

La Barbarie refinada: The Crisis of European Modernity in Gómez Carrillo's Chronicles of the First World War¹

Este ensayo analiza la crítica a la Modernidad europea desarrollada por Enrique Gómez Carrillo en sus crónicas de la Primera Guerra Mundial – uno de los conjuntos textuales más notables de la recepción, mayormente ignorada por la crítica, de este conflicto armado en América Latina. Aunque no libre de tonos propagandísticos a favor de los Aliados, las crónicas de Gómez Carrillo denuncian sin ambigüedades la brutalidad de la Gran Guerra y la involución del continente europeo hacia lo que el autor define como “la barbarie refinada” – una fusión de las más avanzadas tecnologías militares con la violencia más extrema. Gómez Carrillo documenta obsesivamente el impacto de este nuevo fenómeno en los paisajes humanos y naturales del continente, denunciando el colapso del prestigio cultural y moral de Europa y el efecto deshumanizante de la guerra tecnológica moderna sobre los soldados. Como resultado de esta crítica sin cuartel a la civilización europea y a las narrativas eurocéntricas del Progreso predominantes hasta ese momento, las crónicas de Gómez Carrillo sientan las bases para el surgimiento durante los años 1920 de una identidad latinoamericana que, con redoblada seguridad en sí misma, desarrolla nuevos modelos para una Modernidad autóctona en América Latina.

“¡Oh estudiantes! ¡Qué libro el que abre, ahora, ante vuestros ojos, la guerra presente! ... A vosotros corresponde meditar con toda la fuerza de vuestro entendimiento cada línea, cada vocablo”

Enrique Larreta. *Historiales*

“This world war is a regression into barbarism. The triumph of imperialism leads to the obliteration of civilization.”
Rosa Luxemburg. *The Crisis of Social Democracy*

On November 10, 1914, readers of Madrid-based newspaper *El Liberal* were shocked to encounter the following front-page headline: "Gómez Carrillo á la Guerra." With this strategy of self-promotion, *El Liberal* proudly announced that its star journalist - Guatemalan writer Enrique Gómez Carrillo - had been officially invited by the French Government to cover the news of the Great War at the Western Front. The note went on to assert:

No pasarán muchos días sin que los lectores de *El Liberal*, lean sus admirables crónicas de la Guerra, escritas en el mismo campo de batalla. Hora era ya de que la Prensa española pudiese dar noticias ciertas de la gran catástrofe europea, y hora es de que un testigo presencial nos cuente lo que allí pasa. El reinado de la fantasía y el de los 'tecnicismos fantasmagóricos', vendrá á tierra en las crónicas de Gómez Carrillo, empujado por la verdad de los hechos, vistos y comprobados. (1)

Well-known for his cultural chronicles, interviews, and travelogues of the Middle and Far East, Gómez Carrillo's self-fashioned mask as a cosmopolitan and sophisticated *bon vivant* that made of frivolity both a way *and* a means of living is somewhat at odds with the scenarios of the First World War (1914-18). As a correspondent for newspapers *El Liberal* and *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), the self-proclaimed "Príncipe de los cronistas" established himself as one of the most successful correspondents covering the Great War. The hundreds of impressionistic snapshots he wrote "en el mismo campo de batalla" under the general rubric of "Crónica de la Guerra" constituted the most extensive body of chronicles on the First World War published by a Latin American writer - only comparable in scope to Spanish writer Vicente Blasco Ibáñez's monumental *Historia de la guerra europea de 1914* in 9 volumes (1914-1919). Gómez Carrillo's journalistic texts circulated widely in the Spanish-speaking press on both sides of the Atlantic and were anthologized in several best-selling books: *Crónica de la guerra* (1915), *En las trincheras* (1915), *Campos de batalla y campos de ruinas* (1915), *En el corazón de la tragedia* (1916), *La gesta de la legión* (1918), *Tierras mártires* (1918), and *El quinto libro de las crónicas* (1922). Owing to his star status and good connections, his work was also featured in French newspapers *Le Matin* and *L'Information*, and was published in book form in both France and England.²

Despite constituting a seminal group of texts in Gómez Carrillo's overwhelmingly productive career and a milestone in the unwritten history of Latin America's reception of the Great War, such chronicles have so far attracted little scholarly attention.³ In this paper, I will analyze in detail Gómez Carrillo's reaction to the Great War framing it within the

wider context of *Modernismo's* response towards the conflict. Despite his undeniably Aliadophile stand, close analysis of key chronicles demonstrates Gómez Carrillo's full-scale indictment of Europe's industrial Modernity based on technological warfare's brutal effects on the human and urban landscapes of the continent. Gómez Carrillo will denounce the hypocrisy of Europe's monopolistic claims on the concept of Civilization in the face of what he defines as Europe's "barbarie refinada" - a new form of barbarism that unites ultra-violence and the most advanced technologies of destruction in the nightmarish atmosphere of the battlefields. By systematically documenting the devastating impact of this new breed of barbarism on the human and urban landscapes of the Western Front, Gómez Carrillo challenges Europe's cultural and ideological hegemony as the embodiment of Civilization. Through his emphatic journalistic denunciation of the brutality of the Great War, the *bon vivant* turned war correspondent contributes to the emergence throughout the 1920s of a new self-confident Latin American identity convinced of the need to break away from Europe's long shadow and redefine afresh a new autochthonous model for Latin America's Modernity.

Due to its qualitative and quantitative value, Gómez Carrillo's massive journalistic production on the Great War occupies a central position in the rich and mostly un-researched journalistic coverage of the conflict in Latin America. Although literary and cultural historiography has shown little interest in the ideological and aesthetic effects of the Great War in Latin America, its echoes resonated deeply throughout the continent. In the context of an increasingly integrated global community described by José Enrique Rodó as "un solo organismo cuyos centros directores transmiten a los más apartados extremos la repercusión moral y material de lo que en ellos pasa" ("Escritos" 1219), the general public avidly followed every development in the battlefields of a conflict that was vividly affecting their lives. After all, the collapse of the financial system in 1914 had plunged the world economy into a massive recession that fundamentally altered the dominance of European powers over global capitalism and accelerated the consolidation of the United States as the rising economic power of the 20th century. The avid demand for news on the Great War triggered war-related journalism across Latin America. Given the canonical prestige attained by *Modernismo* aesthetics by 1914, modernist writers like Gómez Carrillo played a central role in mediating the perception of "La Guerra Europea," - as it was known at the time. Writers such as Rubén Darío, Enrique Larreta, Enrique Gómez Carrillo, Francisco Contreras, the García Calderón brothers, José Enrique Rodó, and Amado Nervo, among many others, were based in Europe for at least part of the conflict and many of

