the possibility of a Cuban cultural thought in the early 20th Century but the place and functions of cultural institutions, intellectual initiatives and networks as support of those theoretical ideas. Essentially, the early Latin American 20th century reproduced some of the colonial matrix of power (evident in cultural institutions and intellectual network practices) but, surprisingly, the above mentioned theories featured relative epistemic autonomy and, therefore, decolonial thinking features yet to be studied. Therefore, we place the focus on the social conditions and cultural structures that might have enhanced the Cuban cultural thought.

Undoubtedly, the so-called Art Sciences have their own semantic arsenal, and the theory, as Juan Acha has explained, travels along paths and returns itself in disciplines such as criticism or arts' history^{5[5]}. Nevertheless, the unknown remains; is it a certain "cumulative tradition" that suddenly rises up? Is it a higher level regarding the way art was studied before the 1940s' with no link with the past what so ever? Most disturbingly, why is this possible, precisely around this moment?

² Historia y estilo

³ La expresión Americana

For this paper, I would intent to accept the last ones as a specific form of scientific knowledge (mainly because its object is half way between rational and sensitive thinking) taking into account essays, papers, conferences, but also membership in societies, academies, editorial boards and other intellectual initiatives as Broadcasted University (Universidad del Aire, in Spanish). Rather than focusing on evolutionary timelines of concepts, paradigms, theories, I will focus on sharing-knowledge strategies, and the way cultural institutions shaped and legitimated that scientific knowledge about artistic culture.

It is imperative to take into account that the Mañachian theory of the historical circumstantiality of the style, the Carpenterian definition of real maravilloso, the notion of the image participating in history as the basis of the Lezamian theory of the imago, are all second-order reflexive constructions. This condition brings us closer to the orbit of the sociology of scientific knowledge, but from a necessary historical perspective. We will focus on Mañach's cultural thought, not only because of its density, but because this Cuban intellectual is visible in almost every dimension of the intellectual field of his time.

2. Materials and Methods

Unable to encompass every prominent intellectual from the first half of Cuban twentieth century within these pages, this paper intends to inquire about the spaces in which it emerged, and was socialized the cultural thought of one of the most distinguished intellectuals of the time: Jorge Mañach (1898-1961). By examining Jorge Mañach's cultural essays, written between 1923 and 1959, we aim to define it as a scientific knowledge about artistic culture. Thus, the use of the sociology of scientific knowledge, from a historical perspective, is justified in order to place Jorge Mañach's cultural essay in the framework of the Cuban intellectual field of the time.

Therefore, we settle in the spacious domain of

intersection between the Arts' Theory History, Sociology of Scientific Knowledge and Social History of Science. For this purpose, we first lead the analysis towards the specific historical context, which gives rise to a specific knowledge that reflects upon culture and artistic practices. It is about revealing the conditions of its emergency, forms and spaces of circulation and legitimation.

We work upon two main ideas. First one: Jorge Mañach's theory of historical circumstantiality of style ^[6] is a sign of a cultural thought that stands with relative epistemic autonomy regarding the traditional historiography of art anchored in German and French tradition during the first half of the Cuban 20th century. Second: Jorge Mañach's cultural thought is traceable not only within his published works but in his intellectual initiatives, his institutional memberships and the editorial projects he was linked to.

3. Results

3.1 A necessary historical digression

It is well established that, writers and artists often write down reflections about their own work, but, there are other non-artists social actors within the artistic field that also provide important high-level reflections. Frequently called "intellectuals", they similarly deliberate and write about artistic culture.

Jorge Mañach was one of the most notable Cuban intellectuals of the first half of the 20th century. Several authors have referred to him as the impersonation of the features that distinguished the intellectuality of the time ^[7-9]. Educated between Spain, United States and France, he was linked to the delayed Cuban artistic avant-garde since the twenties and integrated the well-known Grupo Minorista (minority group) ^[10]. Some of its members later founded revista de avance journal, a periodical publication that circulated between 1927 and 1930 and became the platform of the Cuban avant-garde movement.

He was also distinguish member of cultural institutions and was linked to forms of intellectual management with no government support. All of them, focused on the development of artistic culture in Cuba. One of the most notorious was, without a doubt, the Universidad del Aire. This was a radio program that invited the most prominent intellectuals of the Cuban academy and culture, to offer cycles of conferences related to Cuban and universal history and culture. This intellectual initiative was broadcasted between 1932 and 1933 and between 1949 and 1961. At the same time, Cuadernos de la Universidad del Aire (Broadcasted University Notes) were printed. These editions summarized the broadcasted lectures and offered suggestions from other texts to give continuity to the discussed topics.

Jorge Mañach was also linked to teaching within University of Havana. He performed as Secretary of Education and member of both Academy of the History of Cuba (1942) and the National Academy of Arts and Letters (1944). He had a prolific life as a writer and wrote in almost all genres, although it was his essays that distinguished him in life ^[7,11,9,12].

