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Eulalia Piñero Gil

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Black Lives Matter: Police Brutality, Media and Injustice in *The Hate U Give*, *Dear White People*, and *On the Other Side of Freedom*

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the connection between activism and the use of social media in contemporary stories, belonging to different genres. The study scrutinizes two literary works, Angie Thomas' novel *The Hate U Give* (2017), DeRay McKesson's memoir *On the Other Side of Freedom* (2018), and a TV series directed and written by Justin Simien – *Dear White People* (2017). With a methodological approach constituted by works of sociology, history, and cultural studies, this text-focused analysis exposes the intersection of activism, literature, and television. Different genres address the same issues with a common ground: with the support and filter of social media, these stories reveal incidents of police brutality, and episodes traceable to the rise of #BlackLivesMatter. Moreover, the protagonists of these narratives find in activism a way to accomplish personal realization.

All in all, the results of this investigation illustrate how social media are not the primary focus in the narration of moments of crisis or change, but slowly acquire a

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central role in the characters' interactions and in the dynamics connected with forms of protests. McKesson's memoir differs in its personal and specific representation of the use of social networks as an essential instrument for activism in the twenty-first century.

Key Words: Activism; Black Lives Matter; police brutality; social media.

In doing that, this study is focused on the analysis of three primary sources: the novel *The Hate U Give*, the memoir *On the Other Side of Freedom*, and the TV series *Dear White People*.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the #BlackLivesMatter movement has influenced and changed many narratives and the way in which media portray activism and forms of protests. This paper aims to scrutinize the connection between activism, literature, and television with the purpose of exposing the ways in which different genres and media, such as literature and television, novels, and memoirs, address and represent social issues connected with racial discrimination, and the dynamics behind protest movements. In doing that, this study is focused on the analysis of three primary sources: the novel *The Hate U Give*, the memoir *On the Other Side of Freedom*, and the TV series *Dear White People*; and also examines how social media are an essential part of the characters' development, and their personal realization.

In *The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas narrates the struggles of a young African American student. In this story, the role of media is essential in leading the protagonist to her future as an activist. In investigating the novel's main themes, this essay points out how contemporary television and social networks discuss activism, cases of police brutality, and racism.

In *Dear White People*, the protagonist Samantha White uses a radio podcast as an instrument of social discussion to share her critical perspective of discrimination inside Winchester University. The scrutiny explores how the characters are affected by an incident in which the campus police are involved, and highlights how this Netflix TV series is commenting on contemporary American race relations.

With *On the Other Side of Freedom*, the civil rights activist and Twitter celebrity, DeRay McKesson, creates a memoir in which he explores the complicated reality of Black people in contemporary America. In his personal storytelling, he illustrates the relevant role of new social media.

The methodological approach through which the analysis is structured consists of a close reading of the primary sources with the support of critical, historical, and political studies such as *The Making of Black Lives Matter, Why Are All Black Students Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*, and articles by literary critics and scholars such as Bernard Beck, Vincenzo Bavaro, and Jay Shelat.

In *Dear White People*, the protagonist Samantha White uses a radio podcast as an instrument of social discussion to share her critical perspective of discrimination inside Winchester University. [...] *With On the Other Side of Freedom,* the civil rights activist and Twitter celebrity, DeRay McKesson, creates a memoir in which he explores the complicated reality of Black people in contemporary America.

Indeed, in examining how these stories represent racist incidents and forms of protest, this study aims to compare how the TV show *Dear White People*, Thomas' *The Hate U Give,* and the memoir *On the Other Side of Freedom* present protagonists are all activists, and victims of social injustices and they respond to stressful circumstances with the use of different media: a radio program, TV, and social networks. They are set in the same period, the early and late 2000s.

Besides the aforementioned relevant role of online forms of communication in all these narratives, the choice of Thomas's novel, McKesson's memoir, and Simien's TV series highlights how embracing the civil struggle can lead to a personal realization.

1. A STUDY OF POLICE BRUTALITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSE

To have a better understanding of the fictional representation of these themes, we have to be grounded in the reality of police brutality of the latest decades. The starting point of the investigation centers on the numbers concerning police violence that have been reported. In his book *When Police Kill*, Professor Franklin E. Zimring presents a statistical study, the RTI analysis of the number of police killings between 2003 and 2011. A closer look at the data indicates that it is possible to create an overview by adding a fundamental element: a lot of legal intervention killings in the two decades before 2000 were not considered in the official Vital Statistics reports (26).

> Studies by Colin Loftin and his associates demonstrated that the totals for legal intervention killings were consistently lower in the years of 1976-1998 than the volume of killings reported by the FBI(...) They estimate that a total of 7,427 killings actually occurred during the period (2003-2011), an average of 929 each year when the aggregate is divided by eight years covered. (27)

The data gathered by the case study developed by Zimring and Loftin also reveal how, in the time frame of thirty years, the situation has not changed for the better. Indeed, the volume of people killed by legal interventions is exorbitant, and especially in the case of black people, Zimring clarifies that in 1,100 killings, the death rates for African Americans and Native Americans were incredibly more massive than the white population.

In *On the Other Side of Freedom*, McKesson discusses aspects of these sets of findings, and he praises and illustrates the work of the collective database of killings by police, mappingpolice.com. He explains that "mapping police violence sought to build on the work of Fatal Encounters and Killed by Police, the two major databases on police violence that attempted to do what the government could, but seemed not to want to, do. They pioneered a methodology for finding cases online without having to go through the police department themselves" (51). Indeed, the Mapping Police Violence website includes details and a clear overview of the contemporary situation: on 1,111 known police killings in 2013, 1,059 killings in 2014, 1,103 killings in 2015, 1,071 killings in 2016, 1,095 killings in 2017, 1,143 killings in 2018 and 1,099 killings in 2019, ninety-five percent

of the killings in their database occurred while a police officer was acting in a law enforcement capacity, black people were 25% of those killed, despite being only 13% of the population, and that there were only twenty-three days in 2018 where police did not kill someone. In line with their analysis, Black people are three times more likely to be killed by police than white people.

The movement #BlackLivesMatter has gained traction in social media and the cultural discourse, especially after the Ferguson unrest and all the other protests that have been arising in the last decade. With the change of media and the rise of social networks, #BLM is a movement that started in 2013 as a hashtag, #BlackLivesMatter, on Twitter. Patrisse Cullers originated this online conversation in response to outrage amongst the black community caused by Trayvon Martin's death. Garza created a Facebook post, and then along with Opal Tometi, the three decided to set up social media accounts for the movement, also making their presence tangible in the offline community, by organizing a march. Their presence on the streets, along with a large number of people rioting, led to the use of this slogan by politicians.

Trayvon was a seventeen-year-old African American teenager, and George Zimmerman shot him in Sanford in Florida, causing his tragic death. Zimmerman was the neighborhood watch coordinator, and he claimed that he acted in self-defense. He had not been arrested or charged.

The movement's manifesto illustrates that their purpose is to fight for all the victims of social crimes, police misconduct, or direct episodes of racism that were ignored by society and by the appropriate authorities. Furthermore, on the movement's website, founders declare that this "is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' humanity, our contributions to society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression."[1] In his *The Making of Black Lives Matter*, Christopher J. Lebron points out that the essential common factor in all these African Americans' police-related killings, is that in almost every case, the tragedy seemed unnecessary, in each case, it is clear that another resolution was possible (96). In examining its impact, it is relevant to emphasize how Black Lives Matter wants to do more than correct for a deep history of oppression, and their primary aim is to create a community based on the values of resilience and resistance.

Black Lives Matter has caught the attention of generations of activists and has set in motion a popular mobilization in reaching a wide group of people. As Amanda D. Clark argues in "Black Lives Matter: (Re)Framing the Next Wave of Black Liberation," the movement's use of social media amplified its message: "BLM has been a significant factor in drawing attention to Black identity in the United States and mobilizing action against police brutality through social media platforms" (142). In his memoir, McKesson emphasizes the relevance of social media in the change that protesters attend: "In uncertain terms, Twitter saved our lives" (155). The salvific role of a platform derives from an increasing sense of frustration and hopelessness caused by these recurring injustices. Inevitably, there are also significant problems due to controversies and contentions among users. In her analysis, Barbara Ransby draws attention to the controversies

[1] https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/what-we-believe/

emerging on social networks: "While Twitter and Facebook have been tools for movement building, they have also been sites for some nasty exchanges, for accusations, for name-calling, and for shaming" (102).

In this complicated social situation, how Thomas's and Simien's stories, along with McKesson's memoir, depict activism and the presence of social media in this discourse? These three narratives represent the consequences of police brutality and institutionalized racism on the lives of their Black protagonists, and at the same time, with the filter of social media, how activism is crucial in their response.

2. *THE HATE U GIVE:* A BILDUNGSROMAN OF A YOUNG ACTIVIST

Firstly, this paper examines Angie Thomas' novel, *The Hate U Give*. The story focuses on a teenager, Starr Carter, and her path towards activism after she experiences the traumatic loss of her best friend, Khalil, who is an innocent victim of a police shooting that happens in front of the protagonist's eyes. The novel is a bildungsroman set in the 2010s, but it differs from the canonical tropes of the coming-of-age journey, in order to expose the protagonist's experience with institutionalized racism in today's America. *The Hate U Give* also represents how Starr, who has lost any trace of naïveté in her early childhood, gets to her personal realization through activism. Starr's losses are many: Khalil and her best friend Natasha were shot, and she is a witness to these tragic events. As a consequence of all the violence, the acronym THUG acquires an exceptional value for both Khalil and Starr, as it hints at all the suffering that African American teenagers, like them, are enduring. It also refers to a broken system, which Starr gradually gets to know:

> The Hate U Give Little Infants Fucks Everybody [...] Khalil said it's about what society feeds us as youth and how it comes back and bites them later. When the Khalils get arrested for selling drugs, they either spend most of their life in prison, another billion-dollar industry or they have a hard time getting a real job and probably start selling drugs again. That's the hate they're giving us, baby, a system designed against us. That's Thug Life. (2017:167-169)

At its core, this narrative has the process of circulation of hatred and the consequences of this phenomenon on Starr's identity. Thomas portrays a character who lives in a dual dimension. Indeed, Starr feels that she has gained self-confidence within a white community by creating an *alter-ego*, and at the same time, she feels a sense of racial anxiety in dividing her life between two groups of people, her Black family, and her white classmates.

Angie Thomas uses the teenager's point of view to discuss and criticize social dynamics that constitute phenomenons of discrimination. As the scholar Jay Shelat highlights, "Thomas confronts the racist institutions that determine color lines and implements specifically black cultural symbols and capital to serve as foils to the racist ideologies and hierarchies at the heart of Starr's community"(70). Her coming-of-age journey as a young African-American is filtered through traditional and new media, which affect her self-discovery throughout the story.

Indeed, among the other social networks, Twitter helps Starr to have a more consistent awareness of her friends' hypocrisy and the several racist incidents happening in her country. Instead, the news affects her privacy and exposes Starr's past. In the first part of the novel, the media are an obstacle in her attempt to live a normal life. They contribute to the aforementioned circulation of hatred, from which Starr must find a way to escape. Thomas represents the protagonist's response to the difficulties created by internal and societal turmoils, and consequently, creates an outlook of the teenagers' problems in overcoming violent systems. Discussing how young adult fiction, like *The Hate U Give*, explores racism and discrimination with an unconventional lens, the scholar Zara Rix explains that "the female narrators push the stories toward nuanced depictions of multiple types of violence, both systemic and personal" (53).

The prominent role of social networks in *The Hate U Give* emerges in connection with the psychological forms of violence, she is enduring and indicates to the protagonist a possible escape: activism. In the first part of the novel, the fictional representation of the use of social media as an instrument of aggregation and solidarity clearly reflects the #blacklivesmatter, and from a narrative point of view, it exposes Starr's doubts about her classmates who are showing solidarity. In her high school, students are aware of these episodes of racism, but they stage a demonstration that is utterly inauthentic in the protagonist's point of view. As Shelat highlights, Starr is associated with a social cause: "To her white classmates he's an easy hashtag and a pretext to get out of class on a drummed-up protest; her white best friend's clueless at best response to the situation makes Starr realize that she's been deliberately letting some offensive behavior slide" (72). The protagonist does not give credit to this form of support because she recognizes how privileged classmates do not understand the gravity of these issues. The discussion of racism on social media becomes a way to create or maintain a specific appearance or ideology, not the real manifestation of a possible change. Social networks are supporting Starr's enlightenment about her status within the two communities she belongs to. In the second part of the novel, Twitter and Facebook change the protagonist's attitude towards the difficulties she struggles with: social networks become instruments of support in her journey towards activism.

The question of authenticity can also be considered as an autobiographical element projected within the novel. As an African American teenager, Starr feels a sense of alienation and isolation from her friends and classmates. As a consequence of this condition, she is ready to embrace stereotypes in order not to feel this burdensome label. In connection with Toni Morrison's remarks[2] about the decision to write for Black readers, Angie Thomas explains how she was writing white characters instead of creating authentic African Americans teenagers: "When I first started writing in that program, I was writing white characters. I was whitewashing my own stories. It wasn't until I started writing "*The Hate U Give*" short story that I realized, wow, I could use my art as my activism."[3] Thomas wants her fiction to work as a source of creative activism.

[2] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/apr/25/toni-morrison-books-interview-god-help-the-child

[3] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/17/movies/microaggressions-hate-u-give.html

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In her book *Why Are All Black Students Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, the psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum illustrates what the psychological mechanisms that guide Black students in high schools are: in a situation of stress, young African Americans look for support in other black students but in doing that, they also "are operating with very limited definitions of what means to be Black, based largely on cultural stereotypes." (62) These stereotypes are also contributing to the creation of discrimination and the racial divide between students. The start of Starr's empowerment and self-realization is the loss of her best friend, which ultimately pushes her to become an active member of the online protest movement. *The Hate U Give*'s core is constituted by its representation of contemporary forms of protests, but its origins as well derive from Angie Thomas' will to contribute to the general discussion around police brutality.

Indeed, in various interviews, Angie Thomas has stated that her primary inspiration was the shooting death of Oscar Grant III, who was killed by a white transit police officer in 2009. Oscar was a twenty-two-year-old African American young man who died in the early morning of New Year's Day 2009. He was unarmed and was forced to lie face down on the platform. Johannes Mehserle was the police officer who shot him in the back. Everything was captured on cell phone cameras, and the images went viral. Regarding this tragedy, Angie Thomas states to Robert Ito from the New York Times: "many of Thomas' classmates either weren't aware of the shooting, or didn't care about it, or wrote it off. They were like, 'Well, maybe he deserved it. He was an ex-con, why are people so upset' I was so angry."[4] In her decision to write this story, Thomas wanted to attempt to advocate the rights of young African Americans, often not protected by the system of justice. *The Hate U Give* exposes the writer's ideology but also represents how social media can serve as a platform in which young African American students can approach activism and embrace it. With this young narrator, the novel exposes a nuanced view of coming to terms with racism, and with the fight against it.

3. *DEAR WHITE PEOPLE*'S POINT OF VIEW ON CAMPUS POLICE

In its representation of the conjunction between contemporary activism and African American identity, Justin Simien's TV Series, *Dear White People*, also addresses amongst the many, the same poignant issues: systemic racism and police brutality. The TV series explores these socially relevant issues with the specific use of radio programs as the main instrument to convey social messages.

The story is set at Winchester University, and one of the main protagonists is Samantha White. With her witty radio show, she tries to raise awareness amongst students about the social issues still at play at their university. The program is often used as an instrument of social critique, but it is not the only medium that acquires an important value. All the students are discussing and arguing on Twitter, and their use of this social network exposes the hypocrisy and secrecy that characterize the right-wing sympathizers.

[4] Ibidem.

Moreover, as in the case of *The Hate U Give*, social media are employed to facilitate moments of aggregation and discussion concerning forms of protest. All the battles, wins, losses are part of an online conversation that affects characters' development. In "Chapter V," there is a critical police incident: the campus officers arrive at a campus party and identify Reggie as a source of violence. They ask for his ID, but he replies, "Guck these pigs, man." A few seconds later, a cop pulls out his gun and points it at him. Reggie is harmless, and a false move could possibly end his life. This crucial moment changes all the characters. As in *The Hate U Give, Dear White People* focuses on the relevance and the importance of creating a social debate about relevant injustices in educational spaces. The creator Justin Simien was talking about "Chapter V" months before its release. It was considered a pivotal episode. In an interview with *Mashable*, he declares, "It's a turning-point episode. The show is I think very lighthearted, and then we get to Episode 5."[5] Barry Jenkins directs the episode, and the *mise-en-scène* highlights the gravity of the moment: the camera cuts to Reggie's fear and then switches on the shock and tears of his friends. They are all aware that he could have died at that party, and as a black man in adverse circumstances, he is utterly helpless. This specific set of events is an explicit reminder to the viewer of many recent episodes in which African American citizens were killed. In his article "Taking Back One's Narrative," Vincenzo Bavaro illustrates that Reggie's sense of helplessness is a reflection of every day's episodes of discrimination within American campuses: "the tangible perception that to some officers a black life "does not matter," the belief that had Reggie been a white student he would never have elicited the drawing of a gun by the officer, is clearly reminiscent of the various smartphone-videos recording police brutality." (32-33)

It is essential to analyze what the consequences of this event are: Reggie starts to question his activism, and also, his identity. As Simien states: "Every black person, every person of color is at an intersection, cause no one's just their race."[6] The aftermath of this situation exposes the connection of the two main aspects that this scrutiny investigates: Reggie and Sam are affected by rage and terror, and they start questioning the value of activism and the echo of their presence on social networks. Simien describes Reggie living "at certain intersections that make his life difficult and make it harder for him to know who he is, and harder for him to know what identity to put forward."[7] His personal realization is dismantled: he is in a difficult state of disillusionment.

Sam lives in the same limbo, but she decides to give voice to her feelings and ideals through the radio show, which is a liberating instrument of social critique. Using Baldwin's quote that opens episode five, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed if it is not faced," Sam has a fervent need to change the social dimension in which she lives.[8] The importance of her radio shows, or of her tweets and posts, which are central in season two, highlights how characters try to build a change by sharing their message and creating any form of response.

[5] https://mashable.com/2017/05/01/dear-white-people-episode-5/?europe=true
[6] Ibidem.
[7] Ibidem.
[8] http://theculture.forharriet.com/2014/03/revolutionary-hope-conversation-between.html

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Our analysis of this TV Series can also decipher what the long-term consequences of the characters' abuse of social media are. Especially during the first season finale, in which a backlash explodes, Sam is absorbed by the situation, and the viewer realizes how her role as a leading activist and her online presence are dismantling her life. In describing the dialogue between Samantha and Joelle just after the march on campus, which is organized to fight against the abuse of power by campus police, Bavaro argues that the wave of hate speech and threats to Samantha is changing her personally: "Joelle realizes that Sam has lost herself in the reaction to this backlash and has in turn fallen into a state of silence, overwhelmed by the racist non-sense and by a bundle of accusations entangled in various types of logical flaws and prejudices." (34) Samantha is at a crossroads, and she is staying in an in-between state because social networks opened up a harsher and more difficult reality that clashes with her expectations and her previous view.

In losing herself, Samantha lives in an academic environment characterized by divisions, and she ends up realizing how this polarization affected her identity as an activist. Discussing Simien's film by the same name, Bernard Beck explains the complex mechanisms that set in motion this system: "the cultures created by social divisions reinforce the rules that preserve those divisions. [...] subcultures used by the divided groups also have a great deal of content about the other divisions and their members. They also have a great deal of content about the entire system of divisions and what justifies it." (141) At the end of season one, Samantha is finally aware of the complexity of American race relations present in her college.

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All in all, Reggie's major incident exemplifies the representation of oppression caused by hidden forms of institutional and structural racism at Winchester university. The characters are forced to react, but also decide how to develop their own future as activists, consciously being in the constant social media's spotlight of the whole community of students. To expose a clear view of the ambiguities and the difficulties that the protagonists have to endure, *Dear White People* do not represent activism without problematizing some aspects of it. As mentioned by Bavaro, "with all its nuances, ambiguities, and unanswered questions, this is certainly not a simple piece of activist propaganda: the big issues coexist and collide with the intimate ones, the personal and the political are intertwined." (34)

Online and offline, *Dear White People*'s protagonists-protesters struggle with inequality and discrimination in college, and their problems are a direct consequence of hidden forces that preserve institutional racism.

4. *ON THE OTHER SIDE OF FREEDOM*: A MEMOIR BASED ON SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM

McKesson's *On The Other Side of Freedom* is a memoir that explores the amplification of activism through social media. After being an active member of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, McKesson's activity on Twitter was essential for getting social recognition. McKesson illustrates how Twitter played a significant role in interrupting the media silence about Ferguson and Missouri: "If it were not for Twitter, the elected leaders in Ferguson and Missouri would have tried to convince you that we did not exist, that there were not thousands of us in the street night after night, refusing to be silent." (2018a: 155) He was working in a school administration when in 2014, he decided to join a protest against police brutality in Ferguson and won national prominence. He used social media to share his four hundred days of being "pepper sprayed, smoked bombed and shot at with rubber bullets." (40) This last part of this analysis wants to conclude with this "technology-powered protest": McKesson is the last step in our exploration of protest movements and social media.[9]

In McKesson's case, social media are essential in his personal realization as a protester: with his exposure, he accomplished many important social objectives. In discussing how he got to become a national leader of civil rights, McKesson illustrates how rapidly things changed because of the use of Twitter: "I had to figure out how to tell the story of what was happening to us because it was happening so quickly. It was the strength of Twitter that helped me find the words in a way that made sense, and the book was a recognition that I just needed more space to tell these stories." (45) Mckesson uses his memories and his personal battles as mirrors of society. With his insights into social justice, he explores how movements are deeply affected by social networks, because these platforms amplify engagement and mobilize marginalized or unaware people.

In his view, Twitter undeniably changed the conversation about racial justice in the country: "In our generation, it was the first time that we saw this type of activism on the streets that was widespread and caught on. There were certainly other demonstrations across the country that happened way before the death of Mike Brown, but this one was the phenomenon."[10] This memoir is also a reflection on identity, considering how protest formed Mckesson's determination in his pursuit of hope, freedom, and justice. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has stated about McKesson's non-fiction work, this book reveals "the mind and motivations of a young man who has risen to the fore of millennial activism." (1) His motivation and belief are the guiding lines of this narrative, along with the presence of online media.

The increasing support of technology has created a change in the protesters' motivation. As McKesson argues, "Technology lined up at the time. The police were so wild in a way that was so concentrated. The community was ready to engage. The media was present. [...] It changed the country. It opened up a wave of activism across a host of areas and focused citizens in a way that

[9] https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/deray-mckesson/on-the-other-side-of-freedom/

[10] https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/dec/30/deray-mckesson-black-lives-matter-interview

is truly special." The contemporary technological changes have given rise to new forms of activism, but also a new consciousness and realization among American people.

