

EDUCATION, ART AND NATURE IN WILLIAM T. HARRIS AND MANUEL B. COSSÍO

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Eugenio Otero Urtaza*

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Abstract. William Torrey Harris (1835-1909) was an educator of great importance in the United States and can be seen as the link between the thought of Horace Mann and John Dewey. Harris met Giner and Cossío in Paris in 1889 and from that point on maintained a stable relationship with the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Free Institution of Teaching, ILE). This allowed for an exchange of information and increased the knowledge in Spain of the pedagogical ideas that were being developed in his country. This paper looks at the first contacts between American pedagogy and the ILE, before walking us through Harris' biography until he was appointed commissioner of education in the United States. We focus on his initial contact with transcendentalism and its subsequent connection with the thought of Hegel and on his wish to integrate all of these concepts into the idea of kindergarten as a fundamentally public space of coexistence for people of all groups and social classes. The core of the study offers a review of some similarities and differences between the thought of Harris and Cossío in connection with the educational potential of art and nature, especially regarding schools and technical training, concluding that both are part of a transnational trend in pedagogical thinking that goes beyond national frameworks. This «transatlantic community of discourse», as Kloppenberg called it, is a complex process of intellectual convergence that sought a middle way between idealism and positivism.

Keywords: William T. Harris; Manuel B. Cossío; Francisco Giner de los Ríos; Institución Libre de Enseñanza; American transcendentalism. Artistic education; Education and nature.

Resumen. *William Torrey Harris (1835-1909) es un educador de una gran importancia en los Estados Unidos: es el eslabón que enlaza el pensamiento de Horace Mann con John Dewey. Harris conoció a Giner y Cossío en París en 1889 y desde entonces mantuvo una relación estable con la Institución*

* Departamento de Pedagogía y Didáctica. Facultad de Formación del Profesorado. Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (Campus de Lugo). Avenida de Ramón Ferreiro s/n, 27002 Lugo. Spain. otero.urtaza@usc.es.

Libre de Enseñanza (ILE) que facilitó un intercambio de información y un mayor conocimiento en España de las ideas pedagógicas que se estaban desarrollando en su país. Se estudian así los primeros contactos entre la pedagogía norteamericana y la ILE, y se hace un recorrido por la biografía de Harris hasta que fue nombrado comisario de educación de los Estados Unidos, especialmente en lo que fue su primer contacto con el trascendentalismo y su conexión posterior con el pensamiento de Hegel, de su preocupación por integrar todo ese pensamiento en la idea del kindergarten como un espacio netamente público, de convivencia entre todos los grupos y clases sociales. En la centralidad del estudio se examinan algunas concomitancias y diferencias entre el pensamiento de Harris y el de Cossío en relación con la capacidad educadora del arte y la naturaleza, especialmente en el ámbito escolar y la formación técnica, concluyéndose que ambos forman parte de una red trasnacional que impregna el pensamiento pedagógico más allá de los marcos nacionales que Kloppenberg denomina «transatlantic community of discourse», un complejo proceso de convergencia intelectual que buscaba una vía intermedia entre el idealismo y el positivismo.

Palabras clave: *William T. Harris; Manuel B. Cossío; Francisco Giner de los Ríos; Institución Libre de Enseñanza; Trascendentalismo norteamericano; Educación artística. Educación y naturaleza.*

INTRODUCTION

The relations of the *Institución de Libre Enseñanza* (Free Institution of Teaching, hereinafter ILE) with educators in the United States is an episode that has barely been treated in what refers to its beginnings in the nineteenth century. And yet its presence is felt almost from the moment of its creation, when James Russell Lowell appeared in Madrid as head of the American Legation, which was his first political office.¹ There is no doubt that this relationship was growing in the first third of the twentieth century. Even after the Civil War there were many intellectuals, scientists and exiled writers who found host universities in sharp contrast to those ones who were received officially after 1953. However, there are pedagogical anchors that first forged an early

¹ He remained active in Madrid between 1877 and 1879 and continuously supported the work of the ILE. Then, he was ambassador to London where he again met Giner and Cossío in 1884. A posthumous book about his stay in Spain was published: *Impressions of Spain* (Boston/New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899). For his relationship with ILE, see Lawrence L. Klippe, «James Russell Lowell's Residence in Spain», *Hispania*, 41 (2), (1958): 190-194.

connection that became larger over time allowing the reception of their culture in Spain before 1936.