In 1944 he lectured *El estilo en Cuba y su sentido histórico* (The Style in Cuba and its historical Sense), for his membership at the National Academy of Arts and Letters, in which he presented the idea that the evolution of Cuban style did not only respond to the inextricable artist/work-of-art relationship, nor certain "social" explanations often used at the time (clime, geographic localization, ethnicity, etc.). He established that, the Cuban style evolution also responded to what he called "peculiar historical conditions of stylization". Thus presenting, his theory of historical circumstantiality of style ^[6].

But, why is "this theory of historical circumstantiality of style" important?

It is from a quadruple angle of analysis that the place of Jorge Mañach's historical circumstantiality of style's theory can be justified: by the

historiographical method and conception applied, the chosen literary genre as editorial support, its publication date, and finally, the object of study declared by the author.

From the first of them, both the method and the historiographical conception, allowed him to incorporate approaches to the evolution of style that exceeded the most used arts' theories of the moment. Indeed, the understanding of a historical conditioning of style, at the same time exceeded Earl of Buffon's idea and Taine's theory of *milleu*. Moreover, he separated himself from the formalistic and iconological prevailed analyzes at the time.

In the same way, recognizing that such conditioning exceeded the artist and the artist's work but was framed by the "spirit of time", places him at the forefront of the theoretical conceptions of a sociological lens that were not important until the fifties with Arnold Hauser [13,14]. In addition, visualizing what he called "temporary imperative" required the recognition of differentiated historical timelines and the establishment of categories of analysis deduced from his own object of research: Cuban artistic culture.

If we approach from the chosen literary genre as editorial support for his cultural thought, the significance of *El estilo en Cuba y su sentido histórico* becomes obvious. The essay, as genre, was solid and widespread in Latin America and Cuba during the first half of the 20th century, and this would place Mañach's conceptions within Latin American literature tradition. Latin American essay has also been considered as a socialization space for intellectuals [15,16,17], and these conceptions help us to understand its importance as editorial support of Mañach's reflections as we review this authors' intellectual networks and initiatives.

From the third of the mentioned aspects, the publication date of *History and Style* is significant, once it is known that on the European theoretical horizon, after *Philosophy of Art* [18], only *Cartas sin dirección* (Letters to no Address) and *El arte y la vida social* (Art and Social Life) [19] and *El arte*

desde el punto de vista sociológico (Art from a Sociological Point of View) [20], were published⁴. Authors such as García [13], Ocampo & Peran [14], Acha [5], and others, agree that it is not until Arnold Hauser and Frederick Antal, that the approach to the study of the artistic field from an extra artistic point of view became systematic.

The object of study declared by Mañach is a fundamental element to take into account. That his thesis was aimed to demonstrate the style in Cuba as a long-term-in progress process (completely new at the time), to verify over four centuries, is an issue that regardless of its limitations –already pointed out by Arencibia [6]– deserves recognition within Cuban art and literature historiography.

Another title published by the father of Arts' History in Cuba, Luis de Soto y Sagarra *Filosofía de la historia del arte* (Apuntes) [1] and *Historia y estilo* [2] were still published under the strong influence of the historiographical method imposed by Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) for Arts' History, which was intended to articulate the study of artistic styles by ordering them in a single line of chronological progression. The second volume of the book written by Luis de Soto y Sagarra proves it. However, it is evident that Mañach rejects this judgment, when he almost always avoids the intense description, works of art formal analysis, erudite references or life stories of the artists. It is significant to discover that, Mañach even disregards the traditional categories of analysis, by introducing others such as *destierro*, and genres like *décima*.

In this sense, he advances, separating himself from Joachin Winckelmann's "history of the works of art", the Henrich Wolfflin's "history of art without names", and from Burckhardt's history of styles (which did not took into account Latin American art).

For his conference at National Academy of Arts and Letters, he shaped a theoretical

⁴ With a modest impact in Spanish horizons, in words of García

corpus, based on the electivist method ^[6], which allowed him to establish a detached periodization of the traditional arts' histories, artists and styles, of the time. He stated categories of analysis that deduced directly from the evaluation of his object of study, always relying on the angle of analysis of the Long Duration.

Finally, in order to assess his theory, he ends up surpassing Earl of Buffon's and Hyppolyte Taine's notions when he overlaps Buffon's idea of the indissoluble relationship between the artist and his work, and Taine's theory of milieu, with his conception of a historical conditioning of the style. This idea, central to the last of the essays within *Historia y estilo*, was bold and novel in Cuban academy back in 1944.

Now, once the place of the Mañach's theory is known (and recognized); and, once it is accepted as a second-order knowledge: why then, the historical sociology of scientific knowledge?