With his memoir, McKesson has been able to give his readers an insight into what means to be an activist and what the consequences of his dedication are. Indeed, in discussing race and violence in America, McKesson also analyzes the moment in which BLM emerged: "We took the streets as a matter of life and death. [...] In each generation, there is a moment when young and old, inspired and disillusioned, come together around a shared hope, imagine the world as it can be, and have the opportunity to bring that world into existence. Our moment is now."(123) Without fictional elements, *On the Other Side of Freedom* fully explores the history and implications of contemporary activism and its connection with social media, which are central. To have precise data concerning the prominence of the online participation, with "Social Media Participation in an Activist Movement," a group of scholars examined the connection between the Black Lives Matter movement ant Twitter, getting to the conclusion that:

> Over 28M Twitter posts show continued participation in the conversation around this movement. [...]Another important finding of our work is that activism on social media predicted future protests and demonstrations that commenced on the streets throughout the country. [...] we observed BLM participation on social media to indicate an emergent collective identity. (100-101)

By analyzing how the media can influence, activate, or create strong fervency in relation to activism and protests, this paper exposes the inextricable link between Twitter, forms of protests, and activists. *The Hate U Give, Dear White People, and The Other Side of Freedom* all convey how powerful the connection between social media and the #BlackLivesMatter can be, and consequently, how this union becomes part of a discussion about Black identity and contemporary forms of racism in the United States.

In the specific, it is essential to highlight how, in the fictional cases, the protagonists seem to find solace not on social media, but on personal realization and expression. The conjunction between activism, social media in these three cases of study propounds the view that the incredible amount of social pressure, deriving from both discrimination and need of being recognized as a member of a community, leads to alienation. Starr, Sam, and Reggie are not consoled by external agents; instead, they overcome the trauma by rediscovering their activism and also by becoming aware of the hidden forces that guide systemic racism. These key components help to have a more accurate view of the presence and role played by activism in African American students' contemporary fiction. This study advances the claim that social media, when employed in order to aggregate a large group of people for a cause, have the power to create solidarity and mobilize a large group of people. Still, they also can affect one's own personality and amplify hate speech and personal attacks. Their presence in these three narratives set in motion a series of changes, moments of turmoil, and reflection, but at the core remains a nuanced vision of institutional racism and the consequences that this phenomenon has on young African Americans.

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Continuity through Renewal: John Dewey, the International Institute in Spain, and Resisting the Assault on the Humanities

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The International Institute
in Spain

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ABSTRACT

This paper marks the relation between humanities education and democracy as one of mutual necessity, since the pragmatic value of each is dependent on the other to be recognizable and realizable. Such an understanding is drawn from the ideas of the American philosopher and educator John Dewey. Dewey's system clearly reveals the nature of the stakes of the assault on the humanities; it also indicates the educational measures democratic societies should take in response. By instantiating the "conjoint communicated experience" of democracy in a public, shared space in which differences are respected, human meanings are explored, and the expansion of knowledge and experience is valued as an end in itself, the humanities classroom emerges as a site of social renewal, as well as one of resistance to illiberalism. In order to present such a site in a manner befitting Dewey's pragmatism, a lesser-known, local example of the value of humanities education is examined in this paper: that of the International Institute in Spain, located in Madrid. Beginning with its founding as a school for girls by Boston missionaries in 1892, and through its role at the center of

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a network of institutions invested in progressive educational reform in Spain during the pre-civil war period, IIE stands as a testament to the continuity through renewal that defines both liberal democracy and humanities education.

Key Words: Humanities; John Dewey; democracy; education; International Institute in Spain; Institución Libre de Enseñanza; multiculturalism; progressivism.

A 2013 article published by the *New York Times* entitled "Humanities Studies Under Strain Around the Globe" paints a bleak picture for those invested in the liberal arts:

> In the global marketplace of higher education, the humanities are increasingly threatened by decreased funding and political attacks. Financing for humanities research in the United States has fallen steadily since 2009, and in 2011 was less than half of one percent of the amount dedicated to science and engineering research and development. This trend is echoed globally: According to a report in Research Trends magazine, by Gali Halevi and Judit Bar-Ilan, international arts and humanities funding ha been in constant decline since 2009. (Delany)

The article goes on to describe the logic employed by some of those responsible for these funding cuts by quoting the official language of their budget recommendations. Rick Scott, Governor of the state of Florida, proposed that "students majoring in liberal arts and social science subjects should pay higher tuition fees, arguing they were 'nonstrategic disciplines'." In its own report regarding the state of the humanities released in 2013, quoted in the article, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences calls for humanities researchers and practitioners to be more vocal in defending their work, and more assertive in defining its value:

> At a time when economic anxiety is driving the public toward a narrow concept of education focused on short-term payoffs, it is imperative that colleges, universities, and their supporters make a clear and convincing case for the value of liberal arts education. (Delany)

The humanities, according to its critics, are useless. But who determines their utility? According to what system of value are they being judged? And what, if anything, is different about the stakes of the current debate? After all, Jack Kaminsky, writing in 1956, called attention to a similar value system at work in the academy:

> Science is what a man *must* have if he is to better himself; art is what a man may have if he has the time. The arts, therefore, are to be regarded as no more than simple amusements that men might turn to in their spare moments. Science is necessary; art is contingent. (66)

While the market is not generous with humanists, the current assault on the humanities, their devaluation in both material and moral terms, is not simply a product of brute economic forces, or of an entrenched utilitarianism. Rather, it is another front in a larger war, not against the humanities in particular, but against liberal humanism in general. Though it might at first seem as though the

Liberal democratic principles like equality, empathy, and freedom are only recognized and deemed valuable from a humanistic perspective. Without the humanities, without humanists, democracy itself has no defenders.

conversation surrounding this topic has changed little over the past half-century, the truth is that reality has finally overtaken hyperbole. Or, to put it another way: a conversation that was once largely academic is so no longer.

The value of the humanities in a social sense has been made painfully evident in recent years, as the collective consensus by which the veracity of shared experience is confirmed has been shaken. The "post-truth," "fake news" era is, if nothing else, a testament to the utility of critical interpretative and communicative skills, which form the foundation of humanities education. But it is also a testament to the power of the presuppositions that undergird those skills and the civic actions they are expected to guide, as well as to the need to affirm those presuppositions explicitly, as valuable in and of themselves. Liberal democratic principles like equality, empathy, and freedom are only recognized and deemed valuable from a humanistic perspective. Without the humanities, without humanists, democracy itself has no defenders.

This paper marks the relation between humanities education and democracy as one of mutual necessity, since the pragmatic value of each is dependent on the other to be recognizable and realizable. Such an understanding is drawn from the ideas of the American philosopher and educator John Dewey, in particular those expressed in *Democracy and Education*. Dewey's system clearly reveals the nature of the stakes of this assault; it also indicates the educational measures democratic societies should take in response. By instantiating the "conjoint communicated experience" of democracy in a public, shared space in which differences are respected, human meanings are explored, and the expansion of knowledge and experience is valued as an end in itself, the humanities classroom emerges as a site of social renewal, as well as one of resistance to illiberalism. In order to present such a site in a manner befitting Dewey's pragmatism, a lesser-known example of the value of humanities education will be presented: that of the International Institute in Spain, located in Madrid. Beginning with its founding as a school for girls by Boston missionaries in 1892, through its role at the center of a network of institutions invested in progressive educational reform in Spain during the pre-civil war period, and continuing on to its present-day iteration as a site for transnational learning and public encounters with North American culture, IIE stands as a testament to the continuity through renewal that defines both liberal democracy and humanities education.

For Dewey, a constructive, communicative exchange between individuals from different backgrounds, all of them invested in a common project that exceeds their own self-interest, is the primary condition for making democracy manifest. As Ignacio Pérez-Ibáñez notes in his article "Dewey's Thoughts on Social Change," in *Democracy and Education* Dewey makes the case that "a democracy is a progressive society that facilitates communication, co-operation, and respect between people of different groups" (Pérez-Ibáñez 25). The ability of individuals and groups to overcome differences and navigate towards shared objectives is, according to Dewey, inculcated to a significant degree in the classroom, where these behaviors are modeled and their meanings are explicated. The recognition of meaning is a key point in Dewey's philosophy, since without some awareness of the reason these subjects are taught in the first place a student's education is

degraded to simple imitation, to rote memorization without any discernible objective. For Dewey, art and literature provide that necessary communicative meaning, since they:

> [D]o more than all else to determine the current direction of ideas and endeavors in the community. They supply the meanings in terms of which life is judged, esteemed, and criticized. For an outside spectator, they supply material for a critical evaluation of the life led by that community. (Experience and Nature 204)

Meaning and meaning creation are for Dewey wholly humanistic endeavors. Humanities education, then, can be understood as learning practices that synthesize and communicate the critical appreciation of human meaning at both a cultural and trans-cultural level with democratic norms of interaction, as group identities are registered, criticized, and compared. The benefit of the guided recognition and appreciation of human achievement from within one's group, coupled with a simultaneous fostering of respect and identification with the achievements and meanings generated by other groups, is the instantiation of Dewey's democratic ideal, as expressed in *Democracy and Education*:

> A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. (91)

For most of the 20th century, the democratic habits instantiated in humanities education in progressive schools in the United States subsequently informed a lifetime of public community engagement afterwards. However, the decline of American civic life in the latter half of the 20th century, coupled with the rise of the Internet and the digital enclaves it has fostered, has severely weakened our ability to create "our sense of the 'public'-the space where we address the problems that transcend our niches and narrow self-interests"; that is to say, the conditions for a functioning democracy (Pariser 17).

The above quote is taken from Eli Pariser's *The Filter Bubble* (2011), which argues that one of the primary social impacts of the Internet has been to deplete the "bridging capital" necessary to move between enclaves and overcome individual differences in the interest of common cause. The term "bridging capital " comes from Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000), a seminal sociological work that diagnoses the disintegration of American social structures from the 1960s to the turn of the century. Taken together, these two analyses of contemporary American society, both of which cite Dewey's influence extensively, reveal breakdowns in its communal foundation that retroactively prove the necessity of those principles proposed in *Democracy and Education* more than one hundred years ago. As Dewey's work claims, in order to repair that foundation we must recognize the heterogeneous and multicultural humanities teaching environment as the primary institutional force capable of ensuring that liberal democratic values are enacted and continually renewed.

Bowling Alone interrogates the notion of social capital, generally understood to refer to the value of social networks, and seeks to add nuance to its usage. Putnam distinguishes between bonding (or exclusive) capital and bridging (or inclusive) capital:

> Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups. Examples of bonding social capital include ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women's reading groups, and fashionable country clubs. Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages. Examples of bridging social capital include the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations. (22)

Both bonding and bridging social capital are crucial resources in the development of a functioning participatory democracy, as Putnam makes clear. In order to develop and maintain civic engagement, civic platforms (churches, voluntary associations, etc.) for engagement must exist. Putnam quotes Dewey in support of this idea: "Fraternity, liberty and equality isolated from communal life are hopeless abstractions… Democracy must begin at home, and its home is the neighborly community" (337). *Bowling Alone* charts the fragmentation of this "neighborly community" through the erosion of social capital, and locates the value of bridging capital at the foundational level of democracy:

> Where people know one another, interact with one another each week at choir practice or sports matches, and trust one another to behave honorably, they have a model and a moral foundation upon which to base further cooperative enterprises. (346)

While this common "moral foundation" is strengthened and stabilized through its employment via participatory democracy, it is continually renewed over the course of the individual's educational development, both in and out of the classroom, throughout a lifetime.

As Putnam's work makes abundantly clear, the depletion of America's social capital was an entrenched reality well before the Internet rose to prominence. However, the arrival of the digital age has accelerated the process, and added dimensions to its outcomes that few foresaw. Pariser evokes "bridging capital" in particular in his text in order to describe the social costs of, not simply Internet culture, but the structures that manage and control user interface online:

> The basic code at the heart of the new Internet is pretty simple. The new generation of Internet filters looks at things you seem to like-the actual things you've done, or the things people like you like-and tries to extrapolate. They are prediction engines, constantly creating and finding a theory of who you are and what you'll do and want next. Together, these engines create a unique universe of information for each of us-what I've come to call a filter bubble-which fundamentally alters the way we encounter ideas and information. (9)

Pariser's "filter bubble" is, crucially, a product of anticipatory marketing that guides interface, and is not exclusively of the Internet user's choosing. However, the digital tools that dictate interface are predicated on a psychological reality: given a choice between two social groups, an individual will be drawn to associate with that group whose identity and preferences mirror their own. This homophily is exponentially increased online, where users have the freedom to pursue niche

interests and develop relationships within subgroups in a virtual space that is neither fully public nor fully private. As Pariser points out, the initial hope for the Internet was that it would amplify, rather than drain, our bridging capital, and make a globalized world more neighborly:

> But that's not what's happening. Our virtual next-door neighbors look more and more like our real-world neighbors, and our real-world neighbors look more and more like us. We're getting a lot of bonding but very little bridging. [...] In a personalized world, important but complex or unpleasant issues [...] are less likely to come to our attention at all. As a consumer, it's hard to argue with blotting out the irrelevant and unlikeable. But what is good for consumers is not necessarily good for citizens. What I seem to like may not be what I actually want, let alone what I need to know to be an informed member of my community or country. (17-18)

The fact that information flow itself has been weaponized in attacks on democratic institutions in the United States and beyond, and that many of these attacks have been successful to varying degrees, should come as little surprise given the confluence of factors presented here. Atomized individuals have sealed themselves, intentionally or not, within homogenizing filter bubbles that determine their virtual communities. These communities are defined not by how they negotiate difference, but how they accentuate sameness. As such, the spaces between enclaves grow larger, and mutual suspicion and distrust is the result. As consumers of information guided by homophily in their choice of content, these individuals are operating outside of, to quote Dewey, the "conjoint communicated experience" of democracy.

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It would require too great a digression to engage adequately with the facts of the "Fake News" phenomenon and index the political machinations behind it, from all of the relevant perspectives. Simply put, the extreme U.S. political polarization of the past thirty years has been amplified by the proliferation of online news content that is guided by market objectives, rather than liberal democratic ones. The need to generate clicks and user engagement means, to echo Pariser, giving people what they want rather than what they need from a civic perspective. This directive has led to a profound divergence in the perception of political reality, as the partisan filter bubbles shape truths rather than the other way around. Truth itself has become a product of intra-bubble consensus. Those truths that depart from the narrative consensus of one's respective bubble are marked as "fake news," and are attacked as such. This "post-truth" discourse is perceived

nearly uniformly (at least by humanists) as an existential threat to both liberal and humanistic values. For a constellation of disciplines committed to pursuing and disseminating truth, the discreditation of that pursuit, or the rejection of its authority or any claim to expertise, certainly qualifies as an open declaration of hostilities.

Humanities education, and education in general, is for Dewey a tool by which society can ensure the proper transfer of knowledge and meaning from one generation to the next. That is to say, it is a manifestation of social survival in an evolutionary sense. The disruption of that transfer, then, is tantamount to social suicide. Dewey's ideas help clarify the stakes in this debate, and to better understand how the current crisis has come to be. His pragmatism also serves to chart a path forward, since it obliges us to answer a simple question: How do we fix the problem for the future? How do we turn back the assault?

A pragmatic question deserves a pragmatic answer, one consistent with its premises. Rather than appeal to transcendent values, in Dewey's system the justification for championing a democratic society is equivalent to the recognition of that society's defining features, which in turn are equivalent to the manner in which such a society's wealth of knowledge is expanded and maintained. The worth of democracy as a social system is based on the fact that such a system allows for different social groups within the system to flourish. The members of those various groups have the freedom to interact, and thereby generate the possibility for more opportunities for stimulating experiences. The openness of this system fosters organic flourishing and growth, at an individual and social level. These ends are intrinsically worthwhile in an evolutionary sense. Democracy then is defined by its consistent transformation and expansion. The growth at the heart of democracy is predicated on education as the means through which knowledge is gained rather than lost:

> And to it, as well as to life in the bare physiological sense, the principle of continuity through renewal applies. [...] Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life. Every one of the constituent elements of a social group, in a modern city as in a savage tribe, is born immature, helpless, without language, beliefs, ideas, or social standards. Each individual, each unit who is the carrier of the life-experience of his group, in time passes away. Yet the life of the group goes on. (Dewey, Democracy and Education 76)

The mission of education is continuity through renewal. This is accomplished thanks to the transfer of knowledge and meaning generated by the humanities. The shared heart of both humanities education and democracy is a commitment to individual and social growth, not for any utilitarian objective, but for its own end as an evolutionary necessity. The value of democracy and humanities education are the same.

Dewey's commitment to educational innovation extended far beyond the written page. As can be inferred from his philosophy, generating lived experience according to the pedagogical principles he articulates is a necessary condition for the coherence of his system. There are three famous examples of Dewey's incursions into hands-on teaching practice directed towards specifically democratic, progressive purposes: Hull House in Chicago, The New School for Social Research in New York, and the University of Chicago Laboratory School. All three of these

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institutions were guided from the start by a commitment to democracy as an ethical ideal, and education as a practical and multi-dimensional way to enact lasting social reform, specifically in combatting inequality, be it economic, racial, or gender-based.

Hull House, which was the US's first settlement house (modeled after Toynbee Hall in London), was founded in 1889 by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr. Dewey served on Hull House's first board of trustees and also taught classes there. Hull House was primarily focused on providing education and recreational facilities for European immigrant women and children. As a settlement house, it housed resident social reformers from predominately middle-class backgrounds who were committed to the idea of shared space and public zones of interaction as a way to foster equality and, by extension, the expansion of democracy's premises. It was particularly driven to promote and expand gender equality, and many of its residents became notable champions of the suffragette movement.

In an effort to put forward a pragmatically rigorous answer to the challenge at hand, we will turn now to a real-world example of humanities education in action that is not as widely recognized as the three institutions just mentioned, and examine how it embodies the ideas expressed in *Democracy and Education*. In 1887 Jane Addams, one of the founders of Hull House, visited a small school in San Sebastián, in the north of Spain. Upon touring the school and becoming acquainted with its founders, she remarked: "The school has evoked and at the same time filled a wonderful opportunity in Spain and should have the cooperation of all women interested in the higher education of women" (Mount Holyoke College).

While IIE's genesis predates the publication of *Democracy and Education*, it deserves to be recognized as an embodiment of the educative principles proposed there, perhaps to a greater degree than the institutions already mentioned that were designed by Dewey.

The school Addams visited was The North American School, which in 1892 would be incorporated and renamed the International Institute for Girls in Spain, commonly known as the International Institute (IIE). While IIE's genesis predates the publication of *Democracy and Education*, it deserves to be recognized as an embodiment of the educative principles proposed there, perhaps to a greater degree than the institutions already mentioned that were designed by Dewey. This is because IIE engaged and engages its students still at a trans-national level of interaction, outside of the direct oversight of the state's educational bureaucracy, be it the U.S. or Spain. Even more importantly, the de facto multicultural nature of IIE enhances the dynamics of the liberal humanities classroom envisioned by Dewey. As Leonard J. Wak argues in his article "Rereading *Democracy and Education* Today: John Dewey on Globalization, Multiculturalism, and Democratic Education," the nature of democracy as defined by Dewey, its fundamental drive for

expansion as it incorporates heterogeneous groups within its praxis, necessarily implies that the model of the nation-state will eventually be superseded. This evolution is firmly rooted in education: "The democratic project of humanity must advance beyond the nation-state. But it must first search for educational means conducive to such a transnational democratic order within the existing (national) order" (Wak 30). IIE is, in many ways, a site of enactment of those means, since it operates as a space of shared experience across national, cultural, and institutional boundaries.

William Gulick and his wife, Alice Gordon Gulick, were Protestant missionaries from Boston who came to San Sebastián in 1871, two years after the Spanish constitution of 1869 decriminalized the practice of religions other than Catholicism. The Gulicks were educators as well as missionaries. Alice, a graduate of Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, was committed to providing expanded access to education for Spanish girls, who at the time were severely underserved by the state in that regard. Gulick was a tireless worker and a relentless fundraiser for what was her chief aspiration: the construction of a Mount Holyoke in Madrid, where girls could receive a superior education that included cohabitation, and benefit from the best of America's educational methods, materials, and instructors. The women's college model, most notably represented by the Seven Sisters colleges of the Northeast, heavily guided the pedagogical approach of the Gulicks. As Carmen de Zulueta notes in her book *Misioneras, feministas, educadoras: Historia del Instituto Internacional* (1984), the school in San Sebastián utilized a methodology that was considered quite radical at the time:

> Las estudiantes no se aprenden los textos del curso de memoria, simplemente para pasar el examen, sino que se utiliza la enseñanza práctica en los cursos de ciencias naturales, con el uso del laboratorio o las excursiones al campo para conocer la naturaleza de primera mano. (111)

This kind of experiential learning represented a dramatic departure from orthodox Spanish instruction; the fact that it was being offered to girls made it revolutionary.

The other central force behind the pedagogical practice of the Gulicks' school in San Sebastian was the primary role given to their faith, which they saw as an intrinsic feature of the education they provided. However, in order for the Gulicks to procure the land on which their long-sought-after institution would be built, they had to incorporate it as a secular corporation, since it was illegal for a religious community to own Spanish property. This legal requirement would have a profound impact on the identity of the IIE in the years to come.

Upon the IIE's relocation to the capital, and prior to the completion of what would become known as the Alice Gulick Memorial Hall in 1912, at Miguel Ángel, 8, in Madrid, the Gulicks began a relationship with Institución Libre de Enseñanza, which was formed in 1876 following the Spanish government's curtailing of academic freedom for university professors in 1875. The group, led by Giner de Ríos, Gumersindo de Azcárate, and Manuel Bartolomé Cossío, consisted of academics and instructors who had been marginalized for their refusal to submit to censorship. This organization became the fulcrum for progressive educational reform in Spain over the coming decades, and the International Institute maintained a close collaborative relationship with them throughout this time.

The Institución was from the start greatly sympathetic to the Gulicks' aspirations, and laid the groundwork for a fruitful partnership when the IIE moved to Madrid in 1903 by facilitating the purchase of properties for IIE on Calles Miguel Ángel and Fortuny, only a short walk from the ILE's headquarters on what is now Paseo del General Martínez Campos. The reason for their affinity was a shared commitment to liberal democratic ethics through education:

> Para los institucionistas, defensores de la educación femenina y de la tolerancia religiosa, el Instituto Internacional representaba la realización de un sueño. Nunca habían vivido en España protestantes y católicas bajo un mismo techo y en complete armonía. (173)

The dual ideals of religious and gender equality in education, made manifest in practice through the boarding school model employed by the Gulicks, provided a powerful example for the ILE to follow.

In 1907 the Spanish state, now amenable to forward-thinking pedagogical innovation of the type pioneered by ILE, formed the Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Invesitgaciones Científicas. The Junta was directly inspired and shaped by the disciples of Giner de Ríos and the Institucionistas:

> El propósito de la Junta fue realizer en una escala nacional y con fondos del Estado lo que Giner y la Institución se habían esforzado pos conseguir durante muchos años, dentro de un grupo limitado: la formación total del ser humano. La educación official, memorística y medieval en sus métodos, no la consigue. [...] [L]a Junta siguió la estrategia que en el siglo XIX había seguido la École des Hautes Études de París: "Establecer la investigación fuera de las universidades como el mejor medio para reformarlas". (191)

The impulse to look beyond the pre-existing (and largely sub-standard) Spanish academic structures in search of more fertile ground for educational innovation meant an enhanced role for the IIE in the Junta's reforms, since IIE boasted high-quality facilities, materials, and instructors, all of which were made available in some fashion for Spanish educators interested in improving Spanish education. Most importantly, there was recognition by key figures within the IIE that the progressive initiatives proposed by the Junta would result, if enacted, in a major step forward for Spanish culture and society.

