

JOHN DOS PASSOS IN SPAIN

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In 1931, Ernest Hemingway wrote to John Dos Passos from Madrid: “You are the great writer of Spain” (Baker 1968: 342). The two friends both knew Spain, but Dos Passos got there first. After graduating from Harvard, Dos Passos studied Spanish language, literature and culture at the Centro de Estudios Históricos in Madrid in 1916-17, and he returned for almost eight months in 1918-19 (Carr 1984: 101-102). For six weeks he walked with his friend Dudley Moore across the Basque Provinces before returning to Madrid, where he wrote his war novel *Three Soldiers* (1921). In his first Spanish book, *Rosinante to the Road Again* (1922), Telemachus and his bawdy companion, Lyaeus, ramble along Spanish roads in search of “the gesture”, the essence of Spanish life that the Dos Passos persona hoped to emulate in words. Spain would remain important to both Dos Passos and Hemingway, from 1924 when they planned a hiking trip from Burguete to Andorra, to other times, as when Hemingway explored Zaragoza during the *feria* and Our Lady of the Pillar festivities in 1926. He used the railway station there in “Hills Like White Elephants” (1927) and would compare both Africa and Wyoming to Aragón in his works. Angel Capellán writes in *Hemingway and the Hispanic World* (1985) that “Aragón had become an integral part of his accumulated memories of Spanish landscapes” (33). In 1937, Dos Passos and Hemingway collaborated with Joris Ivens on the documentary *The Spanish Earth*. Both stayed at the Hotel Florida in Madrid, and both supported the Loyalist cause. But Dos Passos felt that Russian Communists had killed his friend José Robles and Hemingway did not, and their friendship did not

survive the conflict, or their differing ideas about themes and sequences in Ivens's film (Pizer 1986: 115-116; Ludington 1980: 365-374; Donaldson 1985: 176-177; Capellán 247-248). Dos Passos exorcised Spanish ghosts in the novel *Adventures of a Young Man* (1938) and another travel narrative, *Journeys Between Wars* (1938). Both the exuberant Dos Passos of *Rosinante* and the angrier author of *Journeys* enjoy the Spanish people, the land, and the villages, and both present a multicultural and multiregional Spain, at odds with efforts at centralization and unification.

Dos Passos and Hemingway's travels in Europe have intrigued generations of critics. On Spanish ground, Pilar Marín Madrazo explores in *La Gran Guerra en la obra de Hemingway y Dos Passos* (1980) their first encounter with war and its literary significance, while Catalina Montes in *La visión de España en la obra de John Dos Passos* (1980) focuses on Dos Passos and his representation of Spain. Regrettably, these works were largely ignored by Anglo-American critics in the 1980s, when Townsend Lundington, Donald Pizer, Scott Donaldson, and others wrote about the Spanish sojourns of the two expatriate writers. In the 21st Century, Dos Passos and Hemingway in Spain have stimulated critics and writers on both sides of the Atlantic, who attempt to explain their break-up, to understand their politics, or, in the case of Ignacio Martínez de Pisón, to imagine their world. Understandably, Dos Passos critics find the Spanish Civil War and its personal and political conflicts so compelling that they have not fully explained the aesthetic ramifications of his Spanish experiences. In *Rosinante*, Spain becomes a testing ground for aesthetic experiments, as the young author searches for techniques to articulate his resistance to American systems and narratives. The Spanish gesture communicates both aesthetic and political choices and links up with the masculinity that Dos Passos associates with opposition and pride. In his non-fiction from the Second Republic, the author of *U.S.A.* focuses on Spanish politics, but he articulates his own political stance most subtly through form. Apart from his modernist interventions, the older Dos Passos satirizes both Nationalists and Republicans, who subscribe to measures and stories he could not decipher but hoped to deconstruct.