Many years before the first scholarship holders got there, news had already arrived in the United States about what Giner's creation meant. In 1884, a note was published in the annual report of the Commissioner of Education about the interest the ILE was raising in that country. The note, in a very laudatory tone, mentions his essays to shape the education system to the principles of modern pedagogy and stresses that the most eminent scientists, writers, artists and politicians of the country lent their support with their publications, helping to improve the deficiencies of university education. He added that they practiced school hiking as it was not done in any other country in Europe at that time. They managed to get French language introduced in the official curriculum and hoped to get gymnastics introduced soon.²

It is known that Giner and Cossío³ unlike other *institucionistas* as Labra or Posada, did not show much interest in knowing what was being done in the Latin American republics. Cossío even gave up the only chance he had to travel to Argentina.⁴ Committed to European projection and wishing that Spain reached the prosperity of other nations in the continent, they devoted almost no effort to know the school reality of the former colonial empire. However, they were very interested in learning about the industrial and intellectual power the United States was becoming. A few years after the end of the war for the independence of Cuba in 1898, Cossío crossed the Atlantic in 1904 to participate in the Arts and Sciences Congress, and the Universal Exposition in Saint Louis

² *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1883-1884* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885), ccxxxii-xxxiv. Consulted at <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009164574> (Cornell University).

³ Manuel Bartolomé Cossío (1857-1935) continued the educational work of Francisco Giner de los Ríos in the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, which was not only a school or educational trend, but a broad reform movement and modernization of Spanish Society. Cossío was the director of the Educational Museum of Madrid between 1883 and 1929, and was appointed as the first Professor of Education at the Spanish University in 1904. He was also the president of the Board of Trustees of Educational Missions (Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas), an organization created in the Second Republic to promote the integration of farmers in the democratic welfare. Besides being the most prestigious educator of his time in Spain, he was an excellent critic and art historian, internationally renowned for his rediscovery of El Greco, perhaps being the best connoisseur of this work.

⁴ Eugenio Otero Urtaza, *Manuel Bartolomé Cossío trayectoria vital de un educador*, (Madrid: Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes/CSIC, 1994), 344.

(Lousiana Purchase Exposition), also visiting Chicago, Philadelphia and New York where he made contact with educators he felt some affinity with as William Wistar Comfort (1874-1955), Isaac Sharpless (1848-1920), John D. Fitz-Gerald (1873-1946) and Benjamin Richard Andrews (1877-1963). A trip that gave rise to emerging contacts that would be expanded in the early decades of the twentieth century with the policy of the *Junta para Ampliación de Estudios* (Board for Advanced Studies) and especially after Federico de Onís settled at the University of Columbia.

It is important to underline that the interest in culture and education that emerged in the United States is contemporary to ILE's own birth. During 1878-1879, Rafael Maria de Labra had taught a course on political institutions. Adolfo A. Buylla published in 1886 an article on the development of socialist ideas in that country, recalling it had been a laboratory for many social experiments, focusing on strikes and workers' struggles that occurred at that time. He reviewed the role fulfilled by German emigration nourished by numerous refugees who arrived from 1848 on, the *Knights of Labour*, the *International Workingmen's Association* and the *Social Labour Party*, and he disseminated the ideas that Richard Ely had published in *Recent American Socialism*.⁵

Given this background, Giner and Cossío met William Torrey Harris in Paris in 1889.⁶ This meeting marks the beginning of a relationship that lasts to the early twentieth century, while Harris was Commissioner of the Bureau of Education. As a first result of this, Cossío began to be interested in the school organization that existed in the United States⁷ and Harris sent Bureau publications and Commissioner reports to Spain, documents that Giner would sometimes comment on *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Bulletin of the Free Institution of Teaching, hereinafter

⁵ Adolfo Álvarez Buylla, «El socialismo en los Estados Unidos», *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (hereinafter *BILE*), X (220), (1886): 98.