The most noteworthy figure, and the one most crucial to the collaboration that would mark IIE's most socially significant period, was Susan Huntington Vernon, director of the IIE from 1910-1916. It was Huntington who pushed the IIE to accept a more secular identity, one in harmony with its legal status. And it was Huntington who vociferously endorsed and argued for a partnership with the Junta, in order to amplify IIE's impact on Spanish educational policy, alleviate budget concerns, and make manifest the spirit of international cooperation that existed in the West during the period surrounding the First World War. This relationship was instrumental in the formation of two institutions whose legacies have had long-lasting effects on Spanish society: the Residencia de Señoritas, formed in 1915, and the Instituto-Escuela, formed in 1918. The Residencia de Señoritas was formed five years after the Residencia de Estudiantes in 1910, another initiative of the Junta. Both were modeled on the British colleges Oxford and Cambridge; both had tremendous success in fomenting the expansion of higher education to a broad section

of Spanish society. The Residencia de Señoritas, directed by María de Maetzu, a former instructor at IIE, rented its facilities from the International Institute, and many of its instructors and students moved between the two institutions. The same was true for the Instituto-Escuela, which was also housed on IIE grounds.

Both the Residencia de Señoritas and the Instituto-Escuela were examples of applied experimentation in both social and educational policy. The Residencia, and the Grupo de Niñas formed in 1918 as its secondary school, had a profound impact on female education in Spain, as girls received access, thanks in large part to the IIE, to facilities like laboratories and libraries, materials, and instructors, all of which had previously been denied to them. The Instituto-Escuela was created in 1918 to absorb both the Grupo de Niñas as well as the Grupo de Niños, the corresponding school for the Residencia de Estudiantes. The Instituto-Escuela was co-educational, and highly experimental in its methodologies: there were no textbooks, no exams, and no grades of any kind. The students were required to compose reaction essays to the lessons taught in their notebooks, and participated in a wide array of practical, hands-on learning, including laboratory work and map-making. There was a heavy component of art instruction, with emphasis given to its execution rather than its contemplation, as well as folk music appreciation and sport. Finally, students were sent on many diverse field trips throughout Spain, for varying lengths of time.

The Residencia de Señoritas and the Instituto-Escuela, both invested in promoting student habitation as a fundamentally important part of the educational experience, derived a great deal of inspiration from the IIE. In the context of this paper, it must be emphasized that the IIE's dedication to cohabitation for girls of different nationalities and faiths represented a titanic achievement in education in Spain. The space allocated for learning extended beyond the classroom to include the entire field of experience, all of which was recognized as part of a student's development.

The shift in IIE's identity from a Protestant, American girls boarding school, to an integral partner in liberal Spain's push for educational reform, one that de-emphasized its religious mission for a mission guided by social improvement and equality, regardless of faith, did not go internally uncontested. Many of the IIE's board of directors in Boston felt that such a close association with the Junta would be a disaster for IIE, as the Spanish state institution would absorb and erase the school Alice Gulick had worked so hard to create.

Susan Huntington disagreed with this opinion. She appreciated the momentous opportunity available to IIE in 1915. She recognized that the institution's autonomy, even its integrity, were secondary considerations compared to the role it stood to assume in a more fluid dynamic with other institutions guided by similar, if not identical, aspirations. The pursuit of such an institutional network was motivated by the desire for expansion and evolution, for educational reform that flourished outside of the traditional classroom, protected from constrictive bureaucracy and free to pursue radical solutions to deep social problems. This was a definitively liberal, democratic, and humanistic phenomenon. The power of these interlocking networks operating in a practical space of communities flexible and innovative enough to react pragmatically to problems in real time represented and represents a bulwark against the forces that devalue the humanities, and democracy in turn. By working across institutions and institutional boundaries, this network of progressive educators was able to instantiate humanities education that defied entrenchment

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and restriction, while embracing heterogeneity, multiculturalism, and transnationalism. In this way, the history of the International Institute in Spain, and in particular its involvement in the Spanish educational reforms of the early 20th century, serves as a compelling example of Dewey's principles in action.

The assault on the humanities is not simply a hyperbolic reaction to market realities from within the modern academy. It is a statement of fact that reflects one of the defining educational and social challenges of our time. In order to resist this assault we must recover the shared space of participatory democracy and liberal humanism, and so circumvent the digital enclaves that have depleted our social capital. It is only through the recognition of the value of humanities education that society will be capable of renewing that bridging capital, and with it the continuity of our democratic foundations.

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The Hemispheric Approach of Julia Alvarez's Novels

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses three novels by Julia Alvarez– *How the García Girls Lost their Accents* (1991), *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994), and *In the Name of Salomé* (2000)– through the lenses of Hemispheric American Studies. Inspired by the teachings of Antonio Benítez-Rojo's theoretical work *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (1992), I contend that the categorisation of these novels as Latino literature is not enough to describe all of their richness. These novels portray throughout their pages social, political, and artistic relations that tie all of the Americas together, and their analysis benefits from the essays written by Caribbean post-essentialist critics who developed, during the 1990s, a discourse based on the cultural supersyncretism of the islands that helps us to understand the postmodern globalised worlds as it stands. The novels by Alvarez reflect these theories, as they portray the realities of a New World constricted by the workings of race and racism, capitalism, and postcolonialism.

Key Words: Julia Alvarez; Caribbean literature; Caribbean discourse; Hemispheric American Studies; multiculturalism.

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The Saint Lucian Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott claimed in his essay "The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry" (1974) that, despite the shadow of empire being inescapable, Caribbeans "were American even while [they] were British" (3). Furthermore, the insistence on national identification is a result of power intentions in an "archipelago [...] broken up into nations, and in each nation we attempt to assert characteristics of the national identity" (ibid). This is absurd, according to Walcott, since it cannot be denied that West Indian culture is American "not because America owes me a living from historical guilt, not that is needs my presence, but because we share this part of the world, and have shared it for centuries now, even as conqueror and victim, as exploiter and exploited" (4). Such approach to Caribbean literature became popularised in the 1990s thanks to essays such as Édouard Glissant's, Edward Kamau Brathwaite's, and Antonio Benítez-Rojo's. Florencia Bonfiglio explains that the irruption of these texts transcending linguistic and national barriers was the result of an effort on the part of the authors to create a discourse "independent from its 'mother' literatures/Euro-North-American hegemonic paradigms" (149). The most clearly postmodern approach to is expressed in Antonio Benítez-Rojo's *The Repeating Island* (1992), where he explains that the Caribbean way of being and acting serves to transcend the very colonial violence which gave birth to the region as we know nowadays: a culturally heterogeneous place (27-28). If Caribbean cultural productions, as Walcott explained, are indeed American, what about Caribbean migrants in the United States? Can we trace back the Caribbean roots—or routes—of their works? That is what Benítez-Rojo indeed suggested, as he claims that mobility is a characteristic feature of "the Peoples of the Sea" (25).

> **...the insistence on national identification is a result of power intentions in an "archipelago [...] broken up into nations, and in each nation we attempt to assert characteristics of the national identity." (Walcott 3)**

A postcolonial perspective has indeed been taken by some critics in their analyses of cultural productions written by minorities in the United States. Jenny Sharpe's much quoted phrase from her article "Is the United States Postcolonial?" (1995) expresses that: "given its history of imported slave and contract labor, continental expansion, and overseas imperialism, an implication of American culture in the postcolonial study of empires is perhaps long overdue" (181). After the student protests of the 1960s Third World Movement in American campuses, the state of ethnic minorities in the United States started to be considered a postcolonial matter (114), which still serves to challenge the 1980s multicultural model that ultimately serves to portray a static image of cultures as endangered objects to protect but paradoxically enters into conflict with the country's capitalist demands (Piper 15-18). While such approaches are accurate, specially in dismantling the exoticist—in Salman Rushdie's view (67)—notion of multiculturalism, this is not the desirable approach to Julia Alvarez's works, since her literature is not relegated to a United States setting; it also includes many chapters dealing with the locus specific situation of the characters' homeland: the Dominican Republic.

If Caribbean cultural productions, as Walcott explained, are indeed American, what about Caribbean migrants in the United States? Can we trace back the Caribbean roots–or routes–of their works? That is what Benítez-Rojo indeed suggested, as he claims that mobility is a characteristic feature of "the Peoples of the Sea" (25).

Because of the popularity experienced by Latino literature in the United States, one often forgets that places such as the Dominican Republic are Caribbean nations with their own Caribbean specificities such as the inescapable neo-colonial relationship with the United States. Caribbean islands have always being a bastion of the economic powers at work because of their strategic geographical position. Furthermore, such popularity has turned Latino literature into an exotic desirable commodity (Bost & Aparicio 3). As Suzanne Bost and Frances R. Aparicio claim, while some novels adapt to the "fetishized traits" traditionally ascribed to Latinos—"vibrant colored book covers, recipes for spicy food, or traditional spiritual practices"—and have thus turned into best sellers, others have been deemed to oblivion (3). Even when the Latino category considers "layers of conquest, colonialism, and cultural mixture" (Boost & Aparicio 2), it has also worked as an oppositional practice. In Marta Caminero-Santangelo's words: "'Latino' as an ethnic label thus suggests a contrast with some 'other' people understood to be 'non-Latino'" (13).

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The heterogeneity of the locations, timelines, characters, and historical episodes present in the works of Julia Alvarez makes them quite aligned with Benítez-Rojo's claim against the binary implications of *mestizaje*: "The literature of the Caribbean can be read as a mestizo text, but also as a stream of texts in flight in intense differentiation among themselves and within whose complex coexistence there are vague regularities, usually paradoxical" (27). A clear example of this is Alvarez's 1994 novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*, which is completely set in the Dominican Republic. It narrates a fictionalised account of the Mirabal Sisters' lives and their assassination by the Trujillo dictatorship. But we will get to that later. To understand Alvarez's position as a Caribbean writer let us retort to her 1998 collection *Something to Declare*. One of them, "Doña Aída, with your Permission," is an answer to an incident that took place at the Caribbean Studies Association annual meeting, where Alvarez was asked to deliver a plenary talk alongside the Dominican poet Aída Cartagena Portalatín. Cartagena Portalatín criticised Alvarez for speaking English, and the latter's answer—this essay—is deeply rooted in the previously mentioned 1990s Caribbean discourse characterised by anti-essentialism. Alvarez explains in the essay that: "Doña Aída embraced [her], but then in front of the mikes, she reamed [her] out. 'Eso parece mentira que una dominicana se ponga a escribir en inglés. Vuelve a tu país, vuelve a tu idioma. Tú eres dominicana.'" ("Doña Aída" 171) After explaining that she decided to write this essay because the moment did not seem adequate to offer an answer, she claims that the cultural situation she inhabits is "a world formed of contradictions, clashes, cominglings—the gringa and the Dominican, and it is precisely that tension and richness that interests her]." ("Doña Aída" 173) Whereas this

claim is quite specific of migration experiences to a country with a different language–and she mentions other migrant writers claiming that their belonging to several cultures has created very interesting literary works—she then continues to justify her language choice in this way:

> Think of it, the Caribbean… a string of islands, a sieve of the continents, north and south, a sponge, as most islands are, absorbing those who come and go, whether indios in canoas from the Amazon, or conquistadores from Spain, or African princes brought in chains in the holds of ships to be slaves, or refugees from China or central Europe or other islands. We are not a big continental chunk, a forbidding expanse that takes forever to penetrate, which keeps groups solidly intact, for a while anyhow. Our beaches welcome the stranger with their carpets of white sand. In an hour you reach the interior; in another hour you arrive at the other coast. We are islands, permeable countries. It's in our genes to be a world made of many worlds. ¿No es así? ("Doña Aída" 175)

This final paragraph adds a Caribbean perspective to her argument, as what she describes is characteristic of the history of postcolonial peoples, a history made up clashes, cominglings, and confluences, especially in the Caribbean.

Alvarez's claim that "we are islands, permeable countries" takes up the rhetoric on the aquatic worldview expressed by Edward Kamau Brathwaite in his aethetic theory of Tidalectics (as opposed to Dialectics). The Barbadian poet believes that Western conceptualisation, epistemology, and philosophy do not work when defining the lives of the islanders and goes on to suggest alternative ways of reading and interpreting reality (Hessler). In particular, Brathwaite "is concerned with a sense of relation that is expressed in terms of connecting lines" (Reckin 2). According to Anna Reckin, it is the layers which "[open] up the work to new contexts and to wider and deeper […] signification" (3) included in a narration that resemble the movement of the sea. The fragmented and multilayered, in terms of time and space, nature of Alvarez's novels embraces this philosophy.

The 1991 novel *How the García Girls Lost their Accents* has an inverse chronological order with time lapses between its chapters. It begins with the journey back to the Dominican Republic of one of the protagonist sisters, Yolanda, who has the intention of staying there. Then, as the novel progresses, we move on to the sisters' previous time in the United States, their acculturation and identity struggles, such as racist attacks, and the political exile that made them leave their country. Despite the title, this is not only a fiction of migration and acculturation in the United States, since the description of the girls' typical second-generation struggles is only part of the book. It must be considered that the book opens and closes in the Dominican Republic and portrays the characteristic rhythms, colours, and aquatic lifestyle of the Caribbean. During the narrative, mental health is also given big importance, stressing the double, triple, or quadruple consciousness experienced by the sisters living inbetween worlds, that which was described by Alvarez in her essay as typical of the Caribbean. This is also a narrative of return, not only of migration, as Yolanda,

who has multiple cultural identities according to Ana Mª Manzanas—"Yo, Joe, Yoyo, Joey, as the occasion requires" (38)–finds living in this multiplicity only possible in the Caribbean (also meaning in the aquatic epistemology): "This time, however, Yolanda is not so sure she'll be going back [to the United States]. But that is a secret" (Alvarez, *García Girls* 7). The narrative coming and going from the United States to the Dominican Republic and *vice versa* across the Caribbean Sea depicted in the *García Girls* novel reminds contemporary readers that the hybrid nature of these characters does not start on the land but in the sea, reflecting the different waves of migration that have created America.

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In the Time of Buterfflies is in fact, as already mentioned, completely set in the Dominican Republic, and tells a fictionalised account of an important chapter of the history of this country which has made a big impact on the cultural identity of its inhabitants: the assassination of the Mirabal Sisters by the Trujillo regime (recognised by the United States). The issue at stake is that the novel is completely written in English (using some words in Spanish as is characteristic of Latino literature in the United States) while its subject is certainly Dominican: it tells Anglophone readers of an important chapter of the history of a non-Anglophone country. This inserts into the United States cultural scene a history of the country's hegemony presented from another perspective, the perspective of those affected by the neo-colonial imperialist relations the United States establishes with the countries of the Caribbean. In fact, the story of the Mirabal sisters has had an influence worldwide: the date of their assassination has been chosen for the date of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the 25th of November.

In *In the Name of Salomé* (2000) there is also more than one setting: the United States, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. The main character of the Dominican Republic plot, which is set in the second half of the 19th Century, is Salomé Ureña, the national poet who wrote patriotic verses in order to arouse nationalist sentiments for encouraging revolutions against corrupt, colonial, and institutional power. The American setting protagonist, her daughter Camila, a 66 years old university professor, does not feel at home in the United States, like the *García Girls*' Yolanda, and writes a pros and

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cons list for any possible decision she will take once she retires. She feels only convinced by the idea of going to Cuba to join the Revolution. Cuba is not her homeland but part of the Caribbean archipelago which, according to Benítez-Rojo, is "a group of American nations whose colonial experiences and languages have been different, but which share certain undeniable features" (1). The protagonist also reflects this kind of thought when she recalls Jose Martí's teachings: "why speak of Cuba and Santo Domingo, when *even* the underwater cordillera that runs from island to island knows they belong together" (Alvarez, *Salomé* 164; emphasis mine). The word "even," which I have emphasised, suggests that it is not only the cordillera which makes the islands belong together.

Camila's decision to join the Cuban revolution can be analysed through the lens of another Caribbean discourse representative, Édouard Glissant, in terms of his poetics of Relation, as he claims that

> Errantry [...] does not proceed from renunciation nor from frustration regarding a supposedly deteriorated (deterritorialized) situation of origin; it is not a resolute act of rejection or an uncontrolled impulse of abandonment. Sometimes, by taking up the problems of the Other, it is possible to find oneself [...] That is very much the image of the rhizome, prompting the knowledge that identity is no longer completely within the root but also in Relation. (18)

This novel is characterised by the heterogeneity of the historical situations it relates, key moments in the story of the Americas, in a hemispheric sense: the Cuban revolution, the Trujillo dictatorship, the Ku Klux Klan attacks, and the colonial enterprises of Spain in the Caribbean, among others. It establishes the sometimes ignored notion that, as Derek Walcott has put it, that part of the world is shared and most of its culture comes from its past of "ghettos, its river-cultures, its plantations" (4). The metaphor of the archipelago, of a culture creating itself by the heterogeneous experiences of colonialism, is what can also be called the metaphor of America (Walcott 5). Glissant's already mentioned theoretical book on a poetics of Relation makes use of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of

the rhizome. As an image of multiplicity, the rhizome, "chang[ing] its nature as it expands its connections" (Deleuze & Guattari 8), is something characteristic of the Caribbean since, unlike the Mediterranean, it is "a sea that explodes the scattered lands into an arc. A sea that diffracts. Without necessarily inferring any advantage whatsoever to their situation, the reality of archipelagos in the Caribbean [...] provides a natural illustration of the thought of Relation" (Glissant 33).

Camila's errantry is opposed to the idea of the monolingual root characteristic of the conquests that happened across the Americas: "Conquerors are the moving transient root of their people" (Glissant 14). There are two kinds of nomadism, arrowlike (as in the conquerors example) and circular, endogamous and "overdetermined by the conditions of [its] existence" (Glissant 12). Errantry, standing not as an opposition but completely differing from these notions, is best understood when Caribbean migrant writers in the United States like Julia Alvarez continue adopting an epistemology which is deeply postcolonial and Caribbean. The errant, "prompting the knowledge that identity is no longer completely within the root but also in Relation," (Glissant 18) transcends borders.

CONCLUSIONS

While much has been written about the American perspective of Caribbean texts and essays, such relationship has not been actively endorsed in order to look at Caribbean Latino novels in the United States even when considerations such as Benítez Rojo's approach to chaos and multiplicity are reflected in the the fragmented nature of works like Julia Alvarez's. The three novels analysed above deliberately and fluidly change settings between the Unites States and the Caribbean islands—often the Dominican Republic but also Cuba–, emphasising the connections between the different nations of the Americas.

The transnationalism, rather than biculturalism, portrayed in Julia Alvarez's novels is an attempt to recover José Martí's approach to America—our America—as mentioned in *In the Name of Salomé*: "the America our poor, little countries are struggling to create" (121). As Walcott points out when he claims that American culture is that of the plantations and ghettoes, this analysis of Alvarez's works brings back to mind the idea that identification according to nation-states is a mechanism which serves to ignore other socio-cultural realities that have led to shared historical injustices. In contrast, Julia Alvarez and the anti-essentialist Caribbean essayists acknowledge the reality of specific landscapes, geographies, and migration routes which have been the real agents in shaping an American identity.

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Icebox and the Exceptionality Intrinsic to Institutional Violence on the US-Mexico Border

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Icebox and the Exceptionality Intrinsic to Institutional Violence on the US-Mexico Border

ABSTRACT

In 2018, Daniel Sawka directed independent feature length movie *Icebox*, which narrates the story of a 12-year old Honduran boy whose parents push him to migrate northbound in order to escape forced gang recruitment. Without giving way to ideological bias, Sawka reproduces his journey, providing a useful tool for raising awareness on some of the key matters related to the ongoing debate on US immigration and border policies. The operation of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities and the detention of Central American children at the US-Mexico border represent a transnational gray area in the extension of sovereign power, turning the border itself in a kenotic space of exception legitimated by the construction of a specific public discourse on immigration and national boundaries. Furthermore, the movie describes the existence of the evident normalization of inhumanity intrinsic to the detention process and praxis, leading to dehumanization of detainees and a suspension—both individual and public—of questioning the tasks performed by border enforcement agencies from an ethical or moral perspective.

Key Words: Borderlands; state of exception; film studies; border studies; Central American immigration.

Anna Marta Marini is a PhD fellow at the Instituto Franklin–UAH. She obtained her BA and MA in Linguistic and Cultural Mediation specializing in Anglo American Cultures and Mexican Studies, and a 2nd level postgraduate master's in Public History. Her dissertation work (realized in collaboration with the CISAN–UNAM) explores the film representation of reciprocate otherness bridging the US–Mexico boundary. Her main research interests are: discursive and cultural representation of the US borderlands and Mexican American communities; CDA related to violence (either direct, structural, or cultural) and discrimination; identity re/construction and narration through cinema and comics, especially in gothic, horror, and (weird)western genres.

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The movie represents a timely narrative and a useful tool for analysis on some of the key matters related to the ongoing debate on US immigration and border policies.

In 2018, HBO acquired and presented the independent feature *Icebox* (Daniel Sawka, 2018), produced by Gracie Films and co-financed by Endeavor Content. The movie represents a timely narrative and a useful tool for analysis on some of the key matters related to the ongoing debate on US immigration and border policies. Starting in the mid-80s—with the Immigration Reform and Control Act (1986), among others—stricter measures and a structured border discourse have been implemented in the US institutional and public spheres. The militarization of the US-Mexico boundary has been increased in several steps and tied to the construction of the border fence; since the government's reaction to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the measures have been strengthened and brought to a war level. In 2003, the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agencies were created, respectively, to exert border control and fight against illegal cross-border activities; both federal law enforcement divisions are subject to the authority of the US Department of Homeland Security. One of the cruxes of the national fight against illegal immigration has been the application of indefinite detention of migrants and the imposition of restrictions on asylum granting, as well as the limitation to opportunities of trial upon detention and obtainment of a provisional legal status. Detention is indefinite both temporally and legally, as it falls out of strict legal control and is characterized by extrajudicial action; it is, in fact, the suspension of judicial order, in the context of a state of exception (Agamben), dominating the border matter and redefining its legal limits. Several reportages have been released on the conditions of detention and the chronic abuse of migrants in the related facilities; in fact, it has been a question periodically raised at least since the mid-90s. In the 2010s, security footage leaks and internal reports on the abusive handling of detainees in border facilities have emerged, often to be dismissed or minimized by ICE and CBP officials.

If a state of exception should be produced by a state of emergency which legitimates the extension of sovereign power, in the case of the US-Mexico border the trans/national emergency has been constructed primarily through discourse. The border crossing statistics and studies show that illegal border crossing flux has depended mostly on socioeconomic cycles (Massey et al.), and that the number of yearly apprehensions—especially on the southwest border—oscillates in the same range since the mid-70s (US CBP, U.S. Border Patrol Apprehensions; U.S. Border Patrol Fiscal Year). Migration from the Norther Triangle countries—Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador—has often depended also on sociopolitical and institutional downturns, and it's been increasing especially since the beginning of the 21st century. The steady increment and the numbers themselves, though, don't seem justify the use of the term "emergency" nor the character of exceptionality.