them worked as foreign correspondents for Latin American newspapers. From this privileged vantage point, chronicles and articles written by Modernists shaped the symbolic and cultural perception of the conflict. For example, Mexican poet and diplomat Amado Nervo, living in Madrid at the time, published a number of articles later collected in *En torno a la guerra* (1921) during his 1916-1917 European journey, Uruguayan intellectual José Enrique Rodó regularly contributed chronicles on the war to *El Telégrafo*, *Diario del Plata*, and *La Razón* (Montevideo) collected posthumously in *El camino de Paros* (1917) and in *Obras completas* (1967); Peruvian intellectual Francisco García Calderón - residing in Paris since 1906 - wrote *Le dilemme de la guerre* (1919) as well as countless chronicles for *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), *El Figaro* (Habana), and *La Revista de América* (Paris), which were later included in his collections of essays *Ideologías* (1918) and *Ideas é impresiones* (1919); and former Argentine anarcho-syndicalist and Modernist Alejandro Sux worked as a war correspondent for Buenos Aires-based *La Prensa* and published the volumes *Lo que se ignora de la Guerra* (1916), *Curiosidades de la Guerra* (1917), and *Los voluntarios de la Libertad* (1918).⁴

Not surprisingly given their strong links to French aesthetics, most Modernist writers - like the majority of Latin American intelligentsia - were fervent supporters of the Allied Cause. In a fascinating discursive turn, modernist chronicles resorted to a familiar conceptual frame of reference to explain the ideology of the European War. As if continuing the Old World struggles of 1898, they projected onto the European context the cultural opposition between *Latinismo* and Anglo-Saxon cultures José Enrique Rodó had charted in *Ariel* (1900). Latin American intellectuals viewed France as the stronghold of Latin idealism, democracy, and culture in opposition to an authoritarian Germany that replaced the United States as the embodiment of the utilitarian and materialist ethos. This *Arielista* discourse, in turn, merged seamlessly with the French propaganda's efforts to depict the Great War as the ultimate struggle between Civilization and Barbarism (Almeida and Delporte 29-32).⁵ The "triumph of Caliban" so much feared by Rubén Darío was transposed in this way with astonishing ease from America to the geopolitical map of 1914 Europe. For Enrique Larreta - Argentinian Ambassador to France until 1916 - Germany was none other than the new Caliban and its triumph was to bring with it, "el peor de los males: el regreso a la materia por el camino del intelecto, con todos los secretos del saber; la glorificación de la animalidad y de la fuerza; Calibán con la experiencia de Próspero; en una palabra, la barbarie sapiente" (163-64).⁶

Enrique Gómez Carrillo was no exception to this general *modernista* interpretation of the war. Having lived in Europe for more than 20 years and spent long periods in Paris, he viewed the Great War not simply as a geopolitical conflict, but rather as a transcendental struggle between two ideals, a struggle in which France stood out as the stalwart of Latin Idealism (*Crónica* 12). His unshakable ideological commitment to the Allied Cause was further strengthened by his position as an official war correspondent attached to the French army - what we would nowadays call an embedded journalist. In this capacity, Gómez Carrillo belonged to a highly restricted group of star journalists who were allowed special access to the war zone - officially closed to the press. Such privilege, however, came at a price. Working in a context in which heavy censorship and strict control of information had transformed the written media into an extension of the army, the Guatemalan writer was incorporated into the well-oiled machine of the French war propaganda. Under the heavily nationalistic spirit of the *Union Sacrée*, the press had become a propagandistic weapon designed to shatter the foundations of the enemy's *casus belli*, strengthen morale on the home front, and win over public opinion in neutral nations.⁷ Immersed in what he described as "las luchas de la pluma" (*La gesta* 43), Gómez Carrillo worked within the structure of the army with a French uniform and an official military rank. Accompanied by an officer at all times, his movements at the front were surveyed and limited to designated areas. Similarly, his texts were duly censored.⁸ Given these circumstances, it is no surprise that his chronicles reflect many stereotypes of Allied propaganda. France and England are described as the repositories of Democracy and Culture, in sharp contrast to the authoritarian militarism of Germany; the French army is candidly presented as a big family where officers and soldiers share a healthy camaraderie, whereas the German army is mostly portrayed as a horde led by cruel officers who mistreat their own soldiers; the Rape of Belgium and the horror stories of the German invasion of northern France are the focus of many chronicles. Identification with the Allies led Gómez Carrillo to view Germany (rather than the United States) as the greatest imperialist threat to the political and economic independence of the Latin American republics.⁹ If there were any doubts about Gómez Carrillo's allegiances with the Allies, he was named Knight Commander of the Legion of Honor for his services to the French Republic in 1916 and appointed head of *L'Association des correspondants de guerre de la presse étrangère* by the end of the war (*La gesta* 43; Torres 289).

Though undeniably partisan, his chronicles are far from exercises in jingoistic bigotry clouded in propagandistic overtones. Gómez Carrillo was

deeply troubled by the brutality of the conflict. The Dantesque scenes of butchery, the carnage of trench warfare, and the transformation of urban and rural landscapes into endless wastelands, produced in Gómez Carrillo a profound disillusionment with the nature of contemporary warfare. In his outings to the trenches, the writer witnessed in horror how, in a nightmarish atmosphere of extreme violence, seemingly normal individuals indulge in the most brutal behavior. Gómez Carrillo encounters a German soldier who - driven by despair - “cogió la pierna que una bomba acababa de arrancarle a uno de sus compañeros, y blandiéndola cual una maza de armas, golpeaba con ella a los que se le ponían por delante ...;” a French soldier raised to celebrity status for mutilating German soldiers’ genitals with his fixed bayonet while encouraged by his comrades - “cual un perro” (*En las trincheras* 208; 218); a French officer who laughed at a German soldier stabbed in the skull so brutally that “la punta del cuchillo le salió por la nariz,” only to confide to Gómez Carrillo the sinister joy of killing: “Todos hacían gestos grotescos cuando sucumbían y nosotros reíamos llenos de júbilo al verlo ... No existe placer comparable al de ver morir a un enemigo” (*En las trincheras* 218).¹⁰ The feverish violence of such images convinced Gómez Carrillo that the totality of Europe - not just Germany, as French propaganda would claim - was infected with the Calibanesque malady of barbarism. As if inverting the 19th-century ideology of Progress that powers Domingo F. Sarmiento’s opposition between Civilization and Barbarism in *Facundo* (1845), Gómez Carrillo accuses all combatant nations of having regressed to a state of unrestrained barbarism. This general denunciation of the brutality of war cohabits throughout his chronicles in contradiction with Gómez Carrillo’s mimicry of French propaganda and, as a result, continuously subverts the discursive validity of such propagandistic diction. Despite their allegedly civilized status, for Gómez Carrillo there is no doubt that European nations at large are carrying out in the battlefields of Europe “lo que los bárbaros mismos no se atreverían a intentar” (*Crónica* 24). In “El incendio de la catedral de Reims” (*Crónica* 203-08) he formulates - an all-out indictment of Europe’s wild dreams of Progress prompted by the destruction of the Reims Cathedral:

... lo que en el pasado era barbarie y ferocidad, parecía abolido para siempre, gracias al trabajo suavizador de la Ciencia y la conciencia. El Universo entero, en suma, vivía acariciando con orgullo y confianza un ensueño de perfeccionamiento. He aquí que de pronto el despertar brusco nos precipita en un caos, en el cual encontramos todo lo que creíamos abolido: el odio, la ferocidad, la locura destructora, la inclemencia ciega, la sed de sangre. (*Crónica* 207)

Despite all technological and scientific achievements, the free rein given in the battlefield to base instincts suggests that Europe's staggering material progress was not followed by an equally impressive moral betterment. Far from a merely German phenomenon, the Great War unveils a previously hidden barbaric core in the heart of European culture. The anagnorisis that the self-proclaimed spiritual pillar of Civilization is in fact rotten with barbarism shatters the very idea of teleological Progress that animated European Modernity. The "ensueño de perfeccionamiento" Gómez Carrillo refers to has come to an end as the war unmasks the real nature of a civilized Europe suddenly turned savage.

For Gómez Carrillo, Europe's claims to Civilization are unmasked as a hypocritical pose - a mere carnivalesque costume - that attempts to disguise the rather unpleasant reality unfolding in the battlefields. Gómez Carrillo likens German soldiers to the tribes Julius Caesar fought against two millennia earlier. In a mirror image of Domingo F. Sarmiento's claim that underneath the tail-coat of urban Argentinians always lurks "el gaucho más o menos civilizado, pero siempre el gaucho" (Sarmiento 132), for Gómez Carrillo, little more than external appearance has changed in the moral nature of Europe. Although no longer shaft-throwing warriors covered in pelts, Europeans on the battlefields of Verdun or Somme are no more civilized than their barbaric ancestors. "Las pieles de animales con las cuales se vestía el cuerpo," he goes on to claim, "han desaparecido. En vez de flechas usa cañones. Para darse un aire refinado lleva un monóculo. Mas el fondo es siempre el mismo: un fondo de altivez indomable y de incurable rudeza" (*Campos* 156). In a similar fashion, Peruvian intellectual Francisco García Calderón brilliantly proclaims that in Europe "la barbarie ancestral" lurks underneath "[un] vestido frágil, disfraz in[e]stable" we commonly name Civilization (*Ideologías* 359). Despite their civilized costume, French and German soldiers' behavior gives away their true Calibanesque nature. As a French soldier in the trenches affirms proudly, "no hay estratagema de salvajes ni invención de topos que no aprovechemos unos y otros" (*Crónica* 100).¹¹

This critique of Europe as ultimately barbaric subverts Europe's vision of itself as the pinnacle of Civilization. The concept of Civilization and its surrogate nemesis - Barbarism - were the conceptual backbone of the Eurocentric ideology of Progress that had structured European narratives of Modernity since the 18th century. In its teleology of Progress, Europe fashioned itself as the spearhead of Civilization in the triumphal march of History - in contrast to the endemic Barbarism that affected other peoples and races who stagnated in their material and moral backwardness.

Civilization was tautological with Europe's culture and racial makeup and, consequently, other regions were displaced - to a greater or lesser degree - into the discursive and geographic fringes symbolized by barbarism. By denouncing Europe's barbarism, Gómez Carrillo turns this ideology and geography of Progress upside down and presents himself as the symbolic mouthpiece of Civilization. In doing so, the Guatemalan writer breaks Europe's discursive monopoly on the concept of Civilization, implicitly challenging contemporary views of Latin America as a semi-barbaric region. In the wake of the First World War, Gómez Carrillo seems to suggest, a new cartography of barbarism is well overdue. And ironically, Europe - rather than Latin America - lies at the center of it.¹²

Because the brutality has been amplified by modern technology, the barbarism of the Great War is historically unparalleled. In Gómez Carrillo's view, the combination of the latest technological achievements with the most savage behavior unleashes destruction at a scale never witnessed before. In his deliberately oxymoronic formulation of the current conflict, "la extrema civilización y la extrema barbarie" merge in the most unholy union (*En las trincheras* 179). The experience of war is indeed completely transformed by the deployment of such technologies of warfare as the airplane, the submarine, the zeppelin, and the tank, as well as new technologies of communication like the radio, the telephone, and the telegraph. But what truly impresses Gómez Carrillo is modern artillery - "las máquinas destructoras ... que a veinte kilómetros de distancia hacen arder las aldeas y destruyen los templos y convierten en cementerios los campos, sugieren ideas de maldiciones apocalípticas" (*Crónica* 250). With its heightened destructive power and increased range, artillery becomes the embodiment of modern warfare's barbarism - fast, powerful, clinically precise. Rather than the political or military leaders, it is pieces of artillery - such as the French 75mm cannon - that emerge in the popular imagination as the heroes of the conflagration (*En las trincheras* 70-72). "El cañón en el siglo XX," proclaims Gómez Carrillo, "es un ídolo sagrado" (*Crónica* 31).¹³