Like his *alter ego* Telemachus, Dos Passos tries in *Rosinante* to locate a gesture that in terms of Spain says it all. "I can't help it. [...] I must catch that gesture, formulate it, do it", Telemachus exclaims to Lyaeus. He is in Spain for this reason: "It's burned into my blood. It must be formulated, made permanent" (Dos Passos 1922: 20). The young traveler traces the gesture in Pastora Imperio's flamenco dance, which represents the Spain he hopes to capture in words. Blood frozen with anticipation, he watches Pandora come on stage:

Her face is brown, with a pointed chin; her eyebrows that nearly meet over her nose rise in a flattened "A" toward the fervid black gleam of her hair; her lips are pursed in a half-smile as if she were stifling a secret. She walks round the stage slowly, one

hand at her waist, the shawl tight over her elbow, her thighs lithe and restless, a panther in a cage. At the back of the stage she turns suddenly, advances; the snapping of her fingers gets loud, insistent; a thrill whirrs through the guitar like a covey of partridges scared in a field. Red heels tap threateningly. (Dos Passos 1922: 14-15)

In *lo flamenco*, Pandora erases boundaries between life and death, pleasure and terror, body and mind. She is frightening, nurturing and defiant, the perfect embodiment of Dos Passos's artistic vision: "That gesture, a yellow flame against maroon and purple cadences [...] an instant swagger of defiance in the midst of a litany to death the all-powerful. That is Spain". Then he corrects himself: "... Castile at any rate" (Dos Passos 1922: 17). With the three dots preceding "Castile", Dos Passos expresses Pandora's ability to bridge the national and the regional, as well as the general and the individual, a balance he himself hoped to strike in his portrait of Spain and in his fiction generally. The ellipsis hides as well his own ambivalence, as he vacillates between anarchistic, individual tendencies and the desire for truth and essence that drives him across Spanish terrain. His art must, like Pandora's, combine danger and healing. It must scare its audience and then offer comfort, "as a nurse might look into the eyes of a child she has unintentionally frightened with a too dreadful fairy story" (Dos Passos 1922: 15). It must, in short, escape established systems and categories.

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Spain lends itself to his artistic vision through its lack of unity and organization. As Telemachus watches shadows striped with moonlight in Motril, he contemplates the "bewildering dazzle of the night" and watches three "disconnected mules" jingling out of the shadow in the plaza (Dos Passos 1922: 31). Later, inside the stagecoach, he watches "the mules that roamed drunkenly from side to side of the uneven road" (Dos Passos 1922: 32). Spain becomes an aesthetic discourse stressing asymmetry and disjunction, and Dos Passos identifies difference as a general principle in Spanish art. In El Greco, Goya, Zuloaga and others who have successfully painted the peculiar and the picturesque of Spanish faces and Spanish landscapes, Dos Passos sees a "powerful sense of the separateness of things". On a topic close to his heart and his literary production, Dos Passos notes about Spanish art that it verges on caricature in order to differentiate among individuals. "Given the ebullient fertility of the Spanish mind and its intense individualism", he writes, "a constant slipping over into the grotesque is inevitable" (Dos Passos 1922: 58).

Dos Passos clarifies his aesthetic preferences through the picaresque form of *Rosinante*, which emphasizes fragmentation and non-closure. As modern-day *picaros*, Telemachus and Lyaeus travel across the Iberian Peninsula, their journey dotted with passers-by, talks by the road, and introductions to Spanish writers and educators. Dos Passos does not construct a coherent narrative or a coherent Spain, but he presents an aesthetic vision that led to *U.S.A.* In his famous trilogy, he

begins and ends his American epic with Vag, the traveller-observer who listens to the “speech of the people” as he keeps moving “a hundred miles down the road” (Dos Passos 1937: 3, 1240).