In words of Jorge Luis Arcos, Jorge Mañach's work has a high-level literacy features ("literariedad") ^[11] and other researchers, since the 1970s, had referred to its stylistic height ^[21,22]. His postures and political stands, his controversies with other intellectuals of the time, his relationship with the Cuban revolution, his contribution to literary and visual arts criticism, have been approached from numerous pages. However, his contribution to Arts' Theory from the Cuban semantic threshold and oriented to the reflexive and deep study of issues such as avant-garde and style, had not been visualized yet.

At this point, the sociology of scientific knowledge became necessary, as Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) stated, as a logical-historical research method ^[23] and a useful tool to identify Mañach's cultural thought as a second-order scientific knowledge -although "dispersed" in essays, academy memberships or intellectual initiatives-. Traceable from treaties, monographs or textbooks that accompany teaching; and visible, from his relationship with institutions, intellectual initiatives

and editorial projects in which it circulated.

3.2. The Sociology of Knowledge for Mañach's cultural thought in relation to cultural institutions, intellectual initiatives and editorial projects of the time.

In a very general way, the evolution of the sociology of scientific knowledge and the history of science can be verified as an expression of opposite positions between "externalists" and "internalists" or, between sociologists, historians and philosophers of science ^[24,25]. However, in an attempt to save certain dichotomies, from the seventies of the last century, the triple contribution of these perspectives can be clearly perceived in terms of establishing the contingent dimension of the social, political and cultural processes that determine the formation of scientific knowledge. In this case, we assume Jorge Mañach's cultural thought as a scientific knowledge about Cuban artistic culture, and, Mañach's relations with cultural institutions, intellectual initiatives and editorial projects as part of it.

The very existence of an academic discipline entirely dedicated to study the social conditions that enhance the production, accumulation, circulation and legitimization of knowledge is based on its acceptance as a social product ^[23]. As it has been seen, the possibility of placing science results within sociology of knowledge's center of attention –not exempt from conflicts within sociology itself and with other disciplines– responds to the natural autonomization of scientific field within modern societies. As a result, this process historically conditioned ideas such as neutrality and autonomy of science, along with the supposed ethics and neutrality inherent to the researcher (this individual with "specific abilities and competences") taking into account his place within the social structure ^[26-28].

As it has been pointed out, the object of this research reveals itself within a specific historical frame time between 1923 and 1959, and it is delimited by the previous study of Jorge Mañach's

cultural essays, grouped between these two years. Therefore, a delicate historical perspective is needed in order to insurance the observation of the economic, social and cultural conditions in which Jorge Mañach institutional membership, editorial management and intellectual initiatives are framed.

What does sociology bring to the History of Science? In sum, sociology provides a characterization of Science that directly impacted the way of writing its history. All the high complexity of the subject leads to the clarification of three fundamental aspects: the change in the definition of science (from science as a system to science as a practice), the change in the notion of scientific truth and the change in the conception of the scientist ^[29].

In any case, we are talking about a displacement of the meaning of this activity itself. Beyond the image of science as a theory, it moved towards the idea of thinking it in its theoretical relevance. From another perspective, looking back at Science as a set of practices that determine the construction of knowledge, it has been the germ of a completely new history of technique, scientific instruments and social conditions ^[30,31]. For this specific case: the idea of Mañach's cultural thought as a result of specific intellectual competencies and social conditions.

It can also be verified that the sociology of scientific knowledge is based on a re-definition of scientific truth. It will no longer be the truth as an expression of an objective reality, but the truth (and scientific production) will be the result of a conventional and contingent process. Consequently, it follows the need to identify historical-contingent factors in the construction of scientific facts.

In addition to redefining the concept of science, the sociology of scientific knowledge modified the way in which the individual who produced that special form of knowledge was visualized. The traditional way in which the scientist were socially seen and esteemed was challenged. If science is no longer just a cognitive activity that solves

theoretical or intellectual problems, it is because the acceptance of scientists as individuals with intellectual competences, acquired through institutionalized socialization processes, which reveal the structure, interests and contradictions of the community they belong.

It is a logical structure that manifests itself as an inherent feature of the different scientific communities. Thus, is subject to both negotiation and competition relations, as well as tensions between personal and collective interests. In the case here, it is about revealing the process of emergency, consolidation and socialization of Jorge Mañach's cultural thought, from his cultural essay and the institutions, publications and initiatives to which he was linked. Those cultural institutions and initiatives, in its chronological evolution, show us a stark depiction of early Cuban cultural field.

For this paper, the Cuban intellectual community of the first half of the Twentieth Century becomes highly important due to the relationships they developed. That is why, we take Jorge Mañach institutional membership, editorial management and intellectual initiatives as manifestations of his cultural thought. We believe that, with the necessary historical perspective, the contingent process of construction of his cultural thought can be explored in its obvious double conditioning: from the tradition of Cuban thought and from the organization of the different social spaces in which it circulated.

From a different perspective, important contributions were developed, through new paths within the new sociology of scientific knowledge (NSSK). The first that can be identified is known as the Strong Program. Its authors exceeded the strictly sociological, to incorporate aspects of the philosophy and history of science. This was, mainly, the result of an interdisciplinary study space: the Science Unit of Edimburg.