If a state of exception should be produced by a state of emergency which legitimates the extension of sovereign power, in the case of the US-Mexico border the trans/national emergency has been constructed primarily through discourse.

Moreover, the migrants' illegal entrance in the US seems to pose a risk almost exclusively for the inhabitants of the immediate borderlands, as it inevitably intertwines with criminal activities such as human trafficking and narcotraffic. Nonetheless, public discourse legitimates the existence of a state of exception and its consequent infrastructure. In institutional and media spheres, metaphors supporting the idea of an existing emergency draw on terminology related to medical scare (epidemic), hydraulics (tide, flood), war (invasion), natural calamity (swarm), and so on (Santa Ana, "Empirical analysis of anti-immigrant metaphor in political discourse"; *Brown tide rising*), helping the construction of a national discourse that justifies any measure the government is willing to take against immigration.

To keep illegal immigrants in custody, several detention facilities have been built along the border over the years; the government can expand ICE's detection capacity, infrastructures, and logistics by redirecting funding from other federal agencies. In recent years, lawsuits have been filed by ex-detainees for medical neglect and lack of humane hygienic conditions, as well as physical and sexual abuse, during detention (Cantor et al.). The title of the film, *Icebox*, is the translation of *hielera*, the way migrants call these facilities in their recount of the experience. In several occasions the topic has been raised by independent media and yet, CBP officials have shunned the accusations and refused to acknowledge the testimonies on the matter, often collected by non-profit organizations and advocacy groups. Detention spaces are subjected to the desert climate and—at least officially—heat regulation seems to depend on that; also, detainees customarily have to sleep on concrete floors, wrapping themselves in scanty heat sheets.

The feature movie is the remake of a short film written and directed by Daniel Sawka himself in 2016. Oscar (Anthony Gonzalez) is a Honduran 12-year-old boy forced by local *pandilla* members to join them, under the threat of death and violent retaliation against his family. When his school is attacked by the gang chasing him, his family decides to pay a coyote to take the young boy to the US, where his maternal uncle Manuel (Omar Leyva) has lived for years working as a peon in Arizona. After the hardship of the travel through Mexico and across borders, Oscar is caught by the Border Patrol and brought to a facility where tens of migrant children are detained. Eluding the guards' control, he manages to talk with Perla (Genesis Rodriguez), a journalist visiting the detention center, and later on to persuade her to look for his uncle. As Manuel eventually takes responsibility for him, Oscar is entitled to a trial to apply for asylum; his request will be rejected for his—albeit unwilling—activity within the *pandilla*. The story closes with a bittersweet ending when Oscar travels to California in order to become an undocumented agricultural worker; notwithstanding his dream of pursuing education, he accepts the solution as it saves his life and protects his family. Throughout the movie, hand-held camera shots add to the pathos and awkward realism in the sequences related to human interaction, contrasting with unsympathetic overhead and panning shots taken inside the detention facility.

As *Icebox* shows, violence against Central American children begins in their local community, where they are—often unwillingly—chosen as future gang members by means of consolidated recruiting mechanisms. In the frantic opening sequence, three men are forcing a young boy on the floor, screaming over a buzzing sound in the background; they are shirtless and

their tattoos are exposed, letting the spectator understand that they belong to some criminal gang. Marking youth with a *pandilla*'s symbolic tattoo is common practice to force them in the gang, as a visible mark of their alleged belonging will lead to isolation and rejection in the community of origin. Oscar's mother urges him to never show his chest tattoo to anyone; when the detained children are taken to shower, he gets abruptly forced by guards to undress leading to violent repercussions, isolation, and mistrust among the detainees. Later on, he decides to show the tattoo to his uncle, who has been unaware of the real reason behind his nephew's escape; his reaction

When Oscar is abandoned by the coyote and the adult migrants, he's tracked down by a drone, detained by the Border Patrol and brought to a detention facility populated by minors of all ages.

is charged with fear and sorrow, as he immediately understands the implications of forced gang recruitment. In the 21st century, homicide rates and gang violence-related conflicts have been increasing in the Northern Triangle, seemingly due to an increased power of the organized crime groups operating in the region, paired with the ineffectiveness of state protection measures (Cantor). It might be argued that an intrinsic colonial structuring of power sustains the US state of exception spaces (Gregory), as US foreign politics related to the Northern Triangle countries have neglected—if not ineffectively intervened in—the political disruption their populations have been struggling with. The spatiality of border infrastructures and policies is thus complicated by its inevitable transnational character and implications.

Unlike other existing films on Central American minor migrants—such as *Sin nombre* (2009) or *La jaula de oro* (2013), among others—Oscar doesn't board the train known as *la Bestia*, but he travels across Mexico in the back of a truck, packed together with other migrants. The group crosses the border climbing ladders straddling the fence, mounts on bicycles prepared beforehand and cycles in the darkness through the Arizonan desert. When Oscar is abandoned by the coyote and the adult migrants, he's tracked down by a drone, detained by the Border Patrol and brought to a detention facility populated by minors of all ages. The description of detention spaces corresponds with journalistic reportages on the topic, as well as leaked internal footage, and ex-detainees' testimony. The children are held in a huge shed, where different groups are divided in fenced spaces resembling roosts. Each child is given a pad to sleep on the ground and a Mylar heat sheet; as the movie shows, detainees live in the clothes they were wearing at the moment of detention until they're occasionally allowed to rummage in boxes full of second-hand clothes donated by charities, frantically contending for garments with each other. Lighting is key to depict

cinematographically the children's experience. Night sequences are characterized by an almost total darkness in which the crumpled silver heat sheets crinkle and mark the *mise-en-scène* with an eerie, lunar mood; shadows dominate nighttime dialogues between Oscar and Rafael (Matthew Moreno), a younger kid he gets close to and whose future seems as indefinite as his time spent in detention. Conversely, daytime sequences are characterized by neutral light falling flat on the scene and giving the *mise-en-scène* the feel of a non-place (Augé), a space where relations are emptied of their anthropological meaning and existences reduced to the application of apparently lawful procedures. The treatment the children receive from the guards is quite detached—there isn't any interaction but the bare necessary—and resolved within the realm of a space of exception. No useful information is given to them nor clear perspectives on what will happen to them; vagueness dominates the detention time in a blurred extra/judicial vacuum, where the detainees are apparently bereft of any value and consideration. Despite their critical situation, in various scenes the children's naivety emerges as they joke, flirt, and cry as they miss their family; the film plays with these moments, showing the contrast between their necessity to grow up before time and their inevitable childlike nature. Contrastively, the character of Felipe (Johnny Ortiz) embodies the disillusionment and consequent crazed desperation; he's been detained three times in that same facility without being given the opportunity of a lawful trial. At first, Felipe acts as a confident, shrewd older boy feared by younger minors in custody; in the last sequence he appears, he's dragged away by guards while opposing resistance and screaming warnings to the other detainees on the illusory character of migrant-related bureaucracy. A pervasive sense of uncertainty and atemporality marks Oscar's stay in the facility, despite the check-in officers informing the children of alleged deadlines related to their detention process. Actually, on August 21, 2019, the US Department of Homeland Security announced that it would remove time limits on the detention of migrant children, thus legally extending the practice of indefinite detention to minors. In order to do so, the Trump administration would repeal the Flores Settlement Agreement (1997), a legal ruling which barred the government from holding migrant children in detention for more than 20 days.

Children can be released waiting for trial in the case a documented close relative guarantees for them. For Oscar's uncle, taking responsibility of the child in order to allow him to appear in court represents a rather complex choice. When he drives his nephew "home", the spectator discovers that he lives in a shack he shares with other peons on the land he works; he has to lend Oscar his spot in a bunk bed and sleep on the floor. After years spent as an undocumented worker, Manuel was wildly beaten by three American citizens; he holds a regular residence permit thanks to a U visa, which is granted to victims of violence they suffered while in the US. Such a permit can lead to the possibility of requesting a Green Card after a 3-year period of uninterrupted residence; the status it grants, though, is conditional and can be revoked for a wide range of reasons, while the requirements to fulfil during the stay are quite strict. Thus, Manuel's fear derives from yet another state of uncertainty in which even legal immigrants can live by. The trial sequence is as short as these trials are in reality. The only category most of Central American children could resort to in their attempt to be granted asylum is the belonging to a persecuted Particular Social Group (PSG), as they aren't victims of persecution based on religious, racial, national, or political reasons

Its reality invisiblized by a public discourse reduced to platitudes and superficial assertions, the border itself becomes a kenomatic space characterized by the absence of legality, a suspension of law permitted by a sovereign government blurring its limits, and where the migrants' legal subjectivity is rather indefinite.

(Orlang). Nonetheless, there isn't a recognized status for youth escaping forced gang recruitment. The definition of PSG has been ambiguous and open to interpretation; in 1985, the Board of Immigration Appeals ruled as necessary for granting asylum the proven persecution against a social group sharing "immutable characteristics" (Paz 1077), a requirement that's evidently hard to fulfil.

The narrative relative to the Honduran protagonist is reminiscent of other Central American personal stories told by means of other media forms. The Honduran protagonist—also named Oscar—of the comic *Barrier* (Vaughan et al.) doesn't accede to be part of a local gang despite the consequent threats; when the same gang brutally murders his family, he escapes northbound and manages to cross the US border, only to be detained by aliens in a sci-fi turn brilliantly packed with metaphors on border politics and discourse. In her harrowing short essay *Los niños perdidos: un ensayo en cuarenta preguntas* (2016), Mexican author Valeria Luiselli recounts her experience as interpreter for Central American minor migrants, especially during their trials to be granted asylum or—in the case of a negative outcome—deported. Luiselli's last novel *Lost children archive* (2019) resumes the theme, pondering on it through a road-trip narrative. Albeit less effective than the essay, the novel—possibly unconsciously—brings forth an extremely significative message: in the public sphere, the existence of these children holds, in many cases, the value of a piece of news caught on the radio, which can easily be turned off if it sounds too detailed or uneasy to linger onto.

Its reality invisiblized by a public discourse reduced to platitudes and superficial assertions, the border itself becomes a kenomatic space characterized by the absence of legality, a suspension of law permitted by a sovereign government blurring its limits, and where the migrants' legal subjectivity is rather indefinite. Aside from a state of legal exception, there's an evident normalization of inhumanity intrinsic to the detention process and praxis. In the movie, the guards involved in the facility operation don't come across as purposely bad or particularly ill-disposed; rather, their attitude evokes what Arendt described as the banality of evil (1963), a suspension of questioning one's own tasks from an ethical or moral perspective. The judge who turns down Oscar's asylum request as well doesn't appear as mean or ideologically driven; he's represented as a bureaucrat compliantly going through one case after the other, following a given procedure based on standardized questionnaires assessing the children's supposed eligibility. All the officers and institutional characters Oscar encounters throughout the movie aren't markedly characterized as antagonist figures, but rather, they're unreflective parts of the apparatus and act accordingly, in a space devoid of human compassion or questioning. A questioning that is left to individual conscience, as it is explored by Francisco Cantú in his autobiographical essay *The line becomes a river: dispatches from the border* (2018), in which he recounts his experience as a Mexican-American Border Patrol officer; he eventually left the agency as he couldn't cope with the efforts required to reconcile the imposed procedures and routines with his will to help migrants and borderlands inhabitants. Without yielding to political bias, *Icebox* certainly contributes to bare the dehumanizing mechanisms of the handling of immigration at the border, in a worthy attempt to raise timely and indispensable awareness in the audience.

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The Ideology of Self-making and the White Working Class in Rebecca Harding Davis' *Life in the Iron Mills*

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The Ideology of Self-making and the White Working Class in Rebecca Harding Davis' *Life in the Iron Mills*

ABSTRACT

Rebecca Harding Davis' novella *Life in the Iron Mills*, published in 1861 in *The Atlantic Monthly*, is now considered a landmark of early American realism. This paper analyses the text's depiction of the white working class and the ideological consequences of the myth of upward mobility and self-making, which are presented as an impossibility to Hugh Wolfe, the story's main character. I will argue that Davis' choice to offer a representation of the precarious lives of the workers of Northern industrial capitalism implies a criticism of the quintessentially American narrative of upward mobility, and a subsequent reflection on how foundational narratives operate in a society that is not homogeneous in terms of race or class. More specifically, I will maintain that *Life in the Iron Mills* operates as a contestation to the myth of the self-made man, evinced by the comparison between Hugh Wolfe's situation and that of the mill owners, who encourage his aspirations from an oblivious position of privilege. Lastly, Hugh's tragic death will be taken as proof that the myth of self-making mystifies the actual social and economic dynamics of industrial capitalism.

Key Words: Realism; Harding Davis; self-made man; capitalism; ideology.

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Rebecca Harding Davis' novella *Life in the Iron Mills* is one of the first instances of nineteenth-century American fiction that explicitly focuses on the white working class. A largely forgotten text until it was republished by the Feminist Press in 1971, *Iron Mills* was published in 1861 in the *Atlantic Monthly,* a magazine "committed to the ideals of American democracy." (Tharp 3)[1] Against the backdrop of a nation on the verge of disaster and a society that was experimenting deep economic and political change, Davis decided to write about the deprived lives of the workers of industrial capitalism, managing to establish herself as one of the leading voices of reformist literature and American realism (Long).[2] The aim of this paper is to explore how her writing analyses the consequences of the myth of upward mobility for the working class. I will argue that *Iron Mills* is construed as a contestation to the pervasive—and quintessentially American—myth of the self-made man,[3] which by promoting an ideology of effort and hard work as the means towards personal self-realisation, overlooks class differences and socioeconomic realities. An analysis of the tragic unfolding of Hugh Wolfe's life will evince how this myth functions in an ideological way, obscuring the real social dynamics that operate under industrial capitalism.

The liminal position of Davis as a writer in a border state like Virginia might have been useful in the exploration of conflicts in a way that was relevant both to the North and the South of the United States. As Canada argues, people living in border states had a privileged position as they perceived the complexity of the conflict in a way that was uncommon. *Iron Mills* provides a glimpse of the worst of both worlds: slavery and exploitative industrial capitalism.[4] The novella begins with an anonymous, ungendered and presumably middle-class narrator describing the industrial town where the story takes place—a town governed by thick, polluted grey smoke. The introduction rapidly situates the reader in a suffocating environment that mirrors the equally grey, unhealthy lives of the people that inhabit it. The wealth of adjectives can only help to immerse the reader in the stifling atmosphere of the story, as the narrator invites us into "the thickest of the fog and mud and foul effluvia." (13)

The deliberate association between an industrial setting and thick pollution must be read as a political critique on Davis part, since as Gatlin explains, "smoke symbolized manufacturing might and economic triumph" for industrial advocates (202). What Davis sees as filth and unwholesomeness, industrial capitalists regarded as a means towards success. In a nation that was increasingly polarised, the Northern capitalist economy was seen as modern and in tune with the fight for freedom, as compared to the Southern plantation-based economy. The idealisation of the

[1] See Schocket, Tharp and Grauke for an analysis on the relevance and implications of the *Atlantic Monthly*'s editorial political positioning of the time and its reading audience's assumptions.

[2] Although it is hardly arguable that Davis' writings qualify as, indeed, realist and reformist literature, critics have challenged these labels claiming for a more complex understanding of her oeuvre (Hughes 114).

[3] The social advancement and "rags to riches" trope has been often taken to epitomise the so-called "American Dream", a ubiquitous expression whose "definition is virtually taken for granted" (Cullen 5) and which as a result becomes problematic when used casually. Because of its complex implications, this essay avoids such phrase, opting instead for the more precise "upward mobility." See Jim Cullen's *The American Dream. A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (2003) for a concise survey of all the myths and narratives that make up the American Dream ideology, among which we can find the upward mobility trope.

[4] Hence the "tropes of blackness" and "orthographically denoted dialect" applied to white workers that we find in *Iron Mills* (Schocket 46). See *Schocket's Vanishing Moments* for an appraisal of the intermingling of images of race and class oppression in Davis' text.

Iron Mills is construed as a contestation to the pervasive–and quintessentially American–myth of the self-made man, which by promoting an ideology of effort and hard work as the means towards personal self-realisation, overlooks class differences and socioeconomic realities.

North often had ideological consequences, as Foner rightly puts: "glorifying northern society and [...] isolating slavery as an unacceptable form of labor exploitation served to justify the emerging capitalist order of the North." (qtd. in Schocket 37) By associating successful capitalism with a lethal environment, Davis begins to destabilise common assumptions about success and what they may entail for working-class individuals in a way that will resonate throughout the story.

The workers of the iron furnaces are presented as a homogeneous mass of people with no names. Their lives are uneventful and highly routinised, consisting of activities that contribute to the destruction of their bodies: "Their lives were like those of their class: incessant labor, sleeping in kennel-like rooms, eating rank pork and molasses, drinking..." (*Iron Mills* 15) Davis provides a careful description of the physical squalor that impregnates every movement of the workers' existence. The destructive nature of their daily routine is tragically ironic if we consider that the workers' only worth is as physical capital. The fact that workers are metonymically conceptualised as *hands* signals the commodification they are subjected to: they are valuable insofar as their impaired bodies can produce. For Kirby, one of the mill owners, workers are no more than machines: "If I had the making of men, these men who do the lowest part of the world's work should be machines,—nothing more,—hands." (34) Their physicality is their only value, but it is a physicality that is not only flawed but also alien to themselves. The "vast machinery of system by which the

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bodies of workmen are governed" (19) as presented in *Iron Mills* is a paradigmatic example of a dehumanising force that alienates the workers in a Marxian sense, as labour is not an end in itself but a means for mere survival and "therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labor". (Marx 655) Because labour under the capitalist mode of production, is a matter "of self-sacrifice, of mortification," (655) working means the ultimate dispossession. The worker's labour, then, "belongs to another" and therefore "it is the loss of his self." (655)

Davis' effort in portraying the lives of the white working class suggests that her story is not merely an account of the life of an individual. Although Hugh Wolfe is the main character in the novella, it seems that he is only an arbitrary example chosen from the many lives of the many white working-class industrial workers. The narrator confesses: "I cannot tell why I choose the half-forgotten story of this Wolfe more than that of myriads of these furnace-hands." (14) The story about Hugh's wasted potential, read as a contingent example of what it is like to live as white labour, talks about the wasted potential of a whole class. Hugh's artistic endowment could defy this claim if we took it as evidence of his being a special case among his working peers. However, Davis' emphasis on the interchangeability of the workers' lives points to the idea that if this potential

does not show in other workers, it is because they are just too alienated to have any ambition beyond mere survival. Furthermore, the very title of the story accentuates the non-individuality of characters. Hugh's is "only the outline of a dull life, that long since, with thousands of dull lives like its own, was vainly lived and lost: thousands of them, massed, vile, slimy lives." (13) In other words, what is at stake in Davis' novel is not the tragic story of a man, but rather the tragedy of a class.

The working class presented in *Iron Mills* is defined in contrast to the mill owners. By introducing them into the story, Davis elucidates the privilege differences between the workers and the capitalist owners. With bitter irony, the narrator tells us how the visitors to the mills stop by Hugh's furnace as they are tired from *walking* around the foundries. As soon as Hugh sees them, he is invaded by curiosity: they represent the "mysterious class that shone down on him perpetually with the glamour of another order of being." (27) Hugh is painfully aware that he and the visitors belong to different worlds, and he cannot help but wonder: "What made the difference between them? That was the mystery of his life." (27)

The class abyss between them is an undecipherable secret for Hugh. The problem is aggravated when the immutability of class hierarchy is combined with disembodied identity ideals that efface any reference to class, as those represented by Mitchell. Hugh begins to compare himself to him, whom he sees as the epitome of Western civilization and refinement: "Wolfe listened more and more like a dumb, hopeless animal, with a duller, more stolid look creeping over his face, glancing now and then at Mitchell, marking acutely every smallest sign of refinement, then back to himself, seeing as in a mirror his filthy body, his more stained soul." (30) Mitchell's nonchalant knowledge of science and philosophy, of Kant, Novalis and Humboldt, and most importantly, his *white* hand symbolise for Hugh the "the impossibility of an identity." (Dow 53) Tellingly portrayed as an animal in this scene, Hugh is projecting onto Mitchell the ideals of class and manhood that he knows he will never attain: "he knew now, in all the sharpness of the bitter certainty, that between them there was a great gulf never to be passed. Never!" (30) Mitchell embodies the aspirational dream of whiteness constituted as "a signifying agent of class mobility" (Schocket 60) that makes one of the pillars of American nationhood.

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According to Miles, the nineteenth-century United States promoted an identity ideal of white disembodied masculinity that consolidated itself as the legitimate subject of American citizenship. Such ideal was based on an exclusionary subject that did not include the white male worker, among others. Because the dominance of the hegemonic white male subject in nineteenth-

century America was more tacitly enacted than explicitly agreed upon, Hugh cannot find a rational motive to think himself unfit for the same chances of middle-class success that Mitchell embodies. The frustration that Hugh feels on realising that he does not have access to those possibilities of self-realisation is especially acute in a land where it is a supposedly self-evident fact that "all men were created equal." The Declaration of Independence, which marked the character of America as a self-made nation itself, offered the promise of a land of opportunities where all men who so desired could freely pursue a happy life. As Berlant suggests, the foundational documents of America "implicitly defined a 'natural' legitimate subject" that was white and male (qtd. in Miles 91). While America thought of itself as a welcoming nation where anyone could fulfil their dreams of upward mobility through individual effort, "Americans simultaneously founded the nation and consolidated a powerful disquisition of disembodied white manhood that would equate nationhood with all white men." (Miles 91)

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The myth of upward mobility, then, albeit publicised as an opportunity for anyone who desired it, was in reality restricted to a very specific demographic, consisting of subjects that had a relevant degree of agency over their lives. The ideology of self-making relies on a modern conception of individuals as people endowed with freedom, who own themselves and who are able to accomplish their potential. Considering the alienated lives of the workers in *Iron Mills*, it is highly problematic to accept that these people have any sort of control over their own existence. Life does not seem to have much to offer to Hugh besides work and the filth that will accompany him to the grave, where he will have "not air, nor green fields, nor curious roses." (13) The canary chirping in the first pages of the novella evokes a pastoral America that is just as desolate as the bird's singing: "Its dream of green fields and sunshine is a very old dream,—almost worn out, I think." (12) The promise of a fertile land brimming with opportunities for all those who may want to take them is revealed by Davis as a tantalic dream that has been cruelly offered to Hugh, who will discover that, in reality, it had been denied to him all along.