In *U.S.A.* Dos Passos dots his epic of American dreams and disillusion with biographies of famous Americans who had given the nation its contours. By then he had studied Diego Rivera’s paintings in the courts of the Secretariat of public education in Mexico City and had learned to paint social criticism with representative figures and words (Dos Passos 1927: 15). In *Rosinante*, the author also interrupts his travel narrative with short biographies of important Spaniards, who serve as role models, or the opposite, to the author-traveller. A Spanish poem about death inspires a journey into the past, where Don Jorge is mourning his father, the Master of Santiago. Telemachus introduces the poet sitting underneath a lemon tree, in the court of his “dust-colored” mansion, a myriad of details fleshing out this biographical sketch and halting his own journey across Spain: a suit of black velvet, pigeons cooing, vermilion arabesques, the catafalque of the Master of Santiago, and the waiting bishop impatiently fingering his crosier (Dos Passos 1922: 11). Because of his aesthetic mission in *Rosinante*, Dos Passos prefers to portray writers, scholars and artists. Another biographical intermezzo focuses on Pío Baroja, a “novelist of revolution” (Dos Passos 1922: 80), who obviously inspires both Telemachus and his author. Having practiced medicine without “the cocksure brutality of a country doctor”, Baroja opened a bakery and began to write instead (Dos Passos 1922: 82). As in his *U.S.A.* trilogy, Dos Passos wraps up his short biography with an evaluation of Baroja’s life and worth: “So, by meeting commerce squarely in its own field, he has freed himself from any compromise with Mammon. While his bread remains sweet, his novels may be as bitter as he likes” (Dos Passos 1922: 83). In the portraits of both Don Jorge and Pío Baroja, Dos Passos pays tribute to the individualist aesthetics of resistance that he himself would adopt.

In passing through this or that village, Telemachus experiences both the strength and the weakness of the Spain he visits in 1922. “This intense individualism”, Dos Passos writes, “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. No revolution has been strong enough to shake it” (Dos Passos 1922: 53). His words conjure up a historical and natural Spain and present his conception of “the changeless Iberian mind”, but he resists a national story or history. The country, he finds, is “essentially centrifugal”, with centralized government resulting in what he calls “the present atrophy, the desolating resultlessness of a century of revolution”. “Iberia exists”, he asserts, “but Spain as a modern centralized nation is an illusion” (Dos Passos 1922: 53, 55). Instead, he argues for variety and multiplicity:

In trying to hammer some sort of unified impression out of the scattered pictures of Spain in my mind, one of the first things I realize is that there are many Spains. Indeed, every village hidden in the folds of the great barren hills, or shadowed by its massive church in the middle of one of the upland plains, every fertile *buerta* of the seacoast, is a Spain. (Dos Passos 1922: 55)

To support his argument, Dos Passos mentions first the linguistic diversity of the Spain he encounters, where he identifies “four distinct languages” (Dos Passos 1922: 55-56). He emphasizes as well the varied topography of the Iberian Peninsula, which he compares to locations across the globe. The central plateaux that have dominated traditional modern history resemble Russian steppes in terms of climate and vegetation; the west coast is a luckier Wales. The southern *buertas* or “arable river valleys” look like Egypt, while the east coast north of Valencia appears as a continuation of coastal Mediterranean France. “In this country”, he concludes, “where an hour’s train ride will take you from Siberian snow into African desert, unity of population is hardly to be expected” (Dos Passos 1922: 57).

Dos Passos ascribes Spanish pride and religion to intense individualism. A proud Iberian trusts nothing outside the self and moves, like El Greco, towards a “restless, almost sensual spirituality in forms that flickered like white flames toward God”. For the Spaniard, he concludes, “God is always, in essence, the proudest sublimation of a man’s soul” (Dos Passos 1922: 60). In this “hunger of immortality”, Dos Passos finds “the core of the individualism that lurks in all Spanish ideas, the conviction that only the individual soul is real” (Dos Passos 1922: 61). In his view, persistent attempts to unify or centralize—in art, government, philosophy or religion—have resulted in a deadlock, since Spanish energy moves in the opposite direction. Dos Passos sums up the choices facing the country:

The problem of our day is whether Spaniards evolving locally, anarchically, without centralization in anything but repression, will work out new ways of life for themselves, or whether they will be drawn into the festering tumult of a Europe where the system that is dying is only strong enough to kill in its death-throes all new growth in which there was hope for the future. The Pyrenees are high. (Dos Passos 1922: 65)

Dos Passos’s optimism appears not just in his line about the Pyrenees or in his youthful delight with the Spanish people and places of his journey, or in his journey as such. He is on the move, like the young Spanish men eager for love and adventure or the Spanish artists who give Spanish art its “strangely impromptu character”. Like the mature Dos Passos, the author of *Rosinante* links art and politics directly. “Perhaps the strong sense of individual validity, which makes Spain the most democratic country in Europe, sanctions the constant improvisation, and accounts for the confident planlessness as common in Spanish architecture as in

Spanish political thought” (Dos Passos 1922: 59-60). The famous author of the *U.S.A.* trilogy, who called himself an “architect of history”, is waiting beyond the horizon.

By inhabiting the character of Telemachus, Dos Passos suggests that manhood also awaits him in Spain. Born on the day Odysseus departed for the Trojan War, Telemachus grows up in the company of his mother Penelope and a nurse, without a masculine role model. He bursts into tears in front of the people of Ithaca and is sent off in search of his father by Athena, disguised as Mentor. This quest for masculinity opens *Rosinante*, though Dos Passos stresses that Telemachus no longer remembers what he is looking for, in Spain or elsewhere (Dos Passos 1922: 9). His search for “the gesture” nonetheless takes him to masculine spaces, like the café and bar where Telemachus and Lyaeus find themselves amidst “whiskered men leaning over tables, astride chairs, talking”. With the proximity of masculine bodies, Telemachus intuitively remembers his quest. He responds to Lyaeus who has asked why he is in Spain: “It’s the gesture that’s so overpowering; don’t you feel it in your arms? Something sudden and tremendously muscular” (Dos Passos 1922: 17). Lyaeus brings up bullfighting to bolster the masculinity they both desire, including the association between manhood and death that also Hemingway would stress (Dos Passos 1922: 17).

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Dos Passos links this pursuit of manhood with his search for aesthetic forms. As his mouthpiece Telemachus recollects the dancing Pastora, the memory turns sexual. The “strong modulations” of the flamenco-dancer, Dos Passos writes, “seemed burned in his flesh. He drew a deep breath. His body tightened like a catapult. ‘Oh, to recapture that gesture,’ he muttered” (Dos Passos 1922: 19). Through his art, young Dos Passos hoped to prove himself a man. Like Telemachus, he had spent too much time in the company of his mother and his nurses and was ready to strike out on his own. In the *U.S.A.* trilogy, his vision of manhood would link sexuality with aesthetics and politics: the working-class boys and men get closer to the Revolution than the upper-class author of the autobiographical Camera Eye segments. In *Rosinante*, Telemachus idealizes the manly peasants who are anarchists during the day and lovers at night. As Telemachus travels on by coach, the languid driver Paco, the erratic movements of the coach, the uneven road, and the memory of the tavern make up the erotic and political landscape of Andalusia: “As the coach jangled its lumbering unsteady way out of town, our ears still throbbed with the rhythm of the tavern, of hard brown hands clapped in time, of heels thumping on oak floors” (Dos Passos 1922: 34-35). By capturing the gesture of Spain, Dos Passos hoped to write himself into manly action. But his vision retains the homo-social or homo-erotic undertones that critics identify in the Hemingway canon. At the end of *Rosinante*, Telemachus and Lyaeus have become mirror images united by jokes and wet

bodies, while a young Spanish girl remains safely upstairs, a vehicle for the young men's bonding only.