The massive use of artillery unveils how Europe's industry has become a diabolical enterprise devoted solely to the production of means of extermination. This is the focus of "Visiones diabólicas" (*En el corazón* 220-250) - a text reminiscent of Rubén Darío's 1887 article "El Rey Krupp." In this chronicle, Gómez Carrillo vividly narrates a visit to one of England's biggest artillery factories in which scientific knowledge and industry work hand in hand toward the common goal of producing death as cheaply and efficiently as possible. In modern warfare, industrial killing requires industrial production. Whereas in the past technology and science were

used for the betterment of mankind, in contemporary barbaric Europe they have their hands stained with blood. “Los sabios no trabajan ya en sus laboratorios para salvar a la Humanidad de sus miserias y de sus dolores,” Gómez Carrillo denounces, “sino que se desvelan buscando los gases más deletéreos, los líquidos más inflamables, los explosivos más horrendos, los metales más resistentes” (*En el corazón* 222). This highly efficient technification of death is what Gómez Carrillo - resorting again to a seemingly oxymoronic construct - defines as “barbarie refinada” (*En el corazón* 227). Although science provides war with a more clinical and refined look, the most advanced technologies of destruction give unrestrained expression to the basest human impulses, thus producing “el desencadenamiento de los elementos bárbaramente captados por la ciencia” that Gómez Carrillo so forcefully condemns (*Crónica* 17). Paradoxically, the current war is extremely civilized from the point of view of technology, but extremely barbaric from a moral perspective. Technological barbarism is the sign of the age - the uncanny latest product of European Progress. For Gómez Carrillo, if the imaginary of Civilization had rested so far upon an imaginary of construction, at the core of technological barbarism lies an ideology of instant obliteration that anticipates the concept of nuclear deflagration: “nos encontramos ya en la época, soñada por los sabios, en que basta con poner el dedo en un botón eléctrico para hacer saltar una ciudad ... Es la guerra química” (*En el corazón* 234).¹⁴

Technological warfare not only unleashes a scope of physical destruction never witnessed before; at an abstract level, it subverts the human condition itself. Modern European armies are monstrous technological machines in which the human entity is reduced to an irrelevant cog. In “El carácter de la guerra moderna” - the introduction to Gómez Carrillo’s first collection of chronicles (*Crónica de la guerra* [1915]) - contemporary armies are portrayed as cyclopean machines that completely absorb soldiers into their mechanical conglomerate, leaving no human trace behind them:

Un ejército de los que combate en Francia, visto gráficamente, forma una masa férrea que humea, que rueda y que trepida con sus ferrocarriles, sus cañones, su telégrafo, sus automóviles, sus aeroplanos y sus campamentos. Cuando se le ve en movimiento, dijérase que está accionado todo él por el vapor y que sus diferentes miembros se unen a un centro misterioso por medio de gigantescas correas transmisoras. Un engranaje monstruoso permite la unidad del ritmo simultáneo de sus innumerables piezas. Sus regimientos, en vez de llevar nombres poéticos, están numerados. Un color único, el color del hierro, lo hace uniforme de aspecto ... Que

ello sea grandioso, ¡quién lo duda! Lo es como una fábrica de Düsseldorf o de Boston. (18)¹⁵

The technological armies of the Great War are conceived of as Fordist assembly-line factories of death designed to yield the highest destruction. Resonant with the Marxian analysis of human alienation in industrial production, for Gómez Carrillo the division of labor in such armies/factories makes it impossible for the soldier to relate to the final product of his toils. In contrast to the artisanal way of killing that characterized previous epochs, the contemporary soldier is just “un detalle casi imponderable en el organismo de acero de una enorme maquinaria” (*Crónica* 18).¹⁶

Gómez Carrillo’s denunciation of human beings’ submission to the almighty mechanical ethos of technology is inscribed within a wider epochal concern with the intersection of technology and nature, stirred by the consequences of industrial Modernity upon the human body (Armstrong 3-5). Echoing the emergence of a mechanomorphic imagination at the beginning of the 20th century that blurred the boundaries between organisms and machines, Gómez Carrillo denounces how, absorbed into this almighty factory of death, soldiers have progressively lost their humanity. Given their “sentimiento mecánico de la vida” (*En las trincheras* 158), he views the disciplined German soldiers as “maquinaria humana” that parade with clockwork precision “cual si estuvieran accionadas por un mecanismo de acero” (*En las trincheras* 173; 172).¹⁷

If technology was in origin meant to be the transformation of nature and the existing physical and biological environments to satisfy human needs and goals - an appendix that, as Sigmund Freud proclaimed in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929), turned humans into “Prosthetic Gods” (50) - the technologies of destruction deployed in the First World War are of such magnitude that this relation is inverted. In modern warfare, human beings surrender their own humanity to the machine. In this inversion of roles, the contemporary Faustian Man has become slave to his own creation (631), as Oswald Spengler claimed in *The Decline of the West* (1918-20). Far from being a complement to the human body, technology - that rebellious prosthetic extension of ourselves - is now in control. Human beings, robbed of their humanity, have been reduced to mere objects - “peones de un inmenso tablero, una mano invisible los mueve como objetos inanimados, sirviéndose de ellos lo mismo que de cualquier otro elemento automático” (*Crónica* 20). Not only are human bodies dismembered by the millions on European battlefields, in the latest

stage of European Modernity, profoundly anti-humanist technological barbarism robs humanity of its very essence. As Gómez Carrillo laconically puts it, “tenemos un fusil - decían antaño con orgullo los infantes. Hoy es el fusil el que tiene un hombre” (*Crónica* 20).¹⁸

The destructive power unleashed by new technologies on the Western Front creates a dystopian reality that Gómez Carrillo obsessively attempts to represent in his journalism. In doing so, the Prince of the Chroniclers confronts the same dilemma that haunted many European writers of his generation: the unsuitability of his highly aestheticized modernist writing style to accurately represent the sheer ugliness of the Western Front's endless wastelands. Gómez Carrillo faces a war in which landscapes are de-naturalized on a systematic basis, transformed into what he calls “un mundo de quimera y de pesadilla regido por leyes infernales” (*En el corazón* 45). Indeed, the technological barbarism that characterizes the Great War aims at total obliteration:

Matar hombres no es nada en nuestra época ... De lo que se trata es de remover las montañas, de aniquilar las ciudades, de provocar en una palabra revoluciones geológicas. Hay que haber visitado los campos de las recientes batallas para darse cuenta de lo que es la artillería moderna. Bosques, carreteras, pueblos, ríos, todo ha desaparecido en lugares como Carenay, como Metzeral, como Duamont. (*En el corazón* 222)