It is agreed that science emerges as a highly specialized sphere, typical from developed societies. Then, leaving out empiricist and laboratory studies,

the rest of the inquiries might have profound historicist tendencies, mostly because of the objects of study declared and the sources used. The consultation of archives (notebooks, letters, research project documentation, conference proceedings, and lectures), analysis of serial publications, etc., will stand on documentary sources. However, as far as it has been studied, there are not many studies that, in the same logic, account for scientific practices and networks of relationships (institutional, group, individual) for social sciences and humanities within Cuban academy.

The historical differentiation among disciplines had made us believe that objects of study are exclusives. For instance, we tend to believe that Sociology of Science and Scientific Knowledge cares only for the scientific field, the experimental researches and the construction of scientific truths' processes, focusing only in the so-called hard and experimental sciences. In fact, we tend to differentiate "scientists" from "intellectuals". At the same time, kept us from visualizing Jorge Mañach's contributions to Arts' theory as a scientific discipline. Consequently, we challenged that last idea by focusing on the relevance of Mañach's theory of historical circumstantiality of style as a scientific product (a second-order-knowledge product) and looking deeper into the contingent factors that enhanced it.

From here, the case studies and the definition of research objects are often determined by the periods of reference, as is the case of the Mañachian cultural thought (concentrated between 1923 and 1959). In this sense, it is that the historical analyses is also an indispensable tool. About this, Muñoz and Hernández point out that:

Sociology collects factual empirical data on different aspects of the social realities that constitute arsenals of consultation, for a historiography that seeks to recognize the social world of an era. But, also historians will find general concepts, already formulated, that will help

them for a more efficient and global understanding of contemporary societies. Therefore, sociology and history now maintain, in many ways, the same theoretical frameworks ⁵[32].

3.3. Social circulation spaces for Jorge Mañach's cultural thought

Inquiries that review editorial projects from literature and other disciplines are relatively frequent. As common understanding, serial publications are also material support of knowledge, while elements such as their presentation (visual elements, typography, editing, printing techniques, etc.), circulation (period), as well as their members (groups, Cenacles, generations), offer us keys that intersect with institutions, intellectuals and cultural initiatives. At the same time, they constitute spaces that generate specific forms of sociability -not always in consensus-especially within the artistic-cultural field.

These are movable approaches, in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, always from a perspective that allows us adjusting the analysis lens. In the case of magazines, institutions, relevant figures, topics, etc., cross-linking becomes a necessity. It is virtually impossible to study the life of the academies of the History of Cuba and National of Arts and Letters, without analyzing the publications that were deployed as part of their management. Conversely, it is very difficult to assess the place and importance of publications such as *Verbum* or *Orígenes*, if the group of intellectuals who supported them and their *ideo-aesthetic* conceptions is not taken as a reference. Nor could the total of an author's work be studied, without approaching to the institutions and spaces in which he collaborated and/or participated in.

In this sense, we can affirm that we are in the presence of an editorial network that "links" - and at the same time, is an expression of - institutions, intellectuals, *aesthetic* or scientific conceptions that continuously generates sociability spaces. These

⁵ Translated by the author.

sociability spaces are traceable by specific forms of the cultural field such as the signature of manifestos, the invitation for publishing, the creation of groups, the book review, art criticism, etc.

In certain cases, an editorial initiative could generate different forms for the socialization of knowledge, as is the case of *revista de avance* journal (1927-1930) which, in addition to its regular edition, it published *Cuadernos de treintidós páginas* (Thirty Two Pages Notebook) [sic]. On the other hand, an institution could also resort to different forms of editorial management. The Academy of the History of Cuba published its *Annals* and, in parallel, the admission speeches of its new members in separate editions.

Hence, although we take *revista de avance* journal, for the study of Jorge Mañach's cultural thought, the reference to his participation in other editorial spaces is mandatory. At the same time, specific sociability forms from the institutions to which he was linked to, generated *ideo-esthetics* codes deductible from their editorial network.

It becomes evident then, that these aspects can contribute to the strengthening of institutionalization. As well as *revista de avance* journal, supported the platform of the *avant-garde* codes in the late twenties, also *Cuadernos de la Universidad del Aire* (material support of *Universidad del Aire's* intellectual initiative), contributed to the institutionalization of cultural thought in Cuba.

There were also associations such as *Cenacles* (characteristic of literary groups), cultural societies, groups, that broaden the plot of the *intelligentsia* and its legitimation spaces through publications. They offered invitations to dinners, reading speeches, among other sociability strategies that, in the end, served to unite the constitutive space that eventually allowed the consolidation of Jorge Mañach's cultural thought.