Fifteen years later, in 1937, Dos Passos was approaching the Spanish border as a foreign correspondent and as Hemingway's collaborator on *The Spanish Earth* documentary. The famous author of *U.S.A.* was now less exuberant, if not downright disillusioned. Jorge Luis Borges writes about Dos Passos that his importance is incontestable, but he finds that *U.S.A.* leaves "a final impression of sadness and futility since it suffers from a lack of passion and faith" (Borges 1971: 48). Outside a café at Cerbère, this disheartened author watched with a crowd of old men and a sad-faced woman a distant airplane flying low towards Spain. "Loyalist? Fascist?" they all wonder, as the plane disappeared over the horizon, behind a cemetery (Dos Passos 1938: 348). The beer at the café is flat and sour and, with the disappearing plane, the graveyard and the woman in black, it turns into an omen for his disastrous trip. *Journeys Between Wars* opens with reprinted sections from *Rasnante* and closes with Dos Passos in Civil War Spain and thus links his separate Spanish experiences with his Orient Express accounts bridging the time gap. Once again his form highlights the fragmented and anarchic, as the narrator moves from Madrid under siege to sections on Hotel Florida, scenes from crowded streets and long anxious nights in April 1937, and along narrow rural roads. In the countryside Dos Passos visits village bakeries, fishing towns, and eventually the P.O.U.M. headquarters in Barcelona. The voices of the young and the older Dos Passos mingle in their love for Spain and in finding hope for the future in village communities off the main road. Spanish writers would also combine the personal and the political in their accounts of Civil War Spain, as in Arturo Barea's *La forja de un rebelde* (1951).

In "The Villages Are the Heart of Spain", Dos Passos describes an energetic young doctor unwilling to think of a private life until the Fascists have left Spain. The doctor and the author enter a village bakery, where the cozy smell of bread envelopes the tired travellers, who leave with arms full of the big loaves. Back in the car, the doctor speaks bitterly of the hunger in Madrid, while Dos Passos finds hope in the sweet-smelling bread and the people it nourishes: "country people eating their suppers in the dim roomy stone houses and the sharp-smelling herbs in the fires and the brown faces looking out from the shelter of doorways at the bright stripes of the rain in the street and the gleam of the cobbles and the sturdy figures of countrywomen under their shawls" (Dos Passos 1938: 385). Dos Passos also shows his faith in the Spanish people in his report from Fuentedueña, a poor village transformed into an agrarian collective. He writes at length about the villagers' crops, their newly acquired pumping machinery, their irrigation plans, and their pride and self-sufficiency. Everybody felt very good about the socialist community, he concludes, "so good that they almost forgot the hollow popping

beyond the hills that they could hear from the Jarama River front fifteen miles away, and the truckload of soldiers and munitions going though the village up the road to Madrid and the fear they felt whenever they saw an airplane in the sky. Is it ours or theirs?" (Dos Passos 1938: 388). Like the socialist experiment surrounded by fear and death, Dos Passos writes Spanish life and people into fragments and vignettes. His form collides with Nationalist narratives stressing unity and coherence and the vision of war they promote.

In April 1938 The Nationalists' newly formed National Spanish State Tourist Department, headed by Luis Bolín, circulated various tourist brochures to prompt foreign visitors and journalists to travel along *Rutas Nacionales de Guerra* (National War Routes). Early in the war, Bolín had headed the foreign press services at the Nationalist headquarters in Salamanca. As the main contact person for foreign war correspondents reporting from the front, he had censored news even remotely critical of Nationalist positions. His brochures now advertised nine-day bus tours to battlefields and other sites of human carnage, a "thanatourism" combining three meals a day and first-class hotels with real or symbolic encounters with death. With this new initiative, Bolín attempted to present the Nationalists as legitimate government representatives and upholders of order and tradition in the face of Republican chaos and anarchy. To this end, he relied on the "Francoist Crusade narrative", in which Nationalists restored God and Catholicism to a Spain in the grips of lawless Communists. The dominant Nationalist narratives —"the Spanish Civil War as Crusade and the exaltation of Spain's Catholic and medieval past"—maintained that the Republicans had torn apart Spain's national unity and its traditional, legitimate social order (Holguín 2005: 1414-1415). In short, the Nationalists were entitled to carry out the military coup that triggered the civil war.