Having acquired his fame mostly as a travel chronicler and literary and cultural commentator, Gómez Carrillo had fashioned himself as the ultimate global *flâneur* who, armed with his poetic hypersensitivity, could capture the beauty of any environment. In trying to give expression to a war devoid of any lyricism, Gómez Carrillo becomes aware of the limitations of his previous literary persona and writing style: new technologies of destruction demand from the author new technologies of representation. A pragmatic writer, Gómez Carrillo makes a shift in his journalistic style. Continuing the tradition of the chronicle as the Modernists' “literary laboratory” (González 84), the Guatemalan writer blends his *flâneur* literary persona with his new role as war correspondent, incorporating reporter-style journalism into his highly aestheticized modernist prose. His chronicles merge lyrical passages of literary prose with the reporter's tools of the trade: hard facts, an event-based narrative line, a less rhetorical style, as well as testimonials and interviews that enrich his texts with new subjective perspectives.¹⁹ These changes imbue Gómez Carrillo's highly aestheticized lyrical style with a stronger effect of immediacy and truth. Diversifying the literary registers

at his disposal to depict the wastelands of war, he manages to give a human face - "un soplo de humanidad" - to a conflict that is otherwise "una operación de matemáticas" (*Crónica* 20). This aesthetic experiment produces a personal hybrid writing style that draws materials from those two distinctive sources: the literary and the reportorial, which highly self-conscious Gómez Carrillo will call "la voz de las sombras" and "el reino de los repórters" (*Campos* 222). Equipped with this new technology of representation, the Modernist *bon vivant* turned war correspondent systematically documents the devastation of Europe's urban landscapes. Faced with the ungraspable reality of endless wastelands too great to be apprehended, he resorts to the literary trope of the ruin to structure his texts and symbolically represent the perverse effects of Europe's technological barbarism.²⁰

Gómez Carrillo's chronicles constitute a glossary of destruction - a succession of narratives on the waste of war conjugated in all forms and shapes. Reims, San Quintin, Lourdes, Soissons, Compiègne, Pont-à-Mousson, Clermont, Ypres, and Arras are some of the ghost cities Gómez Carrillo evokes with obsessive recurrence before the eyes of his readership. The endless, amorphous extensions of ruins, severed buildings, and piles of rubble he encounters throughout his visits to the front constitute tangible proof of the ideology of total obliteration that lies at the heart of technological barbarism and provide the writer with a concrete physical space around which to frame his narrative *tableaux* (*Crónica* 16). No other chronicle harnesses the effectiveness of the trope of the ruin in Gómez Carrillo's chronicles better than "Iprès la muerte" (*El quinto libro* 125-40).²¹

One of Belgium's most famous historical towns, Ypres was progressively leveled throughout the four years of the conflict due to its strategic position. By the time Gómez Carrillo visited in 1917, most of Ypres's population had fled and the town had been turned into a pile of rubble. Although he had grown accustomed to the devastating effects of contemporary artillery on urban landscapes, Gómez Carrillo was shocked at the level of desolation. Ypres, in the words of the writer, was only inhabited by "la muerte absoluta, la muerte completa, la muerte sin ilusiones de resurrección" (*El quinto libro* 125). The ruins of Ypres, therefore, become the vivid physical testimony of the new face of European Modernity. Personified as a martyr slaughtered by technological warfare, Gómez Carrillo wanders through the ruins in silence, dwelling on his memories of previous visits to the Belgian town. In their incompleteness, the ruins of Ypres both connect him to and separate him from the past. Dialectically, they force him to confront the present

destruction of the city and give him an insight into the past that preceded it. The chronicle is, therefore, structured around extensive, objective descriptions of the destroyed city intercalated with continuous dream-like evocations in which the writer re-constructs before our eyes a past that now lies in rubble. Such structure reflects the strengths of Gómez Carrillo's new writing style. The reporter's style is used by the writer to incorporate the testimonials of the survivors and describe in great detail the devastation of the ruined town. Complementarily, the incompleteness of the ruins becomes the perfect springboard for Gómez Carrillo's imagination to bring the past of the destroyed cities to life:

Con la imaginación contemplo el venerable café de la Buena Voluntad, donde pasé tantas horas agradables hace algunos años ... Luego, como en un cinematógrafo, pasan por mi memoria las fachadas ilustres de la rue de Lille, de la rue de Dixmude, de la Bouche, de la plaza de Van den Pereeboom, del Marché aux Bois, de la rue Elverdinghe, de la rue du Temple ... Todo destruido. (*El quinto libro* 126; emphasis added)

Despite Gómez Carrillo's tendency to be driven by his imagination into the grand historical past of the town, his dreamy mind always returns to the oppressive present of the city to heighten the contrast between those two temporal dimensions codified in the single physical vortex of the ruin. As the narrator goes on to affirm, "lo que antes era un museo de arquitecturas grandiosas o pintorescas con su mezcla de estilos de varios siglos, con sus contrastes de casitas puntiagudas y de altos palacios ojivales, con su abundancia de pórticos ornados y pintados, hoy es un hacinamiento informe de piedras y ladrillos" (*El quinto libro* 135).

This temporal contrast between the well-defined forms of the past monument and the amorphousness of the contemporary ruinscape reaches its climax at the sight of the *Halles aux Draps* (The Hall of Clothes) (see image 1). Considered one of the most important examples of Gothic civil architecture in Europe, and described by Gómez Carrillo as "uno de los santuarios históricos de Europa y del Mundo" (*El quinto libro* 138), the *Halles aux Draps* was the 14th-century headquarters of the powerful local cloth guild. Having survived the turbulent history of Flanders for more than five centuries, the building was bombed to the ground in the course of the war and turned into a symbol of the viciousness of the German occupation by French and English propaganda - along with Reims Cathedral and the Library of the University of Leuven. Gómez Carrillo's confrontation with the destroyed monument's piles of rubble heightens the temporal contrast fixed discursively in the ruins:

Ya sé que no encontraremos sino ruinas, siempre ruinas. Las fotografías nos han acostumbrado al espectáculo de este formidable esqueleto de piedra. 'No queda nada' - nos dicen los que han estado aquí antes que nosotros. Pero la imagen de aquel palacio de encanto *se halla tan grabada en mi retina, que no lo evoco tal cual las últimas tarjetas postales lo ofrecen a la lástima universal, sino tal cual lo vi hace años*, una de aquellas mañanas primaverales en que los romeros del arte veníamos a contemplar sus cien ventanas, sus techos de encaje, sus torrecillas aéreas, su enorme atalaya... (*El quinto libro* 127; emphasis added)

Despite its current state, the illustrious past of the *Halles aux Draps* lives on, not in past representations or contemporary postcards, but in the mind of the Guatemalan writer (see image 2). Gómez Carrillo's memories become a repository - a reliquary where the writer safeguards the remains of a magnificent tradition now gone. "Grabada en mi retina," as the writer affirms, the image of the building emerges back from the dead in the mind *and* writings of Gómez Carrillo, who - resting his eyes in the piles of rubble left after the bombardments - devotes the rest of his chronicle to evoking the Halles's illustrious history and lavish beauty in the minutest detail, as if conjuring an elegiac prayer for the dead monument.²²



Image 1. *Halles aux Draps* at the end of the First World War, Ypres, 1918 (Stedelijke Musea Ieper).