As notable example of the complexity of relationships within this framework (1923-1959), Celina Manzoni refers in *Un dilema cubano: Nacionalismo o Vanguardia* (One Cuban Dilema: Nationalismo or Vanguard) [33] that, the *Declaración*

del Grupo Minorista, and the novel *Folletín* por doce escritores cubanos were first published within *Social journal's* pages. Other magazines that supported the aesthetics concerns of young intellectuals were *Bimestre Cubana* journal, edited by Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969) and *Cuba Contemporánea* founded by Carlos Velasco (-?) and Mario Guiral Moreno (1882-1963) [33]. Manzoni's book, anchored in literary and historical perspective, are useful references when it comes to *Sociology of Scientific Knowledge* once we have come to accept the Mañach's cultural thought as scientific knowledge about artistic culture.

With a sharp reading to the news published in the pages of journals and magazines – such is the case of *Orto*, a journal printed in Manzanillo with national scope in the period – more or less stable relations and spaces of sociability generated by these groups become evident: collaborations, dinners, conferences, invitations or cultural news. Taking journals and essays as socialization spaces [16] it is also interesting that certain names are repeated insistently among these spaces: Emilio Roig (1889-1964), Fernando Ortiz, Jorge Mañach, Juan Marinello, among many others.

Not only from the editorial project created as an intellectual initiative in 1927 sociability spaces can be deduced. Carlos Altamirano gives an account of what he calls the intellectual network that “indicates a form of sociability and a chain of contacts and interaction between artists, people of letters, publishers and other types of cultural agents, linked by shared ideological or aesthetic beliefs” [34]. The notion of the network itself puts us in front of the possibility of visualizing forms of communication and trajectories of ideas that connect individuals and groups in different geographical and multi-temporal locations.

We need to take into account that a chronology – exhaustive or intense – of the activities and work displayed by Jorge Mañach and his contemporaries is not a goal for this paper. All of the above mentioned has been thoroughly described by historians, writers, bibliographers, etc. In any case, thanks to the analysis keys offered by

the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK), we have been able to point out which one of these moments and institutions may have influenced the emergence and subsequent consolidation of the Mañachian cultural thought.

It is necessary to look back at the editorial landscape of the first half of the Cuban twentieth century and evaluate the forms of sociability that were generated. They can be followed from the bibliographic tracking of the texts published during the period. It should also be taken into account that, in certain spaces, it was about to support a common ideal - usually aesthetic one - despite the open ideological distances or partisanship in tendencies that, although not antagonistic, neither amicable.

The editorial project that was *revista de avance* journal was projected as a space of ideo-aesthetic consensus around issues related to avant-garde and artistic culture (Cuban, Latin American and universal). It was an affirmative ideo-aesthetic land despite the ideo-political distances of members such as Juan Marinello, Jorge Mañach, Martín Casanovas (1894-1966), José Z. Tallet (1893-1989), Francisco Ichaso (1901-1962), Félix Lizaso (1891-1967), and even, during a brief period of time, Alejo Carpentier. The subsequent intellectual trajectory of each one of them, as well as the open antagonisms - which within the intellectual field are called "controversies" - shows that, within each of these (journals, magazines, academies, intellectual initiatives), complex systems of relationships were displayed in order to legitimize a specific area of consensus while, in others (temporal or spatial), the disagreements emerged.

As an example, Alberto Lamar Schweyer (1902-1942), one of the founders of the Grupo Minorista, moved away from the group's public activity due to his affiliation with Gerardo Machado (1869-1939). On the other hand, Alejo Carpentier collaborated with the reactionary *Diario de la Marina* (bibliography of Alejo Carpentier), although he suffered prison during machadato due to his political activity.

The idea of a dense network of relations of

conflict and militant consensus in aesthetics and politics is here confirmed when you take those relations between the members of an intellectual initiative, a group or an institution as a reference. The networks of relations and the spaces of conflict and consensus can be followed in the years after 1923 and 1927.

Emilio Roig published in *Social* a set of texts that during 1929 referred to the itinerary and the dissolution of the Grupo Minorista. In issues 6, 9 and 10 (June, September and October, respectively) this remarkable intellectual gives an account of his political and ideo-aesthetic trajectory, while legitimizing his ephemeral passage through the history of Cuba by immortalizing it from *Social* pages. It is not surprising then, to discover that all the permanent members of the editorial team of *revista de avance* journal had signed in 1923 the minority group declaration^{[33]. [12]}.

Accounting for another reference, *Anales* journal, printed by National Academy of Arts and Letters, was a quarterly publication that emerged as the Academy official space, with the purpose of a public statement of their performance in public or private sessions of the organization. In addition, it published the discourses lectured by its new members, previously approved by the Academy or by the respective section as well as other academic activities. Academic members and, sometimes, public, participated from those spaces generated by the Academy.

It is unlikely that a magazine is only the reflection of an individual venture. In general, its pages incorporate the cooperative activity of a series of people (that of an ideological circle, that of a literary group, or a more lax group), although some of those people have greater ascendancy or exercise intellectual leadership over the rest, to the point that the magazine is inseparable from his name, as *Amauta* is from José Carlos Mariátegui^[34].