Like other politicians, artists, intellectuals and activists siding with the Republic, Dos Passos disputed the idea of a unified Spain and subscribed to the ideas of a plural Spain: "Spanish national identity had its root in liberalism and the Enlightenment, in the belief in individual rights, a constitution, representative government, and the separation of church and state" (Holguín 2005: 1412). Republican sympathizers saw Spanish society as pluralistic; the Spanish nation could still be strong, even if Basques and Catalans achieved regional autonomy within the Spanish state. Opponents argued that the Republicans had disregarded Spanish history and culture and so they promoted a strong monarchy that cooperated with the Catholic Church. They viewed Spain as an organic whole, without regional identities and platforms and with a well-regulated hierarchical distribution of power (Holguín 2005: 1412ff).

Dos Passos hated this Nationalist vision, as he makes clear in a description of King Alfonso XIII's sudden departure for London in 1931. In a section from *Journeys* signed "Santander, August 1933", and ironically titled "The Republic of Honest

Men”, Dos Passos crams the royal power paraphernalia into a series of descriptions that constitute most of the lengthy first sentence of the piece. His anger drips from the passage that deserves quoting in full:

When Don Alfonso finished sorting out and burning papers in his office on the side of the palace towards the city, he walked round to the other side of the immense pilastered greystone building; through the tall state rooms ornate with overweening pomp of scrolling designs in stucco and gilt and bronze and crystal and damask and velvet; through the throne room with its lions and its crowns and its crowded black busts of antique Romans; under the huge ceiling where, for the first of the Bourbons in the gaudy days of the Sun King, the Venetian Tiepolo had painted, in that daze of blue empyrean light that was his specialty, the grandiloquently draped abstractions of Government and Power; under the tasseled portières, through the inlaid eighteenth-century doors, to the room where the Englishwoman his wife was having tea. (Dos Passos 1938: 304)

Dos Passos sharpens his satirical scalpel in this enumeration of Don Alfonso’s possessions. The passage climaxes with his ultimate treasure, the tea-sipping Englishwoman, who resembles Nancibel Taylor in Dos Passos’s Boston novel, *Streets of Night* (1923) and also signifies upper-class sterility.

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Dos Passos especially attacks the so-called honest men who built the Republic. As in *U.S.A.*, he dissects with satire the prominent intellectuals who got up from *tertulias* at Madrid cafés to create a Spain they had not envisioned. Indeed, they surpass Don Alfonso’s regime in terms of brutality and repression. Dos Passos angrily condemns these ruthless academics:

How was it that these honest men, lawyers, doctors, socialist professors and lecturers, that finer element of the population that is the dream of reformers the world over to get into positions of power, found themselves so situated that it was easy for them to vote approval of the deportations on the *Buenos Aires* or the shootings at Casas Viejas as it had been for their ancestors [...] to approve of the stranglings and burnings of heretics and Jews in the days of good King Philip? (Dos Passos 1938: 313)

Dos Passos knows the answer: “Almost to a man they called for jails and Mausers and machineguns to protect the bureaucracy that was the source of the easy life and the hot milk and the coffee and the Americanmade cars, and order, property, investments”. “They smelt danger”, he writes. “Maybe the new Spain wasn’t the Spain of the Madrid bureaucracy, or the Spain of those who weren’t holding jobs yet: the honest men” (Dos Passos 1938: 314). These honest men speak through the ghosts of Casas Viejas, the village where the Civil and Assault Guards in the name of the Republic carried out a massacre of fourteen or sixteen Libertarian Communists. In contrast, the highly educated founders of the republic sold their dreams to protect their comfortable lives and get pinned on Dos Passos’s satirical pen.