Image 2. Postcard of Halles aux Draps. Ypres, 1918 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

The narrative of loss that emerges from the description of the *Halles's* ruins is clearly nostalgic. As Andreas Huyssen has rightly claimed, the body of the ruin is an especially powerful trigger for nostalgia given that in it, “the past is both present in its residues and yet no longer accessible” (7). However, far from being a conservative nostalgic move - an example of what Svetlana Boym would name “restorative nostalgia” (41-48) - or an escapist discursive strategy, Gómez Carrillo’s evocations of the past heighten the sense of loss and, above all, stoke the audience’s outrage against the horrors of war. Its historical and artistic significance and the brutal effects of modern technologies of destruction on the 14th-century architectural masterpiece make the *Halles aux Draps* the degree zero of European Modernity in the eyes of Gómez Carrillo - the ultimate symbol of what José Enrique Rodó called “esta aciaga bancarrota de la civilización” (“Escritos” 1229), and Francisco García Calderón “la horrible hecatombe del espíritu” (*Ideologías* 456). Europe’s prestige and authority as the embodiment of Civilization and the arbiter of Progress lie bombed to pieces like the lavish stained glass windows and profusely ornate arches that once decorated the Gothic monument. If European Civilization was once able, through its creative genius, to give birth to “un relicario de la Edad Media” of such beauty (*El quinto libro* 130), the destruction of the

Halles embodies for the Guatemalan writer the moral ruin of the continent. In the bonfire that spirals out of the rubble of Ypres, Rheims, Arras, and Leuven, Gómez Carrillo perceives what he calls “la ruina irreparable de las almas” - the spiritual breakdown of a civilization perverted to its core by the dehumanizing effects of technological warfare. Far from placing the blame for this orgy of devastation on technology, in his damning indictment of European Modernity, Gómez Carrillo points the finger at European intellectuals, who, in their nationalist madness, stirred up and joined “la horda [destructora]” that is now decimating the continent (*Crónica* 251). As he goes on to claim, “¡ante una Europa devastada por el fuego y arrasada por el hierro, casi se sienten deseos de no llorar a los poetas, a los filósofos, a los sacerdotes que ahora sucumben! Ellos, por lo menos no tendrán que llorar lo que, involuntariamente, *han contribuido a hacer*” (*Crónica* 252; emphasis added).

The confrontation with the *Halles aux Draps* highlights the position that Gómez Carrillo enjoys throughout his chronicles as a privileged witness of the historical events unfolding in Europe - hailed as “[el] testigo presencial” by *El Liberal's* editorial. As the chronicler of the conflict, his commanding position is reminiscent of the Angel of History described by Walter Benjamin in *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940). From the heights of his detached vantage point, Gómez Carrillo views the ruins of the *Halles* as a trope of the Great War itself - “one single catastrophe that unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and throws it before his feet” (Benjamin 272-73). Through his chronicles, the Guatemalan writer tries, like Benjamin’s Angel, to awaken the dead and recompose what has been broken to pieces in the endless eschatological process of History. His role as the judging witness that attempts to re-appropriate for himself the splendid European past summarizes the complex cultural politics that underlie Gómez Carrillo’s body of chronicles. Standing on the rubble of Ypres, his figure emerges as the voice of conscience that, vindicating the values of Civilization, denounces the collapse of a Europe that has betrayed its own past. As a Latin American writer, Gómez Carrillo is the one civilized and sensitive enough to honor and mourn Europe’s self-immolation. Ironically, the foreigner - the etymological meaning of “barbaric” - becomes the one entrusted with protecting whatever little is left of European Civilization.

Overwhelmed with nostalgia, Gómez Carrillo - like Benjamin’s evocative Angel of History - is driven forward by the Storm of Progress. Confronted with yet another shocking wasteland of war, for the Guatemalan writer there is no doubt that the ruins of Europe necessarily demand a fresh start for mankind:

Las llamas que ahora incendian desde aquí la mitad del continente, la mitad del globo, han sido encendidas por el Destino con objeto de iluminar una aurora de justicia futura. Sólo que para llegar hasta el fondo del abismo donde se encuentran las visiones consoladoras, es preciso pasar antes por entre los más crueles, por entre los más angustiosos, por entre los más febriles espectáculos. (*En el corazón* 245-46)

Having documented the atrocities of a conflict in which nine million soldiers lost their lives at the heart of a continent that fashioned itself as the spearhead of Progress, Gómez Carrillo clearly perceives that “el juego formidable del Destino está preparando una nueva era, tal vez una nueva Humanidad” (*Campos* 163). In a similar vein, José Enrique Rodó had asked rhetorically in 1914 whether Europe “lleva efectivamente en sí el principio moral capaz de preservarla de la disolución, o si, a semejanza de civilizaciones que la precedieron, está destinada a caer desde la cúspide de sus grandezas, para que sobre sus ruinas se levante un orden mejor y más justo” (“Escritos” 1219; emphasis added). By the end of the war, the answer to Rodó’s question was clear. Standing amidst the ruins of a consumed continent, Gómez Carrillo implicitly urged Spanish and Latin American readers of his chronicles to look for that new humanity he dreamed of by questioning the ideology and geographical location of Progress and Civilization.²³

Out of the hecatomb of the First World War will indeed emerge a new world order - a new economic, geopolitical, and cultural cartography that during the 1920s turned anachronistic the pre-war geographies of Modernity that presented Europe as a model for Progress and Civilization. Embracing Gómez Carrillo’s damning denunciation of European technological barbarism, a new generation of Latin American intellectuals will embark on the tortuous project of laying the foundations of a New Era and Humanity in the New World. From the cultural politics of the Mexican Revolution, Pedro Henríquez Ureña’s “Utopía de América,” and José Carlos Mariátegui’s Indo-American Revolution, down to José Vasconcelos’ vision of the Cosmic Race and the thriving of Afro-Caribbean and *Indigenista* agendas throughout the Antilles and the Andean region, Latin American intellectuals from the 1920s will share the conviction that if Modernity is to be achieved, it ought to be sought in and within the realms of Latin America itself.