In this sense, there were institutions that generated a network that supported specific forms

⁶ Translated by Arencibia Coloma.

of sociability. Such forms, their impact and scope in the first half of the Cuban twentieth century, confirm its importance for the circulation and legitimization of Jorge Mañach's cultural thought. As is the case of revista de avance journal.

It is precisely in the conception of a platform for the dissemination of ideological and aesthetic codes that the manifestations of the Mañachian cultural thought are verified. We are talking about the intense work of promotion, criticism and editorial management deployed, not only by him, but also by the rest of the editors. This is consistent with what could be considered as the first stage (or level) of Mañach's cultural thought, always oriented to get what was necessary for the legitimization of the Cuban avant-garde movement. Contributing to conceive a serial publication with these three dimensions (promotion, criticism and editorial management) is where, in our opinion, the main contributions of Jorge Mañach are revealed during his tenure at revista de avance journal.

Another important reference for Mañach's cultural thought were, with no doubt, Cuadernos de la Universidad del Aire. Universidad del Aire was a very important intellectual initiative led by Mañach between 1932 and 1960. Some of the most outstanding artists and intellectuals of the moment took part of this in order to broadcast knowledge for as many people as possible. For this example, the establishment and consolidation of Jorge Mañach's cultural thought is based on two aspects: the communicative intention and the hierarchy of the intellectuals and artists that he summoned.

In the first aspect, it is about conferences conceived for a multiple, diverse and unknown audience, so the tone of the broadcasted conferences, as well as their printed editions, was marked by the didactic character and the logical organization of the contents, in both the composition of the courses and in each of the conferences. For the second aspect, although the political orientations of many are not visible, it is reasonable to value Universidad del Aire as a space in which Jorge Mañach's place as an intellectual and the coherence of his cultural thought is consolidated.

At the same time, as an intellectual initiative, it was a consensus area around the need to bring culture to as many Cubans as possible.

As we have seen, the present analysis was focused on those conditions of Mañach's cultural thought, referred to the functions and spaces of socialization of his intellectual production. To do this, we took Jorge Mañach's intellectual trajectory and pointed to the historical and social scenario where the construction of a Cuban cultural thought is evident. For example he lectured: *La crisis de la alta cultura en Cuba* (The Crisis of Cuban High Culture) ^[35] within the Cuban Economic Society, an institution that, since the nineteenth century, had the function of caring for the best and greatest virtues of culture and fine arts. He also goes to the Academy of Cuban History because he had been Secretary of Public Instruction and Fine Arts in the cabinet of Carlos Mendieta (1873-1960). The academy was anchored into a space that reproduced the whole hierarchy of the metropolitan codes - as Carmen Almodóvar, Ricardo Quiza and Oscar Zanetti have extensively explained ^[36-38].

In 1942, Mañach takes to the Academy of the History of Cuba an entry speech calling to focus on reconstruct the history of the island ignoring the most important military figures and historical facts rather than the processes in which they were enrolled. Two years later, he places in the center of the National Academy of Arts and Letters, the idea that the evolution of style in Cuba responds, not only to the stylistic will of its artists and writers, but also to the historical fluctuations that conditioned specific themes such as exile, and even literary genres like *décima*⁷.

Beyond the polemicist spirit that has always been imposed on the personality of Jorge Mañach, we are in the presence of an intellectual who could do this and more. Not only for elements such as his proven discursive effectiveness from the essay, but because he managed to hold a cultural capital that placed him in a space of power within

⁷ Musical composition considered traditional within Cuban rural places.

the intellectual field of the time. Thereby, the institutions Mañach was linked to (governmental, or not) become interesting moments of his cultural thought vital cycle. At the same time, his passage through spaces (Cuban and foreign) such as the *Diario de la Marina*, the Ministry of Education, the Institute of the Americas of the University of Columbia, supported his prestige within the concert of the Cuban academics of the time .

All this means that, practically all of his work is published and re-edited in life, it also explains why he became a reference or the young Grupo Orígenes, or that he was invited, in the twilight of his life to the University of Río Piedras, where, on a posthumous basis, his *Teoría de la Frontera* is published.

Now, in terms of researching, a topic like this usually “belongs” to the sociology of the cultural camps or to the sociology of intellectuals as separated disciplines. The differentiation among current sociology disciplines, within Cuban academy, sometimes makes us believe in the exclusiveness of the objects of study. For instance, to the sociology of scientific knowledge “belongs” the analysis of the scientific field, the experimental research and the construction of scientific truth’s processes.

So, we might ask if the scientific results of the social and humanistic sciences can only be studied (or analyzed) from the above mentioned disciplines’ perspectives. Or, assuming that the sociology of scientific knowledge is no longer useful to analyze and/or explain anything out of the strict scientific or technical knowledge’s domain. Thereby, we focus on Jorge Mañach’s historical circumstantiality of style theory, as a scientific product, and looked deeper into the contingent factors that impacted on its legitimacy.