In the *U.S.A.* trilogy, Dos Passos writes in fragments his distrust of master narratives and institutions of power, whether left, right, or middle. Like the satirist George Groz, he sharpens his pen and uses his art against “POWER/SUPERPOWER”. In *Journeys*, Dos Passos covers a demonstration in Santander, where oily-tongued Socialist leaders speak vaguely of a workers’ state and more concretely of discipline, moderation, and order. The Socialist folk march by the city cafés, where their enemies watch them with quiet hatred: “people with gimlet eyes and greedy predatory lines on their faces, jerkwater importers and exporters, small brokers, loan sharks, commission merchants, pawnbrokers, men who knew how to make two duros grow where one had grown before”. Dos Passos concludes: “The *socialistas* filed on by as innocent as a flock of sheep in wolf country” (Dos Passos 1938: 328, 329). With a rhetoric echoing *U.S.A.*, Dos Passos promotes an individualist, anarchist or democratic position and opposes centralized power structures at both ends of the political spectrum.

As always, Dos Passos trusts the people. On a stroll through Madrid, he visits the tower of Wall Street’s International Tel and Tel, to Dos Passos “the symbol of the colonizing power of the dollar” (Dos Passos 1938: 366). He describes the apparatus of telecommunication inside the building as a link to countries waging wars with gold credits and weapon contracts and “conversations on red plush sofas in diplomatic anterooms” and he himself chooses to flee into sunny streets (Dos Passos 1938: 367). In Valencia, he finds that art and intellectual life will no longer do. Newly arrived tapestries from the royal castle in Madrid evoke civil-war Spain with apocalyptic scenarios of hunger, pestilence and death, but young men in the chapel that holds the treasures turn away with a shrug. Dos Passos himself finds the converted hotel called the House of Culture dreary and irrelevant. “We feel like old trunks in somebody’s attic”, Dos Passos concludes (Dos Passos 1938: 358). Again, the streets hold the life and the individuals he seeks out: “It’s a relief to get out on the pitchblack streets where there are unrestrained voices, footsteps, giggling, the feeling of men and women walking through the dark with blood in their veins” (Dos Passos 1938: 359). As in *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) and the *U.S.A.* trilogy, Dos Passos is searching for answers among the ordinary people of his cityscapes, but he can no longer work out their problems. He focuses on a volunteer who has joined the International Brigade to save Madrid from the Fascists, but cannot alleviate his private and political sorrow: “What can he do? What can we do? We tell him he’s a good guy and he goes away” (Dos Passos 1938: 359). Dos Passos looks for answers with increasing frustration.

Dos Passos’s trip to Spain in April 1937 turned into a quest for the truth. Though the older Dos Passos satirizes the honest men who had made the Republic a political morass, his darkest thoughts revolve around the execution of his friend José Robles. In “Thoughts in the Dark”, a section of *Journeys Between Wars* also

written in Valencia, Dos Passos contemplates the many victims of Spanish politics, “the prisoners huddled in stuffy rooms waiting to be questioned, the woman with her children barely able to pay for the cheap airless apartment while she waits for her husband”. He obviously has in mind Robles’s wife: “the days have gone by, months, no news. The standing in line at the police station, the calling up of influential friends, the slowgrowing terror tearing the woman to pieces” (Dos Passos 1938: 359). Dos Passos’s pity and anger intensify, as he imagines the last moments of his friend’s life:

A joke or a smile that lets the blood flow easy again, but the gradual recognition of the hundred ways a man may be guilty, the remark you dropped in a café that somebody wrote down, the letter you wrote last year, the sentence you scribbled on a scratchpad, the fact that your cousin is in the ranks of the enemy, and the strange sound your own words make in your ears when they are quoted in the indictment. They shove a cigarette in your hand and you walk out into the courtyard to face six men you have never seen before. They take aim. They wait for the order. They fire. (Dos Passos 1938: 360)

Dos Passos held that communists had murdered Robles, while Hemingway believed that Robles had been a fascist spy, a theory circulated among American communist sympathizers and maybe originating in Stalinist propaganda.