Ironically, the path towards such dream of self-making is hard work and diligence, an idea resonant with a Protestant work ethic and most famously embodied by Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. The fact that work is the main engine of self-making is painfully ironic since the only thing that Hugh and his working-class fellows do is, indeed, work. This is why Doctor May's unwillingly perverse advice to Hugh that he may become what he chooses becomes the catalyst of

The canary chirping in the first pages of the novella evokes a pastoral America that is just as desolate as the bird's singing: "Its dream of green fields and sunshine is a very old dream,—almost worn out, I think." (12) The promise of a fertile land brimming with opportunities for all those who may want to take them is revealed by Davis as a tantalic dream that has been cruelly offered to Hugh, who will discover that, in reality, it had been denied to him all along.

the tragedy in the story, as it represents the absolute clash between what culture is interpellating Hugh to believe and his real, material possibilities as conditioned by an exploitative system: "Do you know, boy, you have it in you to be a great sculptor, a great man? Do you understand?" [...] A man may make himself anything he chooses (37). Even if he might be trying to be sympathetic towards Hugh, the truth is that his words have the most devastating effect upon him, since on making Hugh believe that he has power over his own life, Doctor May hampers Hugh's understanding of the mechanisms of capitalist society in a way that will prove fatal: "'It's all wrong, [...] all wrong! I dunnot understan.'" (41) When the idea that he can "make himself anything he chooses" is injected in his debilitated mind, Hugh begins to assimilate the ideology behind the mill owners' words and acquires a "false consciousness," which Terry Eagleton defines as a set of ideas "functional for the maintenance of an oppressive power" while "those who hold them are ignorant of this fact" (24). Similarly, Adorno and Horkheimer claim that "the deceived masses are today captivated by the myth of success even more than the successful are. Immovably, they insist on the very ideology which enslaves them" (134).

Hugh's unaware participation in this ideology leads him to desperation for not really understanding the ways of the world he lives in. Anxiously not knowing who is to blame for his desolation, Hugh begins to blame himself, wondering whether it is his own fault that his life is so miserable: "What am I worth, Deb? Is it my fault that I am no better? My fault?" (41) Because the ideology of self-making is essentially individualist, it makes all the weight of responsibility fall on the shoulders of individuals, thus obscuring the real reasons why Hugh cannot, indeed, make himself what he chooses. The reasons are no other than the fact that Hugh's only function in the system he is inserted in is to be *a hand*; a system where the privilege of upward mobility is reserved for the aforementioned legitimate subject of rights. Since capitalism "educates and selects the economic subjects which it needs through a process of economic survival of the fittest," (Weber 20) Hugh is simply destined to accept his place in that system and perish as one of the *weakest*. This extreme individualism is accompanied by a negation of any type of collective responsibility, which allows privileged agents not to admit they have a share in other people's misery. As Kirby tells Doctor May, "Ce n'est pas mon affaire. I have no fancy for nursing infant geniuses." (34) In an ideology in which everything depends on the alleged free agency of individuals, those who are "unsuccessful" are to blame for their own situation.

Hugh's incomprehension of the logics of this "world-cancer," (49) as he calls it, is so unbearable that the only way out for him is suicide. Several critics have read Hugh's suicide as his final proclamation of self-making, as a way of "assert[ing] ownership over his body by erasing it." (Miles 99) Likewise, Schocket has argued that "Davis assures us symbolically that Hugh finds whiteness in his death," a death which works as a parody of "the mill visitor's desires for self-made men" and as "salvation by way of spiritual transfusion." (61) While I agree that that Hugh's final suicide is an example of accomplished agency, I think it is a highly problematic instance of it since the transformational possibilities that his death offers are virtually non-existent. The ending of the novella renders an ironic presentation of art and religion by tacitly suggesting that they lack the redemptive potential that they are often presumed to have. The narrator's final reverie about

"homely fragments, in which lie the secrets of all eternal *truth* and *beauty,*" (65, emphasis mine) situated in a middle-class environment, acts like a mockery of the tragedy we have just witnessed.

In conclusion, Davis' novella can be read as a case study of the harmful consequences that a particularly pervasive ideology as that of self-making had upon a given sector of the population that had not received much attention in American literature heretofore. By addressing a target audience that consisted mainly of well-to-do Bostonians, Davis managed to introduce complex debates in the core of American middle class, critically reflecting upon how certain national foundational narratives operate in a society that is not homogeneous in terms of race or class. Hugh's tragic ending can only help to evince how subaltern identities that did not fit into national narratives deserved a recognition that took into consideration their equally American realities.

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Jan Karski: el testigo incómodo del Holocausto ante Roosevelt

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RESUMEN

Jan Karski, un joven polaco fue el testigo incómodo del Holocausto. Introducido por la Resistencia de forma clandestina en el gueto de Varsovia y más tarde en el campo de tránsito de Izbica, almacenó en su imaginario personal el verdadero horror de lo que era un plan calculado por el gobierno nazi para acabar con el pueblo judío en Europa.

Palabras clave: exterminio; judíos; campos de concentración; Roosevelt; genocidio.

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Entre saber, creer y ser consciente del Holocausto existe una gran diferencia. Así lo expresa el historiador y comentarista político Walter Laqueur en su libro *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's "Final Solution"*.

Y sin embargo, la línea que separa los tres términos es muy fina. Lo explica Jan Karski, miembro de la Resistencia polaca en la Segunda Guerra Mundial, y posteriormente académico en la Universidad de Georgetown, en una entrevista para el documental de Claude Lanzmann *Shoah*. Karski es un personaje fascinante por su lucha para dar a conocer al mundo la existencia del Holocausto, pero todavía es un desconocido para el gran público. En dicha entrevista cuenta que entre 1942 y 1943 informó al gobierno polaco en el exilio y a los Aliados occidentales acerca del exterminio judío en Europa con testimonios y documentos aportados por testigos de los crímenes, pero sus noticias no tuvieron el eco que merecían. Laqueur recoge concretamente la conversación de Karski con el juez del Tribunal Supremo Americano, Felix Frankfurter:

> Frankfurter told Karski that he did not believe him. When Karski protested, Frankfurter explained that he did not imply that Karski had in any way not told the truth, he simply meant that he could not believe him—there was a difference. (3)

Muchas fueron las reuniones con altos cargos del gobierno estadounidense que Karski mantuvo a la vuelta de sus diferentes viajes a Europa, para manifestarles su inquietud por los asesinatos de judíos.

El 27 de noviembre de 1944, *The New York Times* publica "Books of the Times", un artículo de opinión firmado por el periodista Orville Prescott, quien hace una crítica feroz a los americanos por no haber dado crédito a declaraciones de testigos, a fotografías que muestran el terror al que están siendo sometidos los judíos en Europa. Prescott pide que se lea la obra de Jan Karski, *Story of a Secret State*. Un libro publicado por primera vez en 1944, en el que Karski, mensajero del gobierno polaco en el exilio, cuenta de primera mano todo lo que ha visto y oído en Europa sin que nadie hiciera nada por remediarlo. Muchas fueron las reuniones con altos cargos del gobierno estadounidense que Karski mantuvo a la vuelta de sus diferentes viajes a Europa, para manifestarles su inquietud por los asesinatos de judíos. Unos encuentros que no tuvieron ningún efecto. Prescott da a conocer la figura de Karski a los lectores de su periódico, y dice de él que de no ser por la invasión nazi, muy probablemente hubiera sido un estudiante más que hubiese vivido una vida plancentera.

> Mr. Karski is a young Polish leader of the underground. Had his country not been attacked in 1939 he might have spent a leisured and pleasant life as a student of demography, the science of population. But he was called up to service as an artillery officer and soon was part of the confused retreat across southern Poland that swept so many Polish soldiers into the prison camps of the Russians without their ever having had a chance to fire their guns at the Germans. (párr. 2)

Karski fue entrevistado el 9 de febrero de 1995 para la publicación *The Diary of Hannah Rosen*, un compendio de artículos sobre el Holocausto basados en testimonios reales. Durante la conversación, a Karski le preguntan sobre las razones que pudieron pesar para que la administración Roosevelt no actuara antes e hiciera más para salvar a los judíos europeos. Karski respondió que los americanos no querían entrar en guerra, aunque finalmente lo hicieron porque Hitler declaró la guerra a Estados Unidos, pero hacerlo antes le hubiera acarreado a Roosevelt una importante pérdida de popularidad. No obstante, Karski reconoce que, a pesar de haberse entrevistado con él, no tuvo valor para preguntárselo. "Why didn't he extend more aid? How can I know? I couldn't ask the president, "What do you think about the Jews, what are you going to do." I couldn't. I was just a messenger".

El 21 de enero de 1945, *The New York Times* publica por primera vez un titular relacionado con las víctimas del nazismo que apela directamente a la sensibilidad de los americanos, "U.S Citizens Killed in Lwow by Nazis". Del mismo modo, es la primera vez que se recogen evidencias de que los nazis quieren borrar todas las pruebas de las masacres de los judíos, porque advierten que llega su final.

> Reporting the evidence of violence, torture, mass shootings and murders, both in death camps and among the civilian population of the district, the Soviet State Committee says that with the Russian advance, the Hitler Government and the German military command grew panicky and ordered measures to cover their extermination of the foreign nationals who had been in the concentration camps. (párr. 3)

1. ENTREVISTA DE JAN KARSKI CON EL PRESIDENTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Jan Karski explicó a Claude Lanzmann en la entrevista para el documental "Shoah", que durante su reunión con Roosevelt el 28 de julio de 1943 le refirió el maltrato a los judíos, las deportaciones y la existencia de los campos de concentración. Una conversación que duró horas y en la que el presidente de Estados Unidos tan solo le preguntó en una ocasión por los judíos. Esta es parte de la transcripción de la conversación que tuvo lugar en ese encuentro, que ofrece la página web sobre la figura de Jan Karski, *Jan Karski. Humanity's Hero. The story of Poland's wartime emissary*,

Durante su reunión con Roosevelt el 28 de julio de 1943 le refirió el maltrato a los judíos, las deportaciones y la existencia de los campos de concentración. Una conversación que duró horas y en la que el presidente de Estados Unidos tan solo le preguntó en una ocasión por los judíos.

> PRESIDENT: Do you cooperate with the Jews?
>
> KARSKI: Yes. In two ways: the Jewish workers (Socialist) movement participates in the Underground resistance in close cooperation with the Polish Socialist Party. Independently, there is a special committee for the aid and protection of the Jews (Zegota, which is affiliated with the Government Delegate). There are Poles in the committee, which is run by a Jew, and which has relatively large sums of money at its disposal.
> (párr. 32-33)

Después, Roosevelt se interesó por la resistencia polaca, por las condiciones de vida y por la labor de Karski, pero no utilizó la palabra "Jew" en niguna de sus preguntas posteriores. El periodista norteamericano Marvin Kalb dice que Roosevelt se debatía entre la respuesta político-militar y la indiferencia,

> For example, in early 1942, he told Felix Frankfurter not to worry—that the Jews were being dispatched to Eastern Europe to build fortifications against a Soviet counter-attack. Was he lying? Or was he dissembling? Surely Roosevelt knew better. Laqueur cited an August 22, 1942, news conference, at which the President said that the report of Nazi atrocities "gives rise to the fear that [...] the barbaric and unrelenting character of the occupational regime will become more marked and maye ven lead to the extermination of certain populations." Certain populations? Was Roosevelt using code language, too? Who else but Jews? (6)

2. DESCONOCIMIENTO E INDIFERENCIA: EL CONTEXTO CREADO POR LA PRENSA NORTEAMERICANA

El 7 de marzo de 1943 el periódico norteamericano *The New York Times*, dirigido por Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publicó en la sección "Letters to The Times" (85) un artículo titulado "While We Do Nothing" firmado por la soprano británica Dorothy Moulton-Mayer. En él, esta mujer, casada con el filántropo alemán Robert Mayer y residente en Estados Unidos, reprocha a los norteamericanos vivir en cierta paz y tranquilidad mientras en Europa se suceden las atrocidades cometidas por Adolf Hitler. Literalmente, la articulista apunta que uno de los activos más fuertes de Hitler ha sido sorprender desde el principio al mundo con la incredulidad que generaron sus actos. "When he commenced his series of aggressions he profited always from the pause of petrified amazement which followed each of them". (85)

La autora apunta con sus palabras que los americanos, de una u otra manera, han escuchado o leído sobre los planes de Hitler, pero las prácticas nazis de esterilización y exterminio masivo contra ciertos grupos de ciudadanos europeos suenan tan alejadas de la realidad, tan inverosímiles, que resultan difíciles de creer como posibles en pleno siglo XX. Por eso, denuncia la soprano, las grandes potencias y organismos internacionales no saben reaccionar a tiempo y asegura que esos años de incredulidad están siendo aprovechados por Hitler para llevar a cabo su macabro plan palabra por palabra: "And now that we are awake, the horror seems too great for any mind not nurtured on Nazi principles to grasp. Yet, grasp it we must, if we are to act in time to save what may still be saved in Europe and our own honor here at home". (85)

A través de su carta a un medio de comunicación del calado e impacto de *The New York Times*, esta mujer trata de abrir los ojos a la población americana sobre las atrocidades que se están cometiendo en Europa, recordando que desde el mes de julio de 1942 los asesinatos a judíos se están haciendo masivos. Incluso plantea varias preguntas al lector para hacerle más consciente de su indiferencia y, por extensión, de la indiferencia de todo el pueblo americano:

> No words can compute the sum of such misery. And yet, it is your child, torn, crying from your arms, gone forever—where? Your father, your mother, old and loved, kicked into a truck and taken away—where? Your wife whom you adored [...] You yourself, respected citizen, honorable businessman, well dressed, clean, decent—beaten, bruised, covered with filth and unmentionable horrors, locked away from sight and sound of the world—where? The question now arises: What can be done? There can be no questions what any of us would do if we were confronted really with what is happening—a Jewish child running from Nazi tormentors would be helped and sheltered. The trouble is that we do not see these things. We hear of them on the radio or we view them in pictures indistinguishable from the preceding fictitious "thrills" at the movie. The cries and sobs, the torn and violated bodies, the starving babies, the desolate mothers are not real to our minds; if they were, our apathy could not continue. (85)

La autora insta al lector a la acción y es en este punto donde las buenas intenciones de Moulton-Mayer ponen de manifiesto su absoluto desconocimiento del Derecho Internacional. Propone el uso de herramientas diplomáticas como solución a una situación de emergencia humanitaria sin precedentes. Plantea la posibilidad de rescatar a las víctimas, proporcionarles transporte y recibirlas en Estados Unidos o en Palestina, previo permiso del país en el que se encuentran atrapadas, pero teme que la gran afluencia de refugiados judíos europeos hacia Norteamérica genere reticencias en la sociedad americana. Aún así, afirma que se trata de una dificultad fácilmente superable con una buena planificación y lanza una pregunta para la reflexión general, "Can we get hold of the surviving Jews and how can we put them into temporary shelter for a few years where they will be safe?" (85). La articulista no habla de política, habla de humanidad porque la política, dice, se está revelando lenta y excesivamente burocrática. La situación que se está viviendo en Alemania supone una realidad tan nueva y tan lejana de la imagen de una Europa civilizada, que la respuesta que plantea la autora del artículo podría calificarse de inocente y poco realista. Olvida que la salida de ciudadanos de un país para refugiarse en otro está regulada por leyes estrictas, que no menciona en su reflexión. En su lugar, la autora pide respuestas a los ciudadanos de a pie, cuando en realidad debería existir un respaldo político. Sus buenas intenciones demuestran, por lo tanto, falta de conocimiento del aparato político, a quien debería dirigirse públicamente reclamando soluciones.

Moulton-Mayer plantea la pregunta de cómo proporcionar un abrigo temporal y seguro a los judíos supervivientes, y destaca especialmente el término "temporal" porque está convencida de que los judíos afectados por el nazismo querrán volver a su país para reconstruir su vida de nuevo, una vez acabe el régimen de Adolf Hitler. La autora tiene en mente a ciudadanos alemanes, polacos, holandeses y franceses, de clase media y alta, en su mayoría profesionales, artistas, científicos, escritores con una vida y un reconocimiento social asentado durante años en sus respectivos paises. Sus prejuicios de clase la impiden ver que entre los afectados por el régimen de

Hitler y las prácticas nazis, además de la preocupación por la suerte de los ciudadanos burgueses que animan su discurso y despiertan sus inquietudes morales, existen millones de judíos de las clases trabajadoras y del ámbito rural, muchos de ellos analfabetos, pobres y sin recursos sociales, y son precisamente estos los que tienen más dificultades para poder salir de sus países y huír del nazismo. De esta forma, la soprano avisa al lector estadounidense del destino incierto de un grupo de ciudadanos de ascendencia judía, que realmente ya intenta planificar la huida de su país, encontrando dificultades insalvables, incluso para aquellos que habían disfrutado de posiciones sociales privilegiadas.

Sugiere la autora, además, la posibilidad de sacar a los judíos de los países donde sus vidas corren peligro y enviarlos a una potencia protegida, como podría ser Suiza. Incluso, formula la opción de recoger a los judíos supervivientes con la ayuda de Cruz Roja para trasladarlos de forma segura a territorios neutrales como Inglaterra, EE. UU. o Palestina. En este punto, se dirige a la conciencia de quienes tienen el poder de hacer algo,

> What of the more than 1,000 children who were to be saved out of France in the Fall and who are still there? Unfortunately, they fell victims not only to deliberately dilatory measures on the part of French authorities but also to red tape nearer home. (85)

Entre los países que cita está Palestina. Recuerda Moulton-Mayer que en 1939 el Libro Blanco dispuso que 75 000 judíos pudieran entrar en Palestina en los siguientes cinco años, pero hasta ese momento tan solo 45 000 lo han hecho. Una de las cuestiones prácticas que identifica es que ninguno de los países europeos posee un servicio consular para controlar pasaportes y "so if any of these unfortunately reach Palestine, they are turned back". (85) No obstante, propone que, resuelto este escollo, los judíos residentes en Palestina podrían cuidar de exiliados, e incluso, hace también un llamamiento a los cristianos en el mismo sentido,

> it seems incredible that we, the so-called Christian people of the world, can calmly go about our business, eat, drink, amuse ourselves, in fact, live our normal lives, while in the world exists such misery [...] The suffering of these persecuted innocent people is another; it is removable; it should be faced and overcome. When the story of these years comes to be told in its hideous entirety we shall be face to face with the record of our inhumanity. (85)

Por último, culpabiliza al pueblo alemán por no haberse manifestado ni haber protestado ante la falta de humanidad del régimen de Hitler, ni siquiera en las universidades "when books were burned and colleagues thrust into concentration camps" (85). La articulista asegura, sin embargo, que aún no es demasiado tarde para actuar.

El hecho de que Moulton-Mayer plantee todos estos temas todavía en el fragor de la batalla de la Segunda Guerra Mundial hace que su visión sobre el conflicto subyacente, el genocidio, sea realmente útil aún hoy en día para comprender cómo es posible que tal crimen contra la humanidad se estuviese cometiendo ante los ojos impasibles de la humanidad.

Es importante recordar que la Segunda Guerra Mundial comprende una lucha global, en la que los hechos que constituyen el llamado Holocausto no pueden entenderse como crímenes de guerra, ya que dichos hechos no tuvieron lugar en los campos de batalla, ni fueron consecuencia de

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Los juicios de Nuremberg se convirtieron en los primeros de la historia por crímenes contra la humanidad en el mundo. Así se puso de manifiesto en la declaración inicial que los inauguró, y donde se dijo que el verdadero acusador en aquel tribunal era la humanidad.

acción bélica alguna. Como años después se demostrará en los juicios de Nuremberg, los asesinatos de millones de civiles cometidos por los nazis constituyen un crimen contra la humanidad de proporciones nunca antes imaginadas y tipificado hoy en día como genocidio en el Derecho Internacional, y por tanto, una instancia jurídica por encima de las leyes de cualquier país. De esta forma, los juicios de Nuremberg se convirtieron en los primeros de la historia por crímenes contra la humanidad en el mundo. Así se puso de manifiesto en la declaración inicial que los inauguró, y donde se dijo que el verdadero acusador en aquel tribunal era la humanidad.

Tan solo partiendo del conocimiento de estas premisas somos capaces de entender por qué Jan Karski y su discurso ante Roosevelt sobre los hechos que acontecían en Europa parecía del todo inverosímil.

3. EL HOLOCAUSTO: EL SECRETO DE LA SEGUNDA GUERRA MUNDIAL

Según coinciden diferentes fuentes historiográficas, las causas bélicas de la Segunda Guerra Mundial son: en Occidente la invasión de Polonia por parte de las tropas alemanas, y en Oriente, la invasión japonesa de China, las colonias británicas, neerlandesas y posteriormente el ataque a Pearl Harbor. Acciones agresivas todas ellas que recibieron como respuesta la declaración de guerra de Estados Unidos contra Europa. No obstante, entre todas esas causas no figura el Holocausto porque, como ya hemos comentado anteriormente, los hechos que se engloban bajo ese término no formaban parte de la contienda.

Según explica el profesor Walter Laqueur, durante 1943 y los inicios de 1944 los asesinatos masivos a judíos, que se están produciendo por todo el territorio invadido por el ejercito alemán, no figuraban de forma destacada en los medios de comunicación de los países Aliados y neutrales, ni tampoco se mencionaban en las declaraciones oficiales de las potencias aliadas. "Many American and British Jews realized the full extent of the catastrophe only during the last year of the war and many non-Jews only after the war had ended". (6)

Revela Laqueur que en enero de 1943, justo después de la declaración de los Aliados condenando las atrocidades de los Nazis contra los judíos, más de la mitad de los ciudadanos americanos entrevistados para una encuesta sobre este tema no podían creer que los Nazis estuvieran asesinando deliberadamente a los judíos. Otra investigación similar realizada a finales de 1944 mostraba que la mayoría de los americanos todavía creía que menos de 100 000 judíos habían sido exterminados bajo el mandato de Adolf Hitler. Afirma el profesor Laqueur que tampoco se le dio demasiada relevancia política a estas encuestas que dejaban entrever una y otra vez "a regrettable lack of information about facts and figures in general including, for instance, the size of the population of the United States or even their home state or town". (6)

El día que se publicó la citada carta firmada por Dorothy Moulton-Mayer, el 7 de marzo de 1943, hacía ya casi un año y tres meses que se había celebrado en una zona burguesa de Berlín, Wannsee, la conferencia que debatió la "Solución final al problema judío en Europa", el 20 de enero de 1942. Con este macabro eufemismo se referían los nazis al asesinato deliberado y

cuidadosamente planificado de millones de ciudadanos europeos, una matanza inconmensurable de seres humanos que después será conocida como genocidio de los judíos europeos. Aún así, Wannsee no marcó el inicio de aquel histórico exterminio, tan solo fue un lugar donde concretar dentro de las más altas instancias nazis, el plan que ya venía ejecutándose desde 1941 con las cámaras de gas experimentales de Auschwitz, y anteriormente con las unidades móviles en Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor y Belzec. Más de dos años, pues, en que las autoridades y miembros de la sociedad civil estadounidenses escuchaban atónitos las noticias intermitentes que llegaban sobre lo que estaba ocurriendo en Europa, sin dar crédito a las acciones y los métodos, que se decían, utilizados por Hitler, un líder elegido democráticamente por el pueblo alemán. Las noticias sobre las matanzas contra civiles señalaban la impunidad con que se estaba llevando a cabo un plan estratégicamente pensado para exterminar al pueblo judío asentado durante siglos en Europa, y de esta forma acabar con cualquier vestigio de su cultura.