⁶ In fact, Harris and Cossío met at the International Congress of Education in Brussels in 1880, which had been organized by the Ligue Belge de l'Enseignement, although there is no record that they had maintained any conversation at that time.

⁷ In late November 1889 Cossío published an article entitled «La enseñanza en los Estados Unidos y su organización» in the *BILE*. Almost all sources come from Ferdinand Buisson, but he uses the Report of the Commissioner for the first time, possibly sent by Harris who had just taken his seat on the Bureau of Education of Washington. The following year he published «Notas sobre la Inspección escolar en los Estados Unidos» again with Buisson's bibliographic support. Buisson may have been involved in Giner and Cossío's meeting with Harris in 1889.

BILE). During that 1889 meeting, they discovered that Harris had a way of thinking that connected with the wishes of social reform that the ILE was proposing to the Spanish society. In 1891, Giner echoed his convictions about moral education and the need for separation of religious confessions from civil institutions, especially primary school.⁸ According to the ideas Horace Mann had already expressed before, fully shared by Giner and Cossío, he believed that the school could only teach principles that were common to all faiths. Moreover, it was necessary to promote knowledge and love for the great principles governing ideal relationships between each person and their fellows.⁹

It is especially significant that the *BILE* was the only magazine daring to enthusiastically spread the American educational ideas in Spain, possibly due to Giner's personal initiative, when the Maine sank and the war in Cuba began in 1898. He gave news of several «creeds» being defended by great educators as Francis Wayland Parker (1837-1902), James Laughlin Hughes (1846-1935), Richard. G. Boone (1849-1923), Lewis Henry Jones (1844-1917), Levi Seeley (1847-1928), Edward Wheeler Scripture (1864-1945), Earl Barnes (1861-1935), Burke Aaron Hinsdale (1837-1900), Reginald Heber Holbrook (1845-1910), and of course John Dewey, being further analyzed than any other. He continued with John S. Clark, professor of art in Boston, who mentions Dewey, and Patterson du Bois (1847-1917); ending with the analysis of Harris' ideas.¹⁰ It is not necessary to make a detailed analysis of the pedagogy of the latter, but we should bring up the importance he granted to his faith in nature as a primary educator. However, he asserted that it was later, in the institutions,

⁸ Francisco Giner de los Ríos, «La moral en la escuela según el Dr. Harris», *BILE*, XV (345), (1891): 184-187.

⁹ Neil Gerard McCluskey, *Public Schools and Moral Education: The influence of Horace Mann, William Torrey Harris, and John Dewey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 145.

¹⁰ The «creeds» of these educators were signed with an X, a pseudonym Giner also used. They appeared in the *BILE* in five installments during the year of 1898 and had been previously published in *The School Journal*, magazine published in New York and Chicago. On this issue, see Rosa Bruno-Jofré y Gonzalo Jover Olmeda, «El ideal democrático en el ideario pedagógico americano de finales del siglo XIX y su transposición en dos escenarios de habla hispana», in *El largo camino hacia una educación inclusiva: la educación especial y social del siglo XIX a nuestros días: XV Coloquio de Historia de la Educación, Pamplona-Iruñea, 29, 30 de junio y 1 de julio de 2009*, coords. María Reyes Berruezo Albéniz y Susana Conejero López (Pamplona: Universidad Pública de Navarra, 2009), vol. 1, 23-34. As Bruno-Jofré and Jover point, Dewey was then barely known in Spain and indeed the biographical presentation made on Harris is substantially broader. However, the text collected about Dewey is the largest.