By shaping the symbolic and cultural perception of Europe in Latin America through his hundreds of chronicles on the Great War, Gómez Carrillo contributed significantly to the New Era that emerged from the ruins of Europe. But despite his visionary analysis, Gómez Carrillo

was able to adapt neither himself, nor his literary style, to this new historical reality. Among the many things buried deep in the battlefields of the Western Front - along with Europe's prestige as a political and cultural model - was the validity of the highly aestheticized modernist technologies of representation to accurately reflect the new historical reality taking shape since 1918. A victim of the New Era whose birth he had tirelessly documented, by the mid-1920s, the Prince of the Chroniclers had - along with most of the modernist movement - turned from Angel of History into History himself.

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NOTES

- 1 An early version of this paper was presented at the ACLA 2013 Conference. I would like to thank fellow panelists David Barreto, Nathalie Bouzaglo, Leila Gómez, Alejandro Mejías, and Andrew Reynolds for their comments, as well as Marc-Olivier Reid for his suggestions.
- 2 He published three collections of chronicles translated into French: *Parmi les ruines* (1915), *Le sourire sous la mitraille* (1916), *Au coeur de la tragédie* (1917); and two into English: *Among the ruins* (1915) and *In the heart of the tragedy* (1917). His hectic activity during the war was not limited to journalism. Gómez Carrillo edited and prologued two volumes on the reactions of Latin American and Spanish intellectuals towards the conflict: *Voix espagnoles: L'influence allemande et l'influence française* (1915) and *Voix de l'Amérique Latine* (1916). With contributions by such prominent figures as Enrique Larreta, Roberto Payró, Vicente García Calderón, José Enrique Rodó, and Graça Aranha, the latter constitutes - along with Francisco Contreras's *Les écrivains hispano-américains et la guerre européenne* (1917) - the major collection of essays in support of France written by Latin American intellectuals during the war.
- 3 Literary critics have mostly ignored Gómez Carrillo's First World War chronicles, with the exception of two short introductory essays published online (Cuvardic; Reyes Castellanos).
- 4 Besides these better-known correspondents, the conflict was covered by a legion of reporters whose work reached the general public through the press, and later in book form. Although tracing the continental landscape of the immense Germanophile and Aliadophile bibliography - mostly un-researched - falls way beyond the aims of this paper, the following reporters played a significant role in determining the reception of the Great War in Latin America due to the quality *or* quantity of their journalistic production. As an embedded

- journalist in the German Army, Argentinian military Emilio Kinkelin contributed to *La Nación* and later published *Mis correspondencias a "La nación" durante la guerra europea*; living in occupied Belgium for the full duration of the conflict, Roberto Payró also published articles in *La Nación*, which have been recently re-published (see Payró). In Mexico, José D. Frías worked as a correspondent for *El Universal* (see Frías), and Mexican Francisco Díaz Barreiro published extracts from his chronicles for a Venezuelan and a Puerto Rican newspaper in *Un periodista mexicano en los frentes franceses*. Without having touched European soil during the conflict, prolific Francophile Uruguayan journalists Pedro Parrabère (*Apuntes periodísticos sobre la guerra europea in five volumes*) and Adolfo Agorio (*La fragua [apuntes de la guerra europea]*), *Fuerza y derecho; aspectos morales de la gran guerra* and *La sombra de Europa. Transformación de los sentimientos y de las ideas*) narrated the war from a distance. Such is the case, as well, of Cubans Fernando de Soignie who compiled his chronicles for *La Discusión* in *Crónicas de sangre*, and Nicolás Rivero and J. Gil del Real who published their chronicles for *Diario de la Marina* as *La guerra europea. 1914-1915. "Actualidades" y "Diario de la Guerra"*.
- 5 Profoundly reminiscent of the ideology of Progress adopted throughout 19th-century Latin America, French propaganda portrays France as the only barrier between Europe and regression into the pre-Roman dark ages. As Gustave Le Bon puts it, the Great War is a struggle between two psychological dispositions: "La liberté individuelle se dresse contre l'asservissement collectif, l'initiative personnelle contre la tyrannie étatiste, les anciennes habitudes de loyauté internationale et de respect des traités, contre la suprématie des canons. L'idéal d'absolutisme de la force que l'Allemagne prétend aujourd'hui faire triompher n'est pas nouveau, puisqu'il régna sur le monde antique. Deux mille ans d'efforts furent nécessaires à l'Europe pour essayer de lui en substituer un autre" (*Enseignements* 2-3).
- 6 For the defense of France as the embodiment of Latin idealism, see also Rodó's "La solidarité des peuples latins" (70-72) and "La causa de Francia es la causa de la humanidad" ("Escritos" 1220-22), and Contreras's *Les écrivains hispano-américains et la guerre européenne*.
- 7 For a general analysis of journalism in France during the Great War see Almeida and Delporte 17-54; and Delporte 180-92. On the cultural wars and the mobilization of the intellectual, see Hanna. On the figure of the war correspondent, see Farrar and Farish; and McEwen and Fiskén.
- 8 Gómez Carrillo's chronicles are filled with passing references to censorship (see *En las trincheras* 86-87, *Crónicas* 59-61; 139) as well as critical remarks about the manipulation and sheer lying that one encounters in both French and German newspapers (see *En las trincheras* 132 and *Crónicas* 216-21).