Sobre la importancia de la conferencia de Wansee reflexiona Laqueur, apuntando que esta cita fue la ocasión en la que Adolf Eichmann convocó a los representantes de varios ministerios alemanes, cuyo apoyo le era imprescindible para acelerar la "Solución final". Fue un paso importante, dice Laqueur, pero en modo alguno fue el principio del exterminio. "In the six months preceding this conference more than half a million Jews had already been killed by the special SS units, the *Einsatzgruppen*, and the first extermination centre (Chelmno) already functioned". (6)

En abril de 1945, una vez liberado Auschwitz, los soldados de las filas Aliadas que participaron en la cancelación de aquella especie de prisiones diseminadas por Europa desconocían la naturaleza de los campos de concentración nazi y manifestaban su horror ante lo que iban descubriendo: ¿Eran campos de trabajos forzados? ¿Eran lugares para recluir enfermos? ¿Eran campos de prisioneros en situación de desnutrición y suciedad extremos? ¿Se trataba de espacios de tortuna y lugares de exterminio? Hay que tener en cuenta que cuando las tropas británicas entraron por primera vez en el campo de Bergen-Belsen, en abril de 1945, las actividades de exterminio sistemático habían cesado meses antes. Las unidades especiales de las SS se habían afanado, viendo el desarrollo y avance de las tropas Aliadas, en borrar las huellas del exterminio masivo destruyendo los campos y evacuando a los prisioneros a través de las conocidas como marchas de la muerte, que consistían en trasladarlos lejos de los aliados, hacia campos del interior de Alemania, para prevenir que pudieran apresarlos y contaran los asesinatos masivos. Se trataba de marchas en las que los prisioneros recorrían largas distancias bajo unas estrictas medidas de seguridad, sufriendo maltrato por parte de los guardias de las SS y soportando unas condiciones meteorológicas extremas. Muchos de los prisioneros no sobrevivieron a estos traslados y otros fueron asesinados en el trayecto, ya que los guardias tenían órdenes de disparar a todos aquellos que mostrasen síntomas de agotamiento.

Según recuerda el United States Holocaust Memorial Museum de Washington en un artículo titulado "La liberación de los campos nazis", en julio de 1944 las fuerzas soviéticas encontraron el campo de Majdanek cerca de Lublin, en Polonia, donde los alemanes intentaron esconder la evidencia del exterminio,

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> El personal del campo incendió el crematorio grande, pero en la apurada operación quedaron intactas las cámaras de gas. En el verano de 1944, los soviéticos también llegaron a los campos de exterminio de Belzec, Sobibor, y Treblinka. Los alemanes habían desmontado estos campos en 1943, después que la mayoría de los judíos polacos habían sido matados (sic.). En enero de 1945, los soviéticos liberaron Auschwitz, el campo de exterminio y concentración más grande [...] Había abundante evidencia del exterminio masivo en Auschwitz. Los alemanes habían destrozado la mayoría de los depósitos en el campo, pero en los que quedaban los soviéticos encontraron las pertenencias de las victimas. (USHMM párr. 2)

Pero no en todos los campos existieron cámaras de gas. Es interesante en este punto prestar atención y analizar brevemente el sistema de campos de concentración que establecieron los nazis, ya que no en todos ellos se produjeron exterminios planificados en cámaras de gas, y algunos campos evolucionaron de ser originariamente centros de detención a convertirse en campos de la muerte.

En un artículo titulado "El sistema de los campos de concentración en profundidad" publicado por el United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, se apunta la primavera de 1933 como el momento en el que las SS establecieron el campo de concentración de Dachau, "que sirvió como modelo para un sistema de campos de concentración centralizados y en expansión" (párr. 2). En un principio se trataba de lugares de detención para recluir a opositores políticos al régimen, y con el tiempo se convirtieron en lugares "donde las personas eran encarceladas sin respeto por las normas que habitualmente se aplican al arresto y la custodia" (párr. 1). Este mismo artículo establece una tipología de campos existentes en Europa que detallo a continuación:

- Campos de trabajos forzados: donde se obligaba a los prisioneros a trabajar en condiciones infrahumanas. Kaufering/Landsberg, Flossenbürg, Dachau, Buchenwald, Breitenau o Mittelbau/Dora, en Alemania, son algunos ejemplos.
- Campos de prisioneros de guerra: donde eran recluidos los prisioneros que los alemanes realizaban durante la contienda. Niederhagen, en Alemania, o Grini, en Noruega, son algunos casos.
- Campos de tránsito: donde se realizaba la primera criba de presos, como ocurría en Theresienstadt, en la República Checa.
- Campos de concentración: es la evolución de los campos de trabajos forzados que, con el tiempo, se convirtieron en lugares donde las condiciones de trabajo y de vida eran infrahumanas. Mauthausen en Austria es un sombrío ejemplo.
- Campos de exterminio: también conocidos como campos de la muerte, de los que ya nunca más se volvía. Auschwitz-Birkenau y Chelmno, en Polonia, son algunos de los que encabezan esta lista infame.

El mapa de centros creados por los nazis para acabar con la vida de los judíos en Europa era desde un principio, y tal como se comprueba tras la liberación, una especie de puzzle desordenado de piezas aterradoras y sin sentido dentro de los parámetros del mundo civilizado. Escapaban a la moral y a la lógica de la razón de los valores que supuestamente habían alumbrado la cultura europea y, para las tropas extranjeras, carecían de toda explicación. ¿Cómo articular y dar explicación a aquello que no la tenía?

> The camps in which systematic extermination had been practised had ceased to function months earlier. In comparison with the death camps, Belsen was almost an idyllic place; there were no gas chambers in Belsen, no mass executions, death was merely by disease and starvation. But at the time it was considered the greatest possible abomination, and the luckless commanders and guards of Belsen were the first to be brought to trial; their colleagues who had been in charge of the death camps in the East were to appear in court only many years later and some would never be judged. Some had died or disappeared, others were too old or too sick, the witnesses had forgotten or died, too much time had passed. (Laqueur 2)

Este es, según recoge el United States Holocaust Memorial Museum en su archivo online, el mapa de los campos nazis en Europa durante 1943 y 1944.

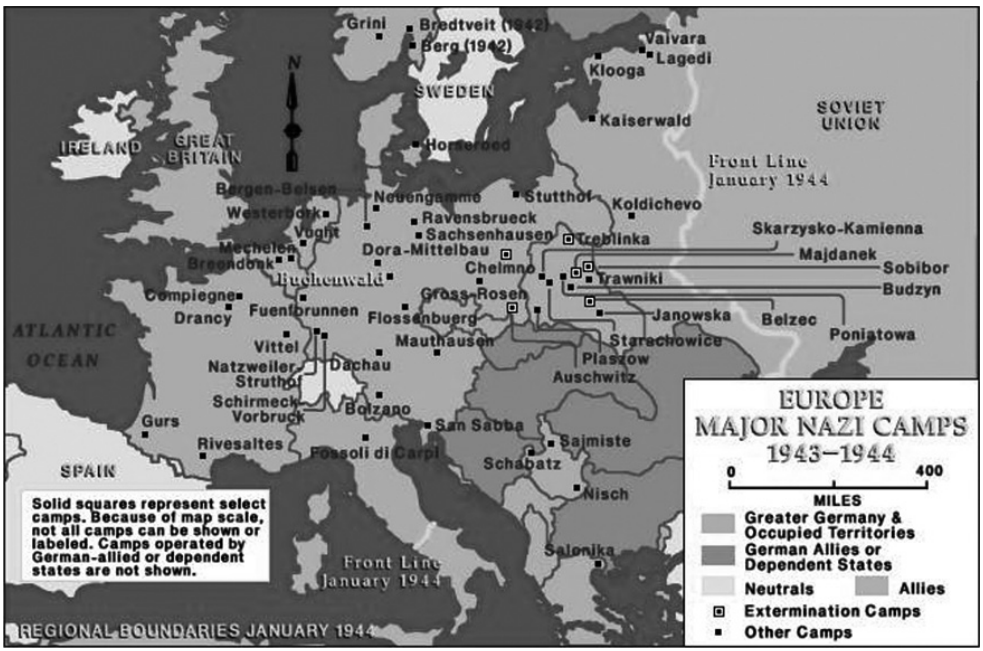

Figura 1: Mapa de los campos nazis en Europa 1943-1944 (USHMM).

Este contexto, unido al escaso y discontinuo flujo de información que llegaba a Estados Unidos en lo que se quiso entender como rumores acerca de las prácticas nazis contra los judíos, generó un vacío de comunicación al respecto. No es un tema baladí éste último, ya que los medios informativos, con sus reportajes y su labor desde el lugar de los hechos son, según un estudio de Sandra D. Melone, Georgios Terzis y Ozsel Beleli, los que alteran el entorno de comunicación y los que tienen capacidad de convertirse en supervisores de las posibles violaciones de los derechos humanos que pudieran estar cometiéndose en el escenario de la contienda, porque aportan "advertencias precoces sobre posibles intensificadores del conflicto" (3).

Unir, por tanto, todas las piezas de aquel puzzle inconexo de campos de concentración diseminados por Europa llevó mucho tiempo, y solo con tiempo se pudo observar ese mapa

al completo y calibrar el peso de lo que acababa de ocurrir en pleno siglo XX en un escenario desarrollado y de la más sofisticada civilización como era Europa.

4. *THE NEW YORK TIMES* – EL PERIÓDICO MÁS LEÍDO Y QUE MENOS USÓ LOS TÉRMINOS 'EXTERMINATION' Y 'JEW'

Entre el 20 de enero de 1942 y el 27 de enero de 1945, fecha de la liberación del campo de Auschwitz, *The New York Times* publicó 42 noticias que contenían los términos 'extermination' y 'Jew'.

Seguramente no fueron suficientes noticias, porque desde la primera información que se publicó con las palabras clave citadas anteriormente, el 4 de febrero de 1942 con el titular "Our Own Fifth Column Urged. Refugees from Germany Recommended for Propaganda Work", hasta que finalmente se liberó Auschwitz, pasaron poco más de tres años.

Haciendo un recorrido a través de las noticias más desgarradoras y humanas que publicó *The New York Times* sobre el genocidio judío con los términos citados anteriormente, encontramos historias personales, cartas, gritos de auxilio, que incrementan su crudeza y su intensidad con el paso del tiempo, y que empiezan a publicarse en 1942 como elocuentes esbozos de que algo estaba ocurriendo. Es a partir de 1943 cuando los artículos incluyen por fin la expresión "mass murders" para dar nombre a algo nuevo que ocurría paralelamente a la guerra, fuera del campo de batalla, lejos de la mirada de la comunidad internacional, y que constituía un crimen contra la humanidad.

El 4 de febrero de 1942, en la sección "Letters to *the Times*", *The New York Times* publica una carta firmada por Gunnar Leistikov titulada "Our Own Fifth Column Urged. Refugees from Germany Recommended for Propaganda Work", en la que el autor insta constantemente a las democracias a utilizar las mismas armas de las que hace uso el enemigo, para de esta manera combatirlo. Se refiere a la propaganda para hacer contrapropaganda al mensaje nazi y cita palabras de Hitler para demostrar que el canciller hablaba, desde que llegó al gobierno, de la desaparición de los judíos.

> Hitler's speeches are always made to cover and influence a special situation [...] At last, he scares his fellow-countrymen: "We know fully and well that the war can end only by the extermination of the Germanic peoples or by the desappearance of Jewry from Europe. Fort he first time in history whole peoples will not be bled, but for the first time the old Judaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth will be applied". (párr. 1)

A lo largo de 1942, este diario recoge diferentes noticias que apuntan a la supuesta comisión de crímenes en Alemania y Polonia por parte del régimen nazi, aunque todavía no se conoce la verdadera naturaleza de los mismos y las fuentes que proporcionan la información son muy pocas. En respuesta a algunas afirmaciones, se producen una serie de protestas en Nueva York de las que se hace eco *The New York Times*. Son movilizaciones promovidas por el American Jewish Congress,

The Jewish Labor Committee y el B'nai Brith. El 20 de julio de 1942, este diario titula "Fight Mass Slaughter. Jewish Groups to Hold Rally in the Garden Tomorrow", y recuerda que la condena pública contra la "mass slaughter" se llevará a cabo al día siguiente en el Madison Square Garden.

> The story will be told at the meeting of how a million Jews have been murdered by the Nazis in occupied countries, how two and one-half million are being starved to death in ghettos and the remainder of the seven million under Nazi domination exposed to economic persecution and other brutalities with a view to their extermination. (párr. 2)

Posteriormente, el 17 de octubre de 1942, *The New York Times* publica "Poland Indicts 10 in 400,000 Deaths. They Head Roster of 3,000 War Criminals to Be Brought to Trial after Peace", y desgrana las acusaciones una a una.

> 1. The German Governor of Poland, Hans Frank, charged with ordering the execution of 200,000 Poles, the confiscation of Polish property, the transfer of hundreds of thousands of Polish workers to Germany, the suppression of Polish citizenship and the establishment of ghettos. (párr. 4)

Noticias como esta llevan al presidente Roosevelt a tomar la decisión de estudiar el posible nombramiento de una comisión que, junto con las Naciones Unidas, recoja y examine todas las pruebas sobre actos criminales cometidos por los nazis en los países que han ocupado. Lo anuncia este periódico el 9 de diciembre de 1942, "President Renews Pledges to Jews. He Tells Group Every Effort Will Be Made to Fix Guilt in Axis Crimes Agains Race". Se trata de una reunión de los altos representates de las comunidades judías en Estados Unidos, de la que sale un memorandum con propuestas para el presidente Roosevelt con el objetivo de que los nazis rindan cuentas por los crímenes cometidos y las deportaciones de judíos. A continuación, este artículo recoge cifras de los judíos asesinados en Alemania, Austria, Bélgica, Bohemis, Holanda, Yugoslavia, Grecia y Rumanía, cerca de dos millones en total. Los representantes de las comunidades judías hacen uso de su influencia para conseguir ser oídos por el presidente de los Estados Unidos, que les ofrece su compromiso serio de ayuda para atajar lo que está ocurriendo en Europa con los judíos.

> President Roosevelt did not doubt, Rabbi Wise said, that the United Nations would be prepared, as the American Government will be, to take every step "which will end these serious crimes against the Jews and against all other civilian populations of the Hitler- ruled countries and to save those who may yet be saved." [...] At that time you will recall, the President added, "I said the American people not only sympathize with the victims of Nazi crimes but will hold the perpetrators of these crimes to strict accuntability in a day of reckoning [sic] which will surely come." (párr. 4-8)

La reunión con los altos representantes de las comunidades judías en Estados Unidos acaba con un memorandum que recopila pruebas que doten de más fuerza, si cabe, su solicitud de ayuda urgente para los judíos en Europa.

> We come to you as representative of all sections of the Jewish community of the United States. Within recent months all Americans have been horrified by the verification of the reports concerning the barbarities against the inhabitants of countries overrun by Hitler's forces. To these horrors has now been added the news of Hitler's edict calling for the extermination of all Jews in the subjugated lands. (párr. 11)

Pocos días después, el 18 de diciembre de 1942, *The New York Times* califica de "war" al exterminio al que los judíos están siendo sometidos por los nazis: "11 Allies Condemn Nazi War On Jews. United Nations Issue Joint Declaration of Protest on 'Cold-Blooded Extermination'" y recuerda el comunicado de Roosevelt del 21 de agosto de ese mismo año, en el que se denuncian las persecuciones y se advierte a los responsables de que serán llevados ante los tribunales; y la del 7 de octubre del mismo año, en el que habla de crímenes de guerra.

> President Roosevelt on 21 Aug. 21, 1942, issued a statement denouncing the persecutions and warning those responsible that "the time will come when they shall have to stand in courts of law in the very countries which they are now oppressing and answer for their acts." In another statement, on Oct. 7, 1942, President Roosevelt advocated a United Nations Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes for meting out "just and sure punishment" to the "ringleaders responsible for the organized murder of thousands of innocent persons and the commission of atrocities which have violated every tenet of the Christian faith." (párr. 14)

A continuación, el 20 de diciembre de 1942, *The New York Times* publica un informe de las Naciones Unidas que ya habla del exterminio a los judíos, e incluso de los métodos empleados por los nazis. "Allies Describe Outrages on Jews", reza el titular y en él se reflexiona sobre la suerte que habrán corrido cinco millones de judíos en Europa, e incluso llega a temer que hayan sido "wiped off from the face of the earth". Un objetivo para el cual, según el informe de la ONU, los nazis podrían haber redoblado sus esfuerzos.

> Reports from various and unquestionable sources confirmed that Jews were being deported from their homes and sent to concentration camps in other countries (notably Poland) in ever-increasing numbers and that a large proportion of them were being put to death by methods utterly foreign to any known standards of human behavior. No attempt has been made to present a complete historical record, the committee says because "that would not be possible, for many details have been shrouded in death itself—but sufficient is shown to reveal the continent—wide consistency of the persecution that is now taking place. The statement thus presents but a summary of the evidence." (párr. 4)

En ese momento ya se sabe, porque así lo cita este diario en palabras de Hubert Pierlot, político belga, profesor de Derecho y presidente del Belgian Government in exile en 1939, que el tratamiento que Alemania da a los judíos es uno de los dramas más oscuros de la historia.

> The report goes on to quote Hubert Pierlot, Premier of the Belgian Government in exile, who declared that Belgians felt unanimously that "Germany's treatment of the Jews is one of the darkest dramas in history." The same conditions are reported from Luxembourg and the Netherlands, as well as the Scandinavian countries in German hands—Norway and Denmark—where the Jews, though few in number, face the same fate as in the rest of the Continent. Most of Norway's Jews are said to have been sent to concentration camps in Toensberg and Poland. (párr. 10)

A partir de 1943, las noticias sobre ejecuciones masivas se suceden, alternándose con las peticiones de auxilio internacional. El 17 de enero de 1943, encontramos el siguiente titular, "Germans clearing Silesian Corridor. Area 60 Miles Wide Is Called Scene of Biggest Drive to Exterminate Poles", y el 5 de abril del mismo año "Jewish Congress Asks Aid in Europe. Chicago Division to Push

Succor Programs for the 5,000,000 Jews There. Warning by a Senator". Ambas noticias no ocupan la portada, sino que se encuentran publicadas entre las páginas 12 y 14 de este diario.

Algo más cercana a la portada, en la página 7, publicó el 4 de junio de 1943 *The New York Times* la nota de suicidio de Szamul Zygielbojm, un polaco residente en Londres como consecuencia del exilio del gobierno de Polonia. En ella, según apunta el diario en un subtítulo, la víctima pide ayuda urgente para los supervivientes y denuncia la apatía de las autoridades polacas en el exilio ante lo que está ocurriendo en Europa con los judíos. Además, se desgranan los motivos de su suicidio, que él mismo justifica diciendo que su mujer y su hijo se encuentran entre las víctimas de Hitler, y que hasta el momento él había trabajado incansablemente como miembro del Polish National Council y del Jewish Socialist Party para aliviar la situación de los innumerables oprimidos, cuyas casas en los guetos fueron gradualmente "being ground out of existence" (párr. 1), pero que ya no puede más.

> By my death I wish to express my strongest protest against the inactivity with which the world is looking on and permitting the extermination of Jewish people. I know how human little life is worth, especially today. But as I was unable to do anything during my life, perhaps by my death I shall contribute to destroying the indifference of those who are able and should act in order to save now, maybe at the last moment, this handful of Polish Jews who are still alive from certain anihilation. (párr. 12)

Esta noticia cita tres elementos importantes para ser conscientes de que sí hubo solicitud pública de auxilio por parte de las víctimas y que sí hubo denuncia social debido a la inacción de las autoridades:

1. La carta de suicidio de Szamul Zygielbojm va dirigida al presidente polaco en el exilio, Wladislaw Raczkiewicz, y al premier, Wladislaw Sikorski, dos personas públicas.

> I take the liberty of addressing to you my last words, and through you the Polish Government and people, the governments and people of the Allied States and the conscience of the world. From the latest information received from Poland, it is evident that without doubt the Germans with ruthless cruelty are now murdering the few remaining Jews in Poland. Behind the walls of the ghettos the last act of a tragedy unprecedented in history is being performed. [...] I have also to state that although the Polish Government has in a high degree contributed to stirring the opinion of the world, yet it did so insufficiently, for it did nothing extraordinary enough to correspond to the magnitude of the drama now being enacted in Poland. (párr. 4)

2. Zygielbojm señala como responsables no solo a los que él llama "perpetrators", verdugos, sino también "indirectly also it weighs on the whole of humanity." (párr. 6)

> The responsability for the crime of murdering all the Jewish population in Poland falls in the first instance on the perpetrators, but indirectly also it weighs on the whole of humanity, the peoples and governments of the Allied States, which so far have made no effort toward a concrete action for the purpose of curtailing

> this crime. By passive observation of this murder of defenseless millons and the maltreatment of children and women, the men of those countries have become accomplices of criminals. (párr. 6)

3. Zygielbojm desvela la existencia de organizaciones clandestinas de información, formadas por judíos y miembros de la resistencia, que trabajaban incansablemente para dar a conocer la tragedia que estaba ocurriendo en Polonia.

> Out of the nearly 350,000 Polish Jews and about 700,000 Jews deported to Poland from other countries, there still lived in April of this year, according to the official information of the head of the underground Bund organization sent to the United States through a delegate of the government about 300,000. And the murders are still going on incessantly. (párr. 8)

El 25 de septiembre de 1943 *The New York Times* publica en su página 6 la petición del secretario de Estado, Cordell Hull, para que los judíos de los países ocupados por los nazis sean considerados legalmente prisioneros de guerra, y que las Naciones Unidas admitan todos esos territorios bajo su control. "Hull Tells Labor Aid to Jews Is Aim" es el titular, y el subtítulo reza: "Notice That All Individual Nazis Will Be Prosecuted for Crimes Is Sought". En el cuerpo de la noticia, las palabras de Hull ya se refieren a la necesidad de depurar las responsabilidades en los crímenes cometidos contra la comunidad judía.

> The United States therefore, must warn the German people that the United Nations have decided to establish the identity of those Germans who are responsible for the acts of savagery against the Jews and other peoples; that as each of these criminal deeds is committed it is being investigated, and evidence is relentlessly being piled up for the purposes of justice. We also appeal to our Government and to the Governments of the United Nations", the statement continued, "to admit to all territorities under their control, Jewish refugees who may succeed in escaping from the Nazi hell. (párr. 10)

Y mientras esa ayuda llega, este diario también recoge las campañas de organizaciones judías americanas, como la American Jewish Joint Distribution, para recaudar dinero destinado a ayudar a los judíos en Alemania. El 6 de diciembre de 1943, se publica en la página 17 el siguiente titular, "Jewish Aid Group to Seek $16,000,000. Greenstein, Chief of Welfare Branch, Says Agency Needs Support in Its Work".