All the aforementioned reinforces the idea that scientific knowledge is only a specific form of representation of reality that is strongly anchored in (and is dependent on) aspects such as social context, learning (formative traditions, schools, etc.), own culture etc. From this point on, the value of Jorge Mañach’s contributions to the study of Cuban

artistic culture can be justified as a second-order knowledge. His education in North American and French circles, in addition to the peculiarities of the entry of literary and artistic avant-gardes in Cuba, in a good deal, offer a more accurate picture for the purposes of this inquiry, when is evaluated from the lens of the historical sociology of scientific knowledge.

This is relevant because the studied corpus - Jorge Mañach’s cultural thought - focuses on issues such as avant-garde and style, from positions that exceed the historical centers of study of these themes: Germany, France, England and United States, within the art sciences ^[39,40].

Thus, we also separate ourselves from the idea of scientists as ideal epistemic subjects. Rather, they belong to specific social groups (scientific communities), which also respond to ideological, economic and/or political traditions and interests. This, for example, is relevant not only for the study of the so called hard sciences scientists, but also for the analysis of the different positions of contemporary intellectuals. That is why, the idea of the avant-garde in opposition to the academies stands out; not only on a formal level, but also in the significance of the gap between the colonies’ cultural thought (Cuban, for this matter) and the aesthetic hegemony of the metropolis ^[5,40]. For this particular case, please notice that Mañach was part of the group that took the avant-garde codes to the official twentieth century Cuban scenario, but he also legitimated its aesthetic, ideological and political importance about seven years later from another magazine: *Social*, when he published *El estilo de la revolución* (The Style of the Revolution) ^[41].

It is in the idea of visualizing Jorge Mañach’s cultural thought as a second-order knowledge that the sociology of scientific knowledge - as we have pointed out - is revealed as a tool (or a lens) of special utility. This allowed us to identify that his cultural thought is expressed primarily through his essayism, but that it can also be traced, from the institutions to which he was linked, his editorial management and the intellectual initiatives he

promoted.

4. Discussion

4.1 We are in the Presence of a Historical Sociology of Scientific Knowledge Approach

In particular, the development of the sociology of scientific knowledge has a very short history in Cuba; although its use as a methodological tool is considered much younger. In words of Muñoz and Gómez, the realization of studies of this nature is visualized towards the nineties of the last century [42]. And so forth, it has shown two main directions: the history of sociological ideas in Cuba, and the “sociology of sociology” as scientific knowledge [43,32,42]. This probably explains why the scientific knowledge that exceeded social or sociological framework has received so little attention from a sociology of science approach. As is the case of the scientific knowledge focused on artistic culture.

With no attempt for a social history of arts’ theory in Cuba, we focus on the cultural essays written by Jorge Mañach and published between 1923 and 1959. It is precisely in this timeline where his cultural thought becomes a higher-theoretical-level one [6]. It is important to establish the need to circumscribe the study to the historical frameworks limited by Jorge Mañach’s own work. Certainly, its evolutionary curve describes a cycle that begins with Declaración del Grupo Minorista (Declaration of the Minority Group) in 1923, continues with the publication of *Historia y estilo* (in which he exposes his theory of the historical circumstantiality of the style) in 1944, and closes with the latest issues of *Universidad del Aire* in 1960 (with Mañach still in Cuba)⁸. This cycle shows, as its most obvious leitmotiv, the reflection about aspects of artistic culture and its associated processes.

⁸ Jorge Mañach exiles himself 1961. Already ill, was invited to Río Piedras University (Puerto Rico) where finally dies after giving a series of lectures that were later compiled in *Theory of Frontier* (1970).

Between 1923 and 1959, he also published many papers and lectures. *La crisis de la alta cultura en Cuba* [35], “Vanguardismo” [43-45]; the reception speeches for the academies of the History of Cuba and National of Arts and Letters (1942 and 1944 respectively)⁹ [2]. Equally important was his participation in *revista de avance* journal’s editorial board (1927-1930) and his management at *Universidad del Aire* (1932-1933 and 1949-1960).

With this in mind, we dig in two main aspects: Jorge Mañach’s second-order knowledge about artistic culture, and, the forms of intellectual sociability generated from Mañach’s relationship with institutions such as the National Academy of Arts and Letters, the Academy of the History of Cuba, or intellectual initiatives such as *revista de avance* journal, and *Universidad del Aire*.

Consequently, the need for the use of sociology of scientific knowledge tools from a historical perspective is confirmed, in order to examine the elements that led to the emergence, socialization and consolidation of Jorge Mañach’s cultural thought.

4.2 How Far Have we Come to Understand this within Cuban Academy?

When it comes to the actual state of art on the subject, due to obvious historical needs and the sediment of its different research objects, sciences such as Philosophy, History, History of Art and Literature, have contributed to the patient task of identifying, collecting, conserving, analyzing, reproducing (and a long etcetera), the various primary sources on which inquiries are held for a historical sociology of scientific knowledge perspective. In principle, this means there is a panorama of abundant and essential passive bibliography that serves the purposes of certain inquiries that could account for the evolution of a specific field of scientific knowledge.