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Dos Passos remains a thanatourist. His travels in Spain did not follow the National War Routes, nor did he subscribe to Nationalist crusade narratives. In accordance with his own individualist politics, he made up his own itinerary, which nonetheless combined war sites across Spain with excellent hotels and authentic Spanish cooking. Upon leaving Hotel Victoria in Valencia, Dos Passos and his companions pile into the waiting car with packages of food, bags, boxes of chocolate and extra cigarettes. *En route* to Madrid, they stop at “a dry dilapidated village”, where they quickly locate the homemade vermouth and send out local boys to “rustle up some ham to go with it”. Soon they are in a well-equipped pastry shop praising the Castilian sponge cake (Dos Passos 1938: 361). At the Hotel Florida in Madrid, where Hemingway was enjoying himself with Martha Gellhorn and a private automobile, Dos Passos enjoys his morning sleep and the hot water in the bathroom before he goes out on a “metropolitan stroll” that takes him to the International Tel and Tel tower and an excellent bookshop, before visiting the Montana barracks, where the people of Madrid stopped the military revolt the previous July. Late in the morning he enters the apartment of Señor Fulano de Tal, which offers “a magnificent view of the enemy” across the Manzanares (Dos Passos 1938: 369). After lunch at the hotel, Dos Passos is ready to visit the mother of an old friend. He returns by train to the Gran Vía, where he steps out of the elevator and walks towards Calle de Alcalá. Thinking of the pastry shops and symphony concerts of past visits, he steps in a pool of blood but proceeds to Café de Lisboa,

where he goes through engraved glass swing-doors to chartreuse-colored plush furniture. With a glass of vermouth and the evening papers, time flies by, and at closing time, he heads for Hotel Florida and discovers that it is almost dark. For some reason, he thinks, “the city seems safer at night” (Dos Passos 1938: 372).

As tourists in Spain, neither Dos Passos nor Hemingway understood the situations and the silences they met, but they reacted differently. Dos Passos left Spain and ultimately Europe behind. Hemingway appeared at the boat train depot in Paris to see Dos Passos and his wife Katy off. Heated words, a Dos Passos shrug, and a raised Hemingway fist presumably marked the end of the friendship. While the young Dos Passos of *Rosinante* searched for the ultimate gesture of Spain, the older Dos Passos stared at Hemingway’s fist and returned to the United States.

In Spain, young Dos Passos found his art, his manhood and his politics. Both *Rosinante to the Road Again* and *Journeys Between Wars* portray Spain through fragmentation, variety and multiplicity and support both formally and thematically an individualist, even anarchist vision of the country both he and Hemingway loved. In both texts, however, Dos Passos’s quest for a Spanish essence complicates his vision and suggests the conservative anarchism of his political stance. In *Rosinante*, Dos Passos finds the gesture of Spain in Pastora’s titillating flamenco, or in the bucket of water a laughing girl drops on Telemachus from her balcony above. In *Journeys Between Wars*, this playful gesture has turned into the executioner’s finger pulling the trigger and killing forever Dos Passos’s exuberance. Angry and hurt by Spanish Civil War politics, Dos Passos responded with a gesture of his own. He waved goodbye to Hemingway, who felt that Robles must have deserved his fate, and goodbye to Europe. His Spanish adventures were over, but his Spanish writings live. With Civil War survivors mostly gone, young Spanish writers explore the private and political stories that captured the American writers in Spain (De Toro and Ingenschay). In *Enterrar a los muertos* (2005), Ignacio Martínez de Pisón brings back to life Dos Passos, Hemingway and Robles, and the brutality and bravery of their world, with a truly Spanish gesture.

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