A continuación, durante 1944 y enero de 1945, los titulares publicados por *The New York Times* sí permiten atisbar ya la verdadera situación que se vive en Europa, bajo el dominio de Hitler. Desde el 18 de mayo de 1944, el titular "Savage Blow Hit Jews in Hungary. 80,000 Reported Sent to Murder Camps in Poland - Non Jews Protest in Vain", se describen con mucha concreción las atrocidades y saqueos que sufre la población judía por parte de los nazis, y cuenta que cientos de judíos prefieren el suicidio antes que caer en manos del ejército de Hitler. Apunta, además, que la gran mayoría de la población aborrece las atrocidades cometidas contra los judíos compatriotas, "most of whose ancestors lived in Hungary for centuries and played and important role in the country's social, economic and political life". (párr. 2) Pero también reconoce que Hitler tiene muchos adeptos, a los que llama oportunistas, ya que se están beneficiando de la política de confiscación y expropiación de bienes aplicada a la comunidad judía.

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> There is no doubt that this clique has acquired a fairly large number of followers, nor is it surprising that the numbers of such sympathizers are growing, especially since scores of thousands of Jewish shops, homes and businesses are being distributed to influential prospective supporters. (párr. 4)

Pocos días después, el 20 de mayo de 1944, se advierte de que si los Aliados actuasen con rapidez, todavía podrían salvarse millones de vidas, "Speed Seen Needed for Jews' Rescue. 1,500,000 in Hungary and Rumania Can Be Saved, Says Official in Palestine". Una información que se publica en la página 5 del diario y como un breve, es decir sin apenas repercusión, cuando perfectamente podría tratarse de un tema digno de ocupar un editorial del periódico, un espacio precisamente dedicado habitualmente a aconsejar a líderes políticos sobre cómo actuar ante determinadas circunstancias.

La lucha que Raphael Lemkin llevaba desde hacía tiempo, el reconocimiento del crimen contra la humanidad con independencia de la nación de la que se trate.

Tendremos que esperar al mes de noviembre del 1944, concretamente al día 26, para que *The New York Times* cite declaraciones de testigos directos de los asesinatos en masa, que hablan de sistematismo en las prácticas nazis. Todos estos testimonios están recogidos en un informe al que tiene acceso la War Refugee Board, y a través de la cual se conocen los detalles. El informe reflexiona, incluso, sobre la posibilidad de que la falta de crédito a las atrocidades nazis sea la causante de la tardanza en la actuación por parte de los Aliados.

> In the first detailed report by a United States Government Agency offering eyewitness proof of mass murder by the Germans [...] "The board has every reason to believe that these reports present a true picture of the frightful happenings in these camps. It is making the reports public in the firm conviction that they should be read and understood by all Americans." (párr. 1)

El reportaje aclara que la información proviene de la narración de dos jóvenes judíos eslovacos que escaparon de Birkenau el pasado 7 de abril de 1944 y recoge las palabras del presidente del Hebrew Committee for National Liberation, Peter H. Bergson, que recomienda diversas acciones a las Naciones Unidas, entre ellas una declaración conjunta que proclame los asesinatos de judíos como un crímen sin fronteras, independientemente del territorio en el que se haya cometido. Una solicitud que conecta directamente con la lucha que Raphael Lemkin llevaba desde hacía tiempo, el reconocimiento del crimen contra la humanidad con independencia de la nación de la que se trate.

> He added that his committee was recommending the following action to the United Nations concerned: "That they issue a joint declaration proclaiming that crimes committed against Hebrews in Europe, irrespective of the territory on which the crime was committed or the citizenship or lack of citizenship of the victim at the time of death, be considered as a war crime and punished as such." (párr. 10)

5. CONCLUSIONES

Hannah Rosen recoge en "Interview with Jan Karski" sus palabras sobre la indiferencia Americana ante el Holocausto.

> Era fácil para los nazis matar judíos, porque lo hicieron. Los Aliados consideraron imposible y demasiado costoso acudir en rescate de los judíos, porque no lo hicieron. Los judíos fueron abandonados por todos los Gobiernos, jerarquías eclesiásticas y sociedades, pero miles de judíos sobrevivieron porque miles de individuos en Polonia, Francia, Bélgica, Dinamarca y Holanda ayudaron a salvar judíos. Ahora todos los Gobiernos e Iglesias dicen "Intentamos ayudar a los judíos", porque están avergonzados y quieren conservar su reputación. No ayudaron, porque seis millones perecieron, pero quienes estaban en los Gobiernos y en las Iglesias sobrevivieron. Nadie hizo lo suficiente.

El 27 de febrero de 2011, el periódico *El País* publica un reportaje titulado "Este hombre quiso parar el Holocausto", en referencia a Jan Karski y recoge sus palabras: "Los líderes judíos lo dejaron claro: los alemanes no intentan esclavizarnos como hacen con otros pueblos, estamos siendo sistemáticamente exterminados. Esa es la diferencia [...] Creen que exageramos, que somos unos histéricos, pero millones de judíos están condenados al exterminio" (párr. 5).

Karski fue el testigo incómodo del Holocausto. Introducido por la Resistencia de forma clandestina en el gueto de Varsovia y más tarde en el campo de tránsito de Izbica, almacenó en su imaginario personal el verdadero horror de lo que era un plan calculado por el gobierno nazi para acabar con el pueblo judío en Europa. Así se lo contó a Lanzmann en el documental *Shoah*, "Las imágenes de lo que presencié en el campo de exterminio son, me temo, mis posesiones permanentes. Nada me gustaría más que liberar mi mente de estos recuerdos". Una entrevista plagada de silencios interpretativos, necesarios para que Karski pudiera recomponerse tras revivir segundo a segundo el horror del Holocausto, a medida que se lo iba relatando a Lanzmann.

Su memoria fotográfica fue su única herramienta para informar al Estado polaco clandestino sobre las atrocidades que se cometían en los campos, y finalmente para llegar a entrevistarse con el presidente de los Estados Unidos. Este último encuentro acaba con la idea de que los altos dirigentes políticos, y especialmente los americanos, no sabían lo que ocurría en Europa.

Karski se entrevistó con el ministro de Asuntos Exteriores británico, Anthony Eden; pero el primer ministro, Winston Churchill, no lo recibió. El presidente norteamericano Franklin D. Roosevelt sí lo hizo, aunque con una actitud indiferente. El tiempo dio la razón a Jan Karski que, como él mismo dijo a Claude Lanzmann, tuvo que vivir por siempre con esas imágenes que le atormentaban.

Revisar con detenimiento los titulares del diario *The New York Times* en el periodo comprendido entre 1936 y enero de 1945, con los filtros "extermination" y "Jew", arroja resultados suficientes como para afirmar que no solo Jan Karski sabía lo suficiente. La prensa sabía lo suficiente, aunque no supo valorar el calado de esas informaciones. Karski se convirtió en el testigo incómodo del Holocausto ante, quizá, el hombre más poderoso en cualquier contienda: el presidente de los Estados Unidos.

Jan Karksi falleció en el año 2000 en Washington y la Universidad de Georgetown, de la que era académico, le dedicó una estatua en sus jardines donde reza lo siguiente,

> Jan Karski (Jan Kozielewski), 1914-2000, mensajero del pueblo polaco ante su gobierno en el exilio, mensajero del pueblo judío ante el mundo, el hombre que alertó sobre la aniquilación del pueblo judío cuando aún había tiempo para detenerla. Nombrado por el Estado de Israel Justo entre las Naciones, héroe del pueblo polaco, profesor en la Universidad de Georgetown (1952-1992), un hombre noble que caminó entre nosotros y nos hizo mejores con su presencia, un hombre justo.

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'This man is looking for a gesture': John Dos Passos's Transcultural and Transnational Views about History and Literature in *Rosinante to the Road Again*

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'This man is looking for a gesture': John Dos Passos's Transcultural and Transnational Views about History and Literature in *Rosinante to the Road Again*

ABSTRACT

This interdisciplinary essay analyzes John Dos Passos's travel book *Rosinante to the Road Again* (1922) from a Jamesonian perspective, focusing on the implicit dialectical interaction between creativity and the totality of history, the role of the modernist utopian illusion and the quest for return to an Edenic past, the cosmopolitan expatriate individual as a fundamental part of a historical context, and the implications of the literary form in relation to a concrete textual tradition or movement. For this purpose, the analysis draws on Jameson's *The Modernist Papers* and *The Political Unconscious* to establish a dialectical criticism that investigates how the literary form is engaged with a material historical situation. Therefore, the Spanish socio-historical reality depicted in *Rosinante* becomes a symbol of Dos Passos's search for the return to the mythic Arcadia. In his transcultural and transnational quest for the Spanish gesture, Dos Passos was searching how to define his own unstable hybrid modernist identity in the context of Spanish history and literature. As a result, *Rosinante* becomes a sort of paradigmatic modernist epic in which the American writer experiments with the literary motif of the journey as a form of self-exploration. His temporary expatriate condition, and the reality of being an American with Portuguese

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roots, determined his need for a more Edenic and epic culture far from the limitations of the American urban industrialization and materialism.

Key Words: John Dos Passos; *Rosinante to the Road Again*; Fredric Jameson; Spain; Spanish history and literature; modernism.

1. TRAVELLING ACROSS CULTURES: DOS PASSOS'S UTOPIAN ILLUSION AND THE EPIC NARRATIVES IN *ROSINANTE TO THE ROAD AGAIN*

In *The Modernist Papers* (2007), Fredric Jameson refers to John Dos Passos's modernist approach toward the fictional space as a "discontinuous literary cross-cutting." (167) The American cultural critic and theorist alludes to the author's transversal and dialectical relationship between creativity and the totality of history. In fact, Dos Passos showed a utopian commitment with ideological radicalism in his literary aesthetics, and in his historical and political views of America and Europe. In this regard, Jun Lee draws attention to the fact that "as a modernist he tried to connect his aesthetic creativity to the totality of history in a dialectical way, since the perspective of totality is the core of his political radicalism as well as his art." (18) In his quest for the totality of history, Dos Passos needed to internationalize his experience and creativity to connect them to the historical context like some modernists who expressed in their artistic creations a deep sense of loss and despair for their society. This was the case of the expatriate members of the Lost Generation, namely T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Ezra Pound. They sought to internationalize their literature and lived in European urban centers such as London and Paris to show their disillusion and despair with the materialist ideas of human progress and the invisible role and place of the artist in contemporary life. In my view, distance became a metaphor of their alienation and the urge to convey a de-centered perspective was a crucial aspect of their modernist poetics. Therefore, crossing cultural and ideological frontiers was at the core of their artistic experience.

Even though Dos Passos was never considered an "exile because he was born uprooted to any plot of ground," and he embarked "on a search for congenial soil and climate for new ground on which to stand or in which to grow" (Wrenn 19), I think that he shared most of the expatriates' experiences and visions of life and art, and became "an archetypal artist of the Lost Generation." (Lee 98)

His journey of discovery to Spain in 1916 inspired the travel book *Rosinante to the Road Again* (1922), which is a series of narrative chapters and essays on his experiences in the villages and cities, and an insightful literary analysis of Spanish poets such as Jorge Manrique, Joan Maragall, Juan Ramón Jiménez and Antonio Machado. In *Rosinante*, Dos Passos put Madrid and other Spanish cities on the map of the global scope of modernism in his quest for the modernist cosmopolitan subject and initiated, at the same time, a very fruitful transatlantic dialogue between American and Spanish literatures. For this purpose, he wrote an innovative modernist epic, in which his fictional

heroes, Telemachus, Lyaeus, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, are searching for the transcendental and abstract totality of life. This holistic approach can be found in many of the colorful sections of the travel book which shows Dos Passos's experimentation and intense interaction with prose, poetry, and painterly descriptive techniques. Such experimentation illustrates the author's relevant involvement with modernist poetics in his ground-breaking and "discontinuous literary cross-cutting."

In this sense, Ezra Pound's famous avant-garde exhortation "Make it New" is clearly reflected in the rhetorical techniques employed in *Rosinante*, as it is an experimental travel book that departs from the classical linear descriptions of this kind of texts, introduces the fictionalization of the protagonists, and uses a discontinuous and fragmentary narrative structure. Thus, Dos Passos's fictional alter ego, Telemachus, becomes a "wanderer in search of a father" (Pizer 144) and an epic hero who undergoes an initiation journey of transformation and spiritual awakening in the Spanish society. For this reason, the author structures his interpretation of contemporary Spain on the parallel mythic pairs of Telemachus and Lyaeus[1], and of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza: "Telemachus and Quixote constitute the life of the intellect and spirit, Lyaeus and Panza that of the body and the senses." (Pizer 142) In this way, the classical Spanish culture offered the American writer the opportunity to explore in depth the significance of *Don Quixote of La Mancha's* protagonists in order to revaluate the complex meanings of the wandering hero from La Mancha and his squire, an aspect that was characteristic of high modernist poetics.

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Most of the critical analyses on *Rosinante* have explored it from different perspectives and theoretical stances: the great impact of Spain in Dos Passos's work (Zardoya; Montes; Marín Madrazo; Ludington), the influences and traces of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* in this early work (Marín Ruíz; Villar Lecumberri), the representation of the Modernist expatriate imagination (Pizer), and the importance of the text as a testing ground for later aesthetic experiments (Juncker). However, this interdisciplinary essay represents a shift in focus on Dos Passos's *Rosinante* in the sense that it is my intention to analyze it from a Jamesonian perspective, exploring the implicit dialectical interaction between creativity and the totality of history, the role of the modernist utopian illusion and the quest for return to an Edenic past, the cosmopolitan expatriate individual as a fundamental part of a historical context and, finally, the implications of the literary form in relation to a concrete textual tradition or movement.

[1] Lyaeus is an epithet of Dionysus/Bacchus which were Greek and Roman mythological variations of the same god. Lyaeus is traditionally considered the lord of exuberance, fertility and drunkenness. Besides, he freed people from care and anxiety.

The classical Spanish culture offered the American writer the opportunity to explore in depth the significance of *Don Quixote of La Mancha's* protagonists in order to revaluate the complex meanings of the wandering hero from La Mancha and his squire, an aspect that was characteristic of high modernist poetics.

In Jameson's *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981), dialectical criticism is the main methodological framework that the critic develops within his complex and influential theories. This critical approach is based on the idea that literary works are always part of a larger structure or a concrete historical situation. Then, in a duality based on the external and the internal conformation of a text, a dialectical criticism will seek "to unmask the inner form of a genre or body of texts and will work from the surface of a work inward to the level where literary form is deeply related to the concrete." (Selden 114) As for the role of the literary text and the artistic artifact in modern societies, Jameson demonstrates that it is inextricably bound up with a larger whole, and part of a historical situation. Therefore, from a Jamesonian perspective narratives always respond to history and are ideologically conditioned and utopian, and in most cases project an ideal future. In general, as for the role of the work of art in society, Jameson suggests:

> It is clear that the work of art cannot itself be asked to change the world or to transform itself into political praxis; on the other hand, it would be desirable to develop a keener sense of the complexity and ambiguity of that process loosely termed reflection or expression. To think dialectically about such a process means to invent a thought which goes "beyond good and evil" not by abolishing these qualifications or judgments but by understanding their interrelationship. (223)

In this way, the Jamesonian critical background will enable me to establish a dialectical criticism that investigates how the experimental fragmentary form of *Rosinante* is also deeply engaged with a specific historical situation and how Dos Passos poses his aesthetic, political, and literary ideas from a comparative perspective in a fruitful translinguistic and transcultural literary dialogue between the United States and Spain. Likewise, the Spanish idealized vision depicted in *Rosinante* becomes a symbol of Dos Passos's quest for the return to the mythic Arcadia and a "counter image to a world destroyed by its devotion to the false gods of modernity" (Pizer 141) previously depicted in *Three Soldiers* (1921); but it also provides a compensation for the loss of his homeland, a quest for transformation, and the eradication of the money-making culture which he clearly rejected. In this light, Jameson emphasized the role of purification that most modernist fiction had in an attempt to separate literature from the dissatisfaction and disillusionment of the existing capitalist order, so that it could embody "the great Utopian idea of a purification of language, a recreation of its deeper communal or collective function, a purging of everything instrumental or commercial in it." (*The Modernist Papers* 8) Similarly, it is my contention that *Rosinante* represents the Jamesonian quest for purification, and it might be explored as the symbol of Dos Passos's utopian illusion about an ideal future, in contrast to the despair and disillusion that he represented in all of his major novels. As a result, the Spain depicted in *Rosinante* symbolized for the writer the original fullness and "the true gods of the past still potent." (Pizer 141) Nevertheless, as the writer evolved in his literary career, a deep change was depicted in his fiction, a clear image "of the disintegration of America, symbolized by his concept, the two nations in a dialectical tension with his utopian vision of one community where people live together in harmony and are allowed to have their own opportunities of self-realization." (Lee 197)

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As it has been previously observed, *Rosinante* can be studied from the political and literary perspectives as an example of Dos Passos's early experimentation that embodies the spirit of American radicalism and the aesthetic techniques of modernism. Therefore, it should be explored as the symbol of the writer's idealized vision of literature in a concrete textual tradition and as the paradigm of his early expectations about a more harmonic future for America which was unavoidably connected to the exploration of other countries and cultures. For this purpose, he makes inter-textual allusions to the classical epic narratives, *The Odyssey* and *Don Quixote*, from a modernist perspective. Related to this, it is important to highlight that "epic narratives focus on a crisis in the history of a race or culture," (Peck and Coyle 31) and they are always concerned with crossing cultural frontiers. Thus, for the writer the crisis in which American civilization was immersed had to be explored by crossing literary frontiers, incorporating the deeds of epic warriors and heroes from other cultural contexts. This is how other modernist writers—T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, and Ezra Pound chief among them—approached the epic conventions in their literature. In other words, their modernist creativity was based on the crossing of cultural and ideological frontiers. Then, for Dos Passos the epic journey becomes a cross-cultural experience to learn a lesson, change, and later return home after he had achieved self-knowledge, transformation, and the exploration of new cultures and ways of life. In fact, he was restless for travel all his life and believed in travelling as a personal experience of discovery and learning, but his deep sense of social uprooting and displacement had also a significant role in his urgent need for having the perspective of another land.[2] Moreover, he appreciated solitude, independence, and the personal enrichment he found in the exploration of diverse cultures and in the opportunity of looking at his own with a certain critical distance and without prejudices or attachments. As a result, his journeys in many different countries all over the world became for the writer transcendental processes of personal metamorphosis which provided a great opportunity for exploring his adventurous spirit and never-ending curiosity. As Donald Pizer has cleverly noted, "he sought in his depiction of a foreign culture to explore in striking new forms the meaning of his own." (137)

[2] There might be also other significant biographical reasons for his need to travel. Dos Passos grew up in European exile as his father was married back in the United States to Mary Dyckman Hays who was not his mother. As his biographer Townsend Ludington has observed, "His first lonely years seemed like a hotel childhood… he felt like a double foreigner… A man without a country" (A Sort of Family Feeling 121).

2. DOS PASSOS'S EPIC JOURNEY IN SPAIN AND CERVANTES'S *DON QUIXOTE OF LA MANCHA*

Dos Passos discovered Spain in 1916 when he still was a young man full of illusions and expectations about the Old World. His journey to southern Europe also included his painful experience in France as a volunteer ambulance driver during the First World War. The writer's antiwar views and emotional crisis emerged rapidly in the form of writing and he fictionalized his disappointment in *Three Soldiers* and in many of the poems of *A Pushcart at the Curb* (1922), where his lyrical voice emerges openly with a desperate tone to save the world from the deceptions of the great warlords. In the novel, the reader has the opportunity of facing the emotional effects of the European conflict which were devastating for the majority of modernist writers. Thus, these authors concluded that it was the epitome of the human atrocities, the hideous ugliness and the confirmation that history was coming to an end; as a consequence, modern life was confusing, terrible, and futile. His anti-war novel shows a deep sense of loss, despair, disaffection, and a direct questioning of materialism and the evils of industrialism in American society from its very roots.

Moreover, during that period of his life, the American writer suffered a personal crisis which appeared in part from his Freudian response to his father's values, and the deep sense of displacement he felt from the vital uncertainties of his childhood and early adolescence. As a result, his disappointment with the contradictions of the American economic system, the sense of social uprooting, and the war experience unchained his need to search for an alternative vital experience. In this manner, his discovery of Spain became a sort of positive personal catharsis (Piñero Gil 2015) in a crucial period. Even though his first stay was less than four months, "He had learned a great deal, not only about Spain but also about himself," as Ludington has noted (316). Similarly, the Spanish experience played a central role in Dos Passos's development of his cosmopolitanism as a writer and "it was the most important factor among many in shaping Dos Passos's ideas and forming the way he saw the world." (Ludington 313) Hence, for the writer the Iberian Peninsula was an Arcadian or idyllic society compared to the industrialized European and American countries. Likewise, during his visits to Portugal, he was also able to appreciate his own ancestry and was eager to compare and contrast its culture and traditions that he described as "having a certain mildness, a lack of the racial and ideological fanaticism that has brought our civilization to the verge of destruction... the more I study it the prouder I am of my Portuguese inheritance." (Ludington 133)

Nevertheless, historian Daniel Aaron has observed that Spanish social and cultural idiosyncrasies had a greater impact in Dos Passos's imagination:

> Dos Passos's ancestral roots in Portugal were next door to Spain, whose greatest literary works, such as *Don Quijote*, had a tremendous effect on him, as did the nation itself, with its proud history; its varied, striking landscape; and its national traits of an almost anarchistic individualism and a notable, if not always successful, defiance of oppressive authority. (Ludington 314)

For Dos Passos the epic journey becomes a cross-cultural experience to learn a lesson, change, and later return home after he had achieved self-knowledge, transformation, and the exploration of new cultures and ways of life.

For the writer the Iberian Peninsula was an Arcadian or idyllic society compared to the industrialized European and American countries.