⁹ Compiled in *History and Style* (1944) with two other shorter essays.

Sadly, at the same time, becomes evident that it also represents an atomized data. We have abundant and well-structured history of literature, history of art, history of intellectuals, and history of ideas, with the necessary institutional net (departments, undergraduate and post graduate programs, projects, etc.) that haven't still look at the first half of the Cuban 20th century as a dense network of cultural institutions, intellectual initiatives and editorial projects that eventually shaped and legitimated that Cuban cultural thought.

That is evident in a long list of titles that constitute icons in the history of knowledge and science in Cuba. Given the impossibility of mentioning them all, it is necessary to state the names of María del Carmen Barcia, Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, Rigoberto Pupo, Fernando Martínez Heredia, Teresa Muñoz, Alain Basail, Ana Cairo, Pedro M. Pruna, Jorge Núñez Jover, Carlos Delgado, among other authors of more recent training.

In a preliminary approach, due to obvious historical needs and the sediment of its different research objects, sciences such as Philosophy, History and Literature, have contributed to the patient task of identifying, collecting, conserving, analyzing, reproducing, the various primary sources on which inquiries are held for a historical sociology of scientific knowledge perspective. With concomitant (and shared) research methods and techniques, these sciences have oriented their inquiries towards areas that illuminate the history of science in Cuba.

The Philosophy approach results in the search of information about figures and their most remarkable contributions. Sometimes, the same figure, from different perspectives. Such are the cases of the study of Enrique José Varona (1849-1933) from philosophical or pedagogical approaches; Juan Marinello (1898-1977) from culture or political thought approaches. Take the cases of the volumes dedicated to the life and work of Presbyter Felix Varela (1788-1853), or José Agustín Caballero (1762-1835).

On the other hand, a useful reference material is

given by Cuban History collections from the History of Cuba Institute. These collections provide synthesis anchored in documentary, testimonial and/or biographical materials. At the same time, certain topics related to the history of institutions or processes such as universities, pedagogy, migration, medicine, etc., have been extensively exposed by these collections. In this sense, researchers such as Oscar Zanetti, from a historiographical perspective, have contributed to the knowledge of the vital process of an institution like the Academy of the History of Cuba.

In addition, the contributions to the history of Cuban 's science and technology, given by the Cuban Society of History of Science and Technology and the work of specialists linked to the National Museum of Science's History "Carlos J. Finlay" are also well recognized. It is important to note the significance of *Historia de la ciencia y la tecnología en Cuba* (History of Science and Technology in Cuba) –by Pedro M. Pruna [46] – that helps to clear weaknesses in the history of various disciplines within the Cuban academy. In this sense, the historiographical perspective that animates Pruna's efforts is valuable; however, despite dedicating large spaces to specific disciplines of the Social Sciences, the Humanities remain slightly invisible, due to obvious limitations of space and the foci of his collaborators.

Similarly, from the Cuban literature perspective, there have been consolidated studies that focus on the evolutionary development of journals, magazines, cenacles (mostly from a history of generation's perspective), literary genres, and others. Thus, it is also necessary to highlight the work of academic spaces such as Juan Marinello Institute, Cuban Linguistics and Literature Institute or Philosophy Institute, or the research projects which, for decades maintained the Cuban university main nodes: Universidad de La Habana, Universidad Central "Marta Abreu", Universidad de Oriente.

5. Conclusions

In principle, the previously exposed represents a panorama of abundant and essential passive bibliography that serves the purposes of certain inquiries that, from a sociology of knowledge perspective, account for the evolution of a specific field of scientific knowledge (in this case: Jorge Mañach's cultural thought). At the same time, becomes evident that the previously exposed also represents an atomized field that have not yet looked at the first half of the Cuban 20th century as a dense network of cultural institutions, intellectual initiatives and editorial projects. Also, this reveals the absence of studies from a social history of science perspective and, the lacking of a history of humanities accomplishments within Cuban science and Cuban intellectual fields.

As it has been constantly said, the sociology of knowledge was fundamental for identifying the conditions that might have had an impact on the emergency, consolidation and legitimation process of Jorge Mañach's cultural thought as a second-order-knowledge about art. Take into account that Mañach's cultural thought emerged in a deeply depressed historical context (economically, politically, socially and culturally speaking). It actually takes form within the crisis that led to the Cuban 30's Revolution.

Furthermore, sociology of scientific knowledge also offers possibilities in order to identify the manifestations of Mañach's cultural thought, beyond his chosen literary genre support: the essay. At this point becomes clear that Mañach's cultural thought revealed itself in not only published essays, lectures and papers but also, in the cultural institutions, intellectual initiatives and editorial projects to which Jorge Mañach was linked to.

6. Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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