- 9 Gómez Carrillo elaborates on such threats in his article “Le Péril allemand dans l’Amérique latine” -prologue to the collective volume *Voix de l’Amérique Latine*- and in *La gesta de la legión* (187). Similarly, for José Enrique Rodó, Germany still views Latin America as “la presa colonial” el país de leyenda abierto a la imaginación de la conquista” (“Escritos” 1222). For analogous views, see García Calderón, *Ideologías* 488; Larreta 172; and Contreras 34.
- 10 Similarly, in “Bajo el vuelo de las granadas” (*En las trincheras* 68-81), Gómez Carrillo confronts with horror the sadistic pleasure that a French officer savors at the dismemberment of German soldiers by French artillery: “Es admirable el efecto de un obús en medio de una tropa, parece que rompiera una caja de muñecos ... Las piernas saltan en el aire, las cabezas ruedan por el suelo ... ¡Lástima que no podamos ver desde aquí! ...” (81). In his chronicle “Ante la catástrofe” (13-22), Amado Nervo also denounces the moral miseries of war times by imagining a stereotypical bourgeois “adornado de todas las virtudes domésticas” who is mobilized and transformed into a soulless thug: “Cuando usted y sus compañeros no tienen manera de tirotear al enemigo, desnudan mujeres y ríen de su sonrojo (claro que se trata de mujeres del otro bando); degüellan niños, apalean ancianos, roban cuanto encuentran a su paso; incendian las pobres casas de los labriegos, destruyen ciudades, saquean bancos, fusilan a un infeliz porque pudiera ser espía, y todo esto ante la complaciente sonrisa de sus jefes” (14).
- 11 Like Gómez Carrillo, many distinguished Francophile intellectuals denounce Europe’s regression to barbarism. Rodó interprets the war as a whirlpool of hatred that “en el centro mismo de la civilización entronizan, más o menos transitoriamente, la brutalidad y la barbarie de la fuerza” (“Escritos” 1219) and points out in a later article how economic and material advancements do not bar Europe from returning to “la más triste fatalidad de la barbarie” (“Escritos” 1229). In his article “El suicidio de los bárbaros” (included in his book *Los nuevos tiempos*), José Ingenieros also equates European cultures with barbarism. For the Argentinian scholar, Europe as a whole represents an outdated mode of civilization - “la civilización feudal imperante en las naciones bárbaras de Europa” - that should be replaced by a new civilization driven by morality (14). In his article “Ante la catástrofe,” Amado Nervo conceives of Civilization as a disease that brings about irremissibly brutal destruction: “una guerra actual super[a] en horrores y en crueldades a todas las invasiones de los bárbaros” (18).
- 12 Latin America was still viewed at the time as a semi-barbarous region. As Le Bon proclaimed in *Lois psychologiques de l’évolution des peuples*, Latin America is condemned to “la plus sanglante anarchie” (114) due to its racial make-up, and left alone its fate would be none other than regression to “la pure barbarie” (116).

- 13 The different pieces of artillery used by the German and French armies even become metaphors for their national ethos. The 75mm becomes personified to the point of being described as “un ser, un protector, un compañero, algo que tiene vida, que tiene alma, algo que se confunde y se identifica con el pueblo que lo ha creado, algo de profundamente francés ... el 75 es el símbolo del guerrero francés, como el 420 es la imagen del soldado alemán” (*En las trincheras* 72; 74).
- 14 Gómez Carrillo’s critique of this technological Avernus is, however, mingled with a fascination with scientific creative process. This ambivalence is epitomized in his description of this “nueva religión diabólica” of destruction as both promethean and diabolic (*En el corazón* 250). The attraction exerted by the new technologies of war is also sexually charged since the highly sexualized phallic weaponry in the factory is manipulated by female workers (*En el corazón* 225-29).
- 15 Quoting German general Friedrich von Bernhardt, Gómez Carrillo comments on how the function of the modern military consists in setting in motion “el mecanismo de las fuerzas en campaña con las redes de ferrocarriles y de rutas, aceitando bien la rueda dentada y cuidando de proveer de combustible al conjunto, en forma de hombres, municiones y víveres” (*Crónica* 21).
- 16 In his chapter “Machinery and Big-Scale Industry” (I: 391-530), Karl Marx similarly questions the human cost of industrialization, diagnosing the reduction of the individual in highly automatized factories to “living appendixes” of “a dead mechanism” (I: 445). The translation of this and all subsequent German texts are my own.
- 17 This convergence of man and machine also affects French artillerists, who start physically resembling the 75mm pieces they operate (*En las trincheras* 74) and confide to Gómez Carrillo that their very being is indistinguishable from that of their weapon: “formamos parte de nuestras baterías y casi no existimos individualmente” (*Campos* 196).
- 18 In a similar vein, in Marx’s description of mechanical Modernity the worker becomes the tool of the machine and by extension of the productive system: “...it is not the worker that makes use of the conditions of production but rather the conditions of production that make use of the worker” (*Das Kapital* I: 446).
- 19 Prior to the Great War, Gómez Carrillo had already experimented with the reporter’s style in his book *La Rusia actual* - a collection of chronicles on the contemporary state of Russia after its defeat at the hands of Japan and the 1905 Revolution.
- 20 Gómez Carrillo often recognizes the challenge of giving literary expression to the immensity of the Great War’s battlefields conceived of as a form of sublime reality that transcends the senses: “por más esfuerzos que se hacen, la vista

humana no logra abarcar el conjunto de la acción. Los que recorren el terreno del combate nos dibujan un largo itinerario de rutas, de aldeas y de ciudades cubiertas de ruinas y de cadáveres, sin lograr producir un efecto de *tableau*" (*Crónica* 16). For further reflections on the ungraspable nature of the battlefields, see also *Campos* 199; 217-18.

- 21 For other narratives of destruction structured around ruins, see *Crónica* 203-08 (on Reims); *Tierras mártires* 175-83 (on San Quintin); *En las trincheras* 234-57 (Arras); and *El quinto libro* 217-30 (on Compiègne), 277-84 (on Soissons), 285-91 (on Lourdes).
- 22 In "La agonía de Arras" (*En las trincheras* 234-57), Gómez Carrillo deploys the same imaginative evocations: "...ha llegado la hora de olvidar a la Arras de Alberto e Isabel, y de Felipe II, y de Carlos V, para no hablar sino de la guerra y sus horrores" (*En las trincheras* 240). See also "El alma indomable de Lorena" (*Campos* 221-28).
- 23 In a similar register, in his article "Después" ("Escritos" 1232-33) Enrique Rodó will later affirm that "tal vez hemos de asistir al alumbramiento monstruoso en que, entre torrentes de lágrimas y sangre, broten, de las desgarradas entrañas de esta civilización doliente, *nuevo orden y nueva vida* ... Empezará la energía que ha de dar de sí un mundo nuevo con la primera aurora de la paz y como protesta y rebelión contra la majestad de la guerra" ("Escritos" 1232; emphasis added). For García Calderón - one of the most refined Latin American commentators of the political and ideological impasses arisen by the Great War - Latin America bears the historical imperative of becoming the new utopia - the new land of provision for civilization. It should provide "al Viejo Mundo demente" with a new peaceful internationalist model and, most importantly, with a messianic vision to aspire to (*Ideologías* 339; 348): "Corresponde al nuevo mundo, en la bancarrota del antiguo, una función mesiánica ... solo del mundo Nuevo, de América, podrá venir la justicia armada en que sonaba Pascal, que ponga límites á la Discordia, á la impureza, al duelo interminable de civilizaciones" (*Ideologías* 348; 480).

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