I certainly agree with Aaron's view because in *Rosinante*, Dos Passos not only tested his beliefs about the kind of individualism he was looking for in America, but it was also a radical way of approaching life and politics which was far beyond the limits of capitalist society. The epic journey he initiated in Spain became a sort of quest for the Promised Land in which he discovered a colorful society full of positive aspects in a colorless world; thus the travel book is deeply engaged with a concrete social reality. With regard to Dos Passos's decision to articulate his Spanish experience with Cervantes's *Don Quixote* in mind, it seems that the novel was for Dos Passos the perfect representation of the literary archetype of the dreamer and the motif of the epic journey that crosses cultural frontiers. In fact, he was fascinated with the novel and had read it more than nine times, the last time in Spanish. Besides, he also intended to study it in depth because he believed that, among many other things, it represented the palimpsestic Spanish history and that significant aspect could help him in establishing the connections between both cultures. In this sense, it is important to draw attention to the fact that Dos Passos belongs to a remarkable tradition of American writers who have established an inter-textual dialogue between their fiction and *Don Quixote of La Mancha* from the American Renaissance to Postmodern literature: Washington Irving, William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Eudora Welty, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, Jack Kerouac and Paul Auster, among others. [3]

In order to explore the connotations and intertextual implications of the novel in Dos Passos's travel book, it is pertinent to analyze the title of the book, as a paradigm of the writer's quixotic vision of his epic journey in Spain. To begin with, Rosinante is Don Quixote's old nag, his faithful companion and doppelgänger. In fact, the old hidalgo considers it of foremost importance to find a proper name for his steed before his first adventure:

> Four days were spent in thinking what name to give him, because (as he said to himself) it was not right that a horse belonging to a knight so famous, and one with such merits of his own, should be without some distinctive name, and he strove to adapt it so as to indicate what he had been before belonging to a knight-errant, and what he then was. (Chapter I)

According to Howard Mancing, "Rocinante becomes one of the most important and most comic figures of the novel" (618). Therefore, we might conclude that Dos Passos chose the name of *Rosinante* for his travel book as a literary homage to one of the most significant Western epic novels and more specifically to the protagonist horse who symbolizes the union between the heroic knight and his steed, his master's virtues and the idea of coming back to the road to defend the helpless and destroy the wicked. For instance, Telemachus discovers a horse on his way to Toledo and immediately shows his affection and recognition of the heroic animal protagonist:

[3] These authors reveal their debt to Miguel de Cervantes's novel in the genesis of their fiction or in their metafictional essays in the following works: Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and *The Tales of the Alhambra*; Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer;* William Dean Howells's "The Spanish Student" and *Criticism and Fiction;* Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*; Eudora Welty's *The Golden Apples* and *Losing Battles;* William Faulkner's *Light in August, Go Down, Moses* and *The Sound and the Fury*; John Steinbeck's *The Wizard of Maine*, *Travels with Charley,* and the Prologue to *East of Eden*; Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and Paul Auster's *City of Glass.*

> Telemachus got up on his numbed feet and stretched his legs. "Ouf," he said, "I'm tired." Then he walked over to the grey horse that stood with hanging head and drooping knees hitched to one of the acacias.
> "I wonder what his name is." He stroked the horse's scrawny face.
> "Is it Rosinante?"
> The horse twitched his ears, straightened his back and legs and pulled back black lips to show yellow teeth.
> "Of course it's Rosinante!"
> The horse's sides heaved. He threw back his head and whinnied shrilly, exultantly. (38)

Likewise, Dos Passos's alter-ego shows his attraction to Don Quixote because the wanderer hero embarks on an idealist journey of self-discovery and embodies an indestructible chimera which is grounded in a quest for a new utopian dream of human regeneration: "Gentleman, it is a little ridiculous to say so, but we have set out once more with lance and helmet of knight-errantry to free the enslaved, to right the wrongs of the oppressed." (37) It is well-known that Dos Passos showed a striking nostalgia for a golden age during his youth that was based on a primordial social harmony in which people could survive without the constraints of the materialist society. In other words, he struggled between the old and the new and the loss of innocence in his early literature in what could be described as a quixotic attitude. In this sense, he also identified the fictional character's idealism with what he defines as one of the most extraordinary virtues of the Spanish people: "The Spaniard, like his own don Quixote, mounted the warhorse of his idealism and set out to free the oppressed, alone." (45) As a result, his journey into the heart of the Spanish landscape, culture, and its peoples was embedded in a utopian illusion that foregrounded the interaction between creativity, history, and the role of purification of literature. With this ideological background, the impact of Dos Passos's Spanish experience was so deep that he had to share his discovery with Dudley Poore, one of his many American college friends, when he was about to return to Madrid: "I am mad about Spain—the wonderful mellowness of life, the dignity, the layered ages." (qtd. in Ludington 110)

3. *ROSINANTE TO THE ROAD AGAIN* AS A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

As I have argued before, Dos Passos's *Rosinante* can be considered a historical narrative from a Jamesonian perspective in the sense that the writer establishes a dialectical representation of history in an international context. In order to achieve this interaction, he analyzed the complex layers of Spanish history and the social influence of the different civilizations and concluded that this fact was a fundamental feature in the construction of a solid society. In other words, the palimpsestic history was an alternative to the capitalist dissolution of history. In one of the many conversations he has in *Rosinante* about the multicultural heritage of Spanish culture, one of his friends observes:

Dos Passos analyzed the complex layers of Spanish history and the social influence of the different civilizations and concluded that this fact was a fundamental feature in the construction of a solid society.

> Spain, he said, is the most civilized country in Europe. The growth of our civilization has never been interrupted by outside influence. The Phoenicians, the Romans-Spain's influence on Rome was, I imagine, fully as great as Rome's on Spain; I think of the five Spanish emperors;-the Goths, The Moors; all incidents, absorbed by the changeless Iberian spirit. (31)

Related to the historical context, *Rosinante* is Dos Passos's first publication of European reportage that clearly had ideological implications about his cosmopolitan identity as an American modernist writer and intellectual. But paradoxically this personal analysis had to be achieved abroad during those years in which he was on the road and immersed in a deep cultural exploration in the lands of Castile, La Mancha, Madrid, Andalusia, Toledo, and the Mediterranean coast. The exotic Spain was for the writer the perfect place for this transformation, a kind of peaceful refuge in which he could reflect on his own country from a distance with the necessary detachment to be really critical about his complex American identity. Similarly, it was the social milieu where he found the raw materials from which he crafted his experimental fiction. In this sketchy narrative he is seeking understanding of himself through self-exile. Moreover, it is an intriguing self-exploration journey through which he discovers a positive value system in Spanish culture that contrasts with "the materialism and moral narrowness of American life." (Pizer 149)

From a rhetorical perspective, *Rosinante* consists of seventeen essays and narrative segments Dos Passos wrote in a fragmentary form with the recurrent leitmotif of the journey as a quest of discovery. For Pizer the text "is a significant expression of what can be called the Modernistic expatriate imagination." (137) The travel book opens in Madrid, which was one of Dos Passos's favorite cities, with a vivid reference to one of Plaza Santa Ana's cafés: "He sat on a yellow plush bench in the café El Oro del Rhin, Plaza Santa Ana, Madrid, swabbing up with a bit of bread the last smudges of brown sauce off a plate of which the edges were piled with the dismembered skeleton of a pigeon." (1) Each of the seventeen sections of this fragmented travel book is a detailed impressionistic word painting of Spanish society, culture, ideology, art, history and literature. In my view, Dos Passos's fragmented style is related to the complexity of Spanish culture and society as well as his desire to represent the valuable information he gathered during his intense journeys. One of his most distinctive rhetorical strategies was the direct interaction with ordinary people he met on the road, and in the villages and cities. In fact, the book has five sections titled "Talk by the Road" in which the author uses an interactive dialogical structure with a polyphonic interplay of various characters' voices which contributes to a fruitful exchange of ideas. Those conversations were essential materials which showed his interest in how Spaniards lived in a particular historical moment as political subjects and how they expressed themselves about it. As a result, even though he had a very idealized image of Spanish social reality, he was also interested in investigating the Spaniards' response to the political situation as part of a larger structure or of a historical situation.

In section two of *Rosinante* Telemachus has a long dialogue with a donkey boy about the significance of productive work in Spain: "Not on your life, in America they don't do anything except work and rest so to get ready to work again. That's no life for a man. People don't enjoy themselves there." (11) Throughout the conversation, Dos Passos cleverly contrasts two radically different lifestyles and how the individual's vision and experience is really significant for his own

study. Once more, the writer gives voice to a peasant who has a very clear vision of life even though he is young and innocent; his testimony is very helpful as he is able to articulate the importance of his independence and the real value of time in a hedonistic life:

> On this coast, señor inglés, we don't work much, we are dirty and uninstructed, but by God we live. Why the poor people of the towns, do you know what they do in summer? They hire a fig-tree and go and live under it with their dogs and their cats and their babies, and they eat figs as they ripen and drink the cold water from the mountains, and man-alive they are happy. They fear no one and they are dependent on no one; when they are old they tell stories and bring up their children. You have travelled much; I have travelled little, Madrid, never further, but I swear to you that nowhere in the world are the women lovelier or is the land richer or the cookery more perfect than in this vega of Almuñécar…If only the wine weren't quite so heavy. (16)

In the same way, Dos Passos foregrounds the conflict between Andalusian peasants and landowners, showing a distinctive capacity to analyze in depth the injustice, poverty, and economic slavery those workers suffered in Cordova. The writer became familiar with the political turmoil of the city, the strikes of farm-laborers and the fact that the region had been under martial law for months: "we talked about the past and future of Cordova;" (53) "many of the peasants had never dared vote, and those that had had been completely under the thumb of the caciques, the bosses that control Spanish local politics." (56) In his permanent need to denounce social injustices and protect human dignity, the writer also criticized the evils of industrialism and the enslaving effects the system had for the American working classes:

> Under industrialism the major part of human kind runs in a vicious circle. Three-fourths of the world are bound in economic slavery that the other fourth may in turn be enslaved by the tentacular inessentials of civilization, for the production of which the lower classes have ground out their lives. Half the occupations of men today are utterly demoralizing to body and soul, and to what end? (Lee 98)

4. "THE EYE OF A PAINTER AND THE EAR OF A POET": *ROSINANTE TO THE ROAD AGAIN* AS A TRANSCULTURAL TRAVEL NARRATIVE

From a rhetorical perspective *Rosinante*, like the poetry collection A Pushcart at the Curb, shows an impressive emphasis on visual imagery. According to John Dos Passos Coggin, the writer "always had the eye of a painter and the ear of a poet." (8) In particular, the author was aware of the importance of verbally representing the perceptual information in the absence of visual input. In other words, it seems as if Dos Passos really had a deep need to paint the Spanish picturesque images he was describing visually throughout the different sections of *Rosinante*. In fact, he also left a visual testimony of his sensorial perception of the Spanish landscapes in the form of a series of colorful watercolors and canvases as he was also an accomplished painter who created over four hundred artworks during his lifetime. In addition, Dos Passos absorbed from the avant-garde painters of his time elements of Impressionism, Expressionism and Cubism. The extreme

modernity of his early watercolors from the countryside of Spain shows how he opted to combine elements from different styles and textures. There are many relevant examples of his sensorial way of depicting the landscapes, as when he visited the Mediterranean island of Mallorca:

> We sat looking at the sea that was violet where the sails of the homecoming fishing boats were the wan yellow of primroses. Behind us the hills were sharp pyrites blue. From a window in the adobe hut at one side of us came a smell of sizzling olive oil and tomatoes and peppers and the muffled sound of eggs being beaten. We were footsore, hungry, and we talked about women and love. (91)

In *Rosinante*, Telemachus, the wandering character, becomes a sensorial observer who merges with the landscape and its people. In this process, he learns through the sensorial perception to encompass the enormous variety of sensory experiences he found in Spain. Thus, the nomadic character is always accompanied by Lyaeus, who is a faithful counterpoint, a *ficelle*, that inevitably reminds the reader of the special relationship Don Quixote and Sancho Panza develop through their long and adventurous journey. The mythical couple represents for Dos Passos the duality of the Spanish character:

- Telemachus ---------- Don Quixote.
- These characters symbolize the intellectual life, a never-ending quest for adventure, and the need to embark on learning adventures.
- "Don Quijote, the individualist who believed in the power of man's soul over all things, whose desire included the whole world in himself." (24)
- Lyaeus ---------- Sancho Panza, the *ficelle*, a character who is a confidante and provides the reader with significant information about the main protagonist.
- These characters represent the body, the senses, and a hedonistic approach to life.
- "Sancho, the individualist to whom all the world was food for his belly." (24)

Dos Passos was also intrigued by the word "*lo flamenco*" which was, in some way, related to the Spanish folkloric world and the sensorial experience. In a long conversation with his friend Don Diego, the narrator insists on the meaning and cultural implications of the expression: "In Spain, we live from the belly and loins, or else from the head and heart: between Don Quixote the mystic and Sancho Panza the sensualist there is no middle ground. The lowest Panza is *lo flamenco*." (17) The response emphasizes the idea of an affective and artistic culture with strong social bonds that rely on the communal experience of music and dancing.

One of the most striking aspects of the mythical couple's journey is that it becomes a personal fictional narrative of Dos Passos's complex relationship with the powerful and successful image of his father John Randolph Dos Passos. In *Rosinante*, the American writer explores his childhood and adolescence as an immigrant, as a fatherless child who dreams about finding the roots of his origins: "Telemachus had wandered so far in search of his father he had quite forgotten what he was looking for." (1) His successful father embodied the values of the American dream: material progress, social regeneration, and social mobility. However, Dos Passos soon detected

the historical tensions of the American Dream and its deep historical contradictions. Therefore, in Spain and from a distance, he was able to see the disturbing proximity of dream and nightmare and the effects of the loss of innocence in American society. As an expatriate in Spain he discovered "what he was prepared to find in an older and mainly unindustrialized culture, just as a few years afterwards many American artists would find in Paris the freedom they believed lacking in America," as Pizer has observed (139). Moreover, in Spain, he found his real self: "I am very happy…walking about here in these empty zigzag streets I have suddenly felt familiar with it all, as if it were a part of me, as if I had soaked up some essence out of it." (130)

Dos Passos really had a deep need to paint the Spanish picturesque images he was describing visually throughout the different sections of *Rosinante*.

Similarly, he became the Adamic hero par excellance, separated from his culture in search of a reality more substantial than that embraced by the materialistic society he had rejected. And as it has been mentioned before, Don Quixote, The Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance, "blunderingly trying to remould the world, pitifully sure of the power of his own ideal" (33) was one of Dos Passos's favorite characters (Schwartz 188) and he incorporates this powerful mythical character in the travel book to create a modernist epic narrative based on his Edenic dreams and powerful experiences in Spain. Thus, the writer "made a significant contribution to the modernist revival of the epic as well as a desire for organic totality" (Lee 17) with the inclusion of one of the most influential novels in the Western canon. In this light, Dos Passos also followed the Poundian concept that considered the aesthetic to include a social purpose, something that is clearly reflected in the rhetorical techniques employed in *Rosinante*, as it is an experimental travel narrative that departs from the classical linear descriptions of this kind of texts and introduces the fictionalization of the protagonists. Therefore, Dos Passos's fictional alter ego Telemachus, the son of Odysseus and Penelope, an observer, merges with the landscape and establishes a dialectical criticism between the Edenic Spain and the excesses of American society from a distance. Likewise, the old Spanish culture offered the American writer the opportunity to explore in depth the myth of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in order to re-evaluate the meanings of the wandering hero from La Mancha and his squire, an aspect that was distinctive of high modernist poetics. Therefore, *The Odyssey* and *Don Quixote* serve as a literary map for Dos Passos. His reading of these classical epic narratives is that "of the map of a whole complete and equally closed region of the globe, as though somehow the very episodes themselves merged back into space, and the reading of them came to be indistinguishable from map-reading." (Jameson, *The Modernist Papers* 167)

5. DOS PASSOS'S QUEST FOR THE "SPANISH GESTURE" AND HIS CULTURAL IMMERSION IN SPAIN

Dos Passos found in the Spanish society of the 1910s and 1920s "the full life of spirit in which the natural, the honest, and the good still existed" in the civilized world (Pizer 149). But he also discovered in his idealized image of Spain "a space that resisted capitalism, homogeneity, centralized nationality, and the devastation of modern war, all of which he saw as ingrained in American culture." (Rogers 77) For that reason, the fictional narrator's quest focused on what he described as the "Spanish gesture" embodied by two mythical individuals: the flamenco dancer Pastora Imperio and the baker of Almorox in Toledo. That village of La Mancha becomes a metaphor, a sort of Arcadia, and a vehicle for the expression of his essential beliefs: "men lived in harmony with nature, fulfilled in body and soul," (Pizer 140) and the fact that generations of individuals had had the opportunity to develop their own idiosyncrasies based on the anarchistic spirit which traditionally characterized Spaniards: "Spain is the classic home of the anarchist." (45) The writer was filled with admiration for this distinctive aspect of the Iberian personality but he was also faithful to the individual in a Thoreauvian way. In other words, he believed deeply in the transcendentalist writer's ideas on self-sufficiency, integrity, peaceful civil resistance against an unjust government, as shown in his open defense of the individual's right to dissent.

A similar point may be made about Dos Passos's interest in the Spanish historical background, "roots striking into the infinite past," and the connection he established between the palimpsestic history and the positive effects the layers of different civilizations had in that society. In other words, the writer believed that Spanish long history had an extraordinary impact on its paradigmatic social cohesion:

> First came his family, the wife whose body lay beside his at night, who bore him children, the old withered parents who sat in the sun at his door, his memories of them when they had had strong rounded limbs like his, and of their parents sitting old and withered in the sun. Then his work, the heat of his ovens, the smell of bread cooking, the faces of neighbors who came to buy [...] In him I seemed to see the generations wax and wane, like the years, strung on the thread of labor, of unending sweat and strain of muscles against the earth [...] Everywhere roots striking into the infinite past [...] In Almorox the foundations of life remained unchanged up to the present. The strong anarchistic reliance on the individual man, the walking, consciously or not, of the way beaten by generations of men who had tilled and loved and lain in the cherishing sun with no feeling of a reality outside of themselves...Here lies the strength and the weakness of Spain. This intense individualism, born of a history whose fundamentals lie in isolated village communities—*pueblos*, as the Spaniards call them—over the changeless face of which, like grass over a field, events spring and mature and die, is the basic fact of Spanish life. (23-25)

At the same time Dos Passos's political insight was surprising. His remarkable capacity to show the world how centralism was one of the most significant political debates of Spanish society in the 1920s can also be appreciated in his brilliant analysis:

> Spain as a modern centralized nation is an illusion, a very unfortunate one; for the present atrophy, the desolating restlessness of a century of revolution, may very well be due in large measure to the artificial imposition of centralized government on a land essentially centrifugal. (25)

It is important to note that the writer spent most of the time in Madrid, which became his center of operations. It was the city that most inspired his need for deepening in the "Spanish gesture" and in its lively streets and people. It was "his adopted city," and, as he confessed many times, the capital was a complete sensorial experience: "Honestly. I've never been in such a musical city as Madrid, everything jingles and rings [...] I am quite settled in Madrid now, I feel as if I'd lived here all my life." (Ludington 100-101) His cultural immersion underwent an unusual and intense adaptation to the customs and habits of the people of Madrid. As Bautista has pointed out, "Dos Passos felt fascinated by *chocolate*, the Sierra de Guadarrama, *botijos*, donkeys and mules, multicoloured shawls and the hours *madrileños* keep." (57) Nevertheless, he was also aware of the inevitable transformations of modern life and of how the Anglo-American influence was changing the city:

> At present in Madrid even café life is receding before the exigencies of business and the hardly excusable mania for imitating English and American manners. Spain is undergoing great changes in its relation to the rest of Europe, to Latin America, in its own internal structure. (102)

6. DOS PASSOS'S TRANS-LITERARY DIALOGUE WITH SPANISH WRITERS

Dos Passos's main literary aspiration in the capital was to establish a trans-literary dialogue with the most relevant Spanish writers. For this purpose, he got in contact with Antonio Machado, Juan Ramón Jiménez and other authors whose works he wanted to translate into English. In fact, he attempted to imitate and made a poetic homage to the Castilian poet Machado in "Winter in Castile," which is the longest and more Spanish section of *A Pushcart at the Curb* (Piñero Gil 36-37). It goes without saying that Dos Passos can be considered a Hispanist as he not only read Cervantes but became familiar with Baroja, Benavente Maragall, Manrique and Unamuno, among other Spanish writers: "He saw Spanish literature as a diverse assemblage of styles and ideas rooted in preindustrial artisanship rather than factory-driven commodification." (Rogers 78) In this sense, his readings of the most significant authors of the 98 generation gave him a direct vision of the political and historical crises the Spanish writers were depicting in their work as a result of the War of 1898 that ended Spain's colonial empire in the Americas. And he "essentially agrees with the nationalist line within Spain that '98 is an exceptional generation," as Rogers has observed (78).

Therefore, in *Rosinante*, Dos Passos not only makes "a complex fusion of travelogue, literary criticism, translation, autobiography, fiction, propaganda, and socio historical commentary" (Rogers 79); he also attempts to establish a trans-literary and transatlantic dialogue between American and Spanish literatures in his quest for the internationalization of the literary experience. Similarly, he encourages the American public to read Spanish literature in a very persuasive way:

> If the American public is bound to take up Spain it might as well take up the worth-while things instead of the works of popular vulgarization. They have enough of those in their bookcases as it is. And in Spain there are novelists like Baroja, essayists like Unamuno and Azorín, poets like Valle Inclán and Antonio Machado...but I suppose they will shine with the reflected glory of the author of the F*our Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. (66-67)

In section XVI, Dos Passos also pays a tribute to Miguel de Unamuno, one of the leading intellectuals of the period who had been condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment for *lése majesté* (117), for an offence committed against the dignity of the reigning sovereign. With this reference, the narrator makes a statement about the right for freedom of opinion and expression that should prevail in any modern society like Spain. In the same way, Dos Passos shows his ideological proximity with the Spanish writer when he stresses Unamuno's resistance to the materialistic "modernization and Europeanization of Spanish life and thought." (121) The philosopher believed that Spanish society had to endorse the democratic political principles in order to be like other European societies. Furthermore, Dos Passos praises the philosopher's views on the chasm between faith and reason and the transcendental significance of each individual in essays such as "Del sentimiento trágico de la vida," (1913) "The Tragic Feeling of Life." Certainly, this is one of Unamuno's most influential essays and Dos Passos stresses its significance when he quotes a long paragraph on Don Quixote's idealism and the hero's importance in Spanish society:

> What is, then, the new mission of Don Quixote in this world? To cry, to cry in the wilderness. For the wilderness hears although men do not hear, and one day will turn into a sonorous wood, and that solitary voice that spreads in the desert like seed will sprout into a gigantic cedar. (123)

7. CONCLUSION

Finally, it remains to say that in Dos Passos's *Rosinante* there is a synthesis between the spirit of American radicalism and the aesthetic techniques of modernism like the implicit dialectical interaction between subject and object, the representation of the cosmopolitan expatriate individual as a fundamental part of a historical situation, the modernist self-referentiality poetics, and, finally, the literary form deeply related to a concrete textual tradition or movement. As a result, the Spanish reality depicted in *Rosinante* becomes a symbol of Dos Passos's quest for the return to the mythic Arcadia, but it also provides a compensation for the loss of his homeland.

In his transnational quest for the Spanish gesture and for a utopian territory, Dos Passos was searching for a way to define his own unstable hybrid modernist identity and establish a dialectical interaction between his artistic subjectivity and his idealization of a new country. Thus, his spiritual journey in Spain was not similar to that of the American nineteenth-century conventional travelers or tourists; rather, his way of travelling and visiting Spain was based on his curiosity and preference for knowing the language, the literature, the food, the politics and, above all, the idiosyncrasy and the peculiarities of Spanish culture and history. In this way, *Rosinante* embodies Dos Passos's cosmopolitan modernist quest to internationalize literature, often making powerful connections between his literature and a broad range of literary myths, finding a more

meaningful modern culture. Likewise, it becomes a sort of paradigmatic modernist epic in the way in which the American writer experiments with the literary motif of the journey as a form of self-exploration and as a creative way of establishing an original transatlantic literary dialogue. His temporary expatriate condition in Spain, and the reality of being an American with Portuguese roots, determined, in some way, his need for a more Edenic and epic culture far from the limitations of the excesses of American urban industrialization and cultural materialism. Therefore, we might conclude that Spain became the country that inspired his rebellious spirit and innovative writing in a period in which he clearly devoted himself to radical politics and experimental modernism to construct a cosmopolitan subjectivity.

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