where the individual actually gained strength: «Ten Robinsons working together, *he said*, are not equal to ten individuals, but ten times ten». For him the «essential is the action of all social things» even though he felt the peculiarities of the individual could not be ignored «and being satisfied by ensuring the consolidated knowledge and being subordinated to the ways and customs of other men, making him «obedient»; and not only the laws of the state, but even the conventional rules of etiquette; especially to their parents, their teachers and to their elders».¹¹

Harris was a very important thinker, rooted in the European thought and interested in creating transnational educational networks, which was an important benchmark of American education for «institucionistas» and therefore deserves to be better known in Spain. The actual reason why Giner and Cossío showed interest in Harris was because they saw that his thought strengthened the way of teaching that they were forging. The purpose of this article is to approach this valuable pedagogical thought, which contributed, in a plural context of races, languages and cultures that coexisted in the same territory, to the understanding between them and the establishment of an educational system that could be shared without the exclusion of any social group. It is not possible now to give a comprehensive response to all the nuances of the study of this influence. It is only intended to highlight the perception of the importance that Harris gave to nature and art education in training people, and establish some comparisons with the conceptions of Manuel B. Cossío in this area.

WILLIAM TORREY HARRIS AS EDUCATOR ROLE MODEL IN THE UNITED STATES

William Torrey Harris was born on a farm in Connecticut on September 10, 1835. According to Greenwood,¹² his mental energy and good physical constitution is the legacy left by a childhood lived outdoors, in an atmosphere of extreme landscape purity. He went through several

¹¹ «El movimiento de las ideas pedagógicas en los Estados Unidos», *BILE*, XXII (465), (1898): 362.

¹² Biographical data about William T. Harris, when no explicit reference is made to other sources are collected from, James M. Greenwood, *Dr. William Torrey Harris, educator, philosopher and scholar: an address delivered before the Missouri State Teachers' Association, at St. Louis, Mo., December, 28, 1909*. [No publication information. Microfiche copy preserved in the library of the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte]

schools before arriving at Yale in 1854, from where it departed for St. Louis in 1857, influenced by the ideas of Theodore Parker (1810-1860). There, he began his work as an educator, under the direction of Ira Divoll in Clay School. It was the first public school in the city where young immigrants were taught in their native language.¹³ He took care of the playground's exercise equipment, and although he kept the classical teachings of History, Grammar and Mathematics, he increased the study of Botany and Astronomy, managing to build and assemble his own telescope. Divoll noticed that the young man was tactful and had skills to deal with pupils and their families. He soon outstands in a city with a very different social composition, from old Spanish and French families to Irish and German latest settlement.

His genial and polite manner, his discreet speech and wealth of knowledge, soon rendered him a general favorite in all classes of cultivated society. He entered heartily into the thoughts and feelings of his new made friends, and he interpreted correctly their thoughts and aspirations. In every sense he was a man teaching school. His nature was very receptive, and he assimilated many of the elements from those classes of citizens who differed from his childhood home, and he was preparing himself to become in the truest sense a full-fledged citizen of the United States and of the world. In his new position he rose rapidly into prominence.¹⁴

In 1858 the Missouri State Teachers' Association was created. Harris was elected secretary, on Horace Mann's advice, but the great leap forward in their pedagogical perceptions would actually happen on that same year, when he met Henry C. Brockmeyer (1828-1906), who came to the United States in 1844 from his home country Prussia.¹⁵ Harris was engaged in a debate on Eastern philosophy in the Mercantile Library.

¹³ Carolyn Siemens Ward, *Community Education and Crime Prevention. Confronting Foreground and Background Causes of Criminal Behavior* (Westport CT: Praeger, 1998): 214-215.

¹⁴ Greenwood, *Dr. William Torrey Harris*, 8.

¹⁵ Brockmeyer was a fascinating character, who is in some ways reminiscent of Henry Thoreau. After performing several jobs once he arrived from Europe at the age of 16, he started as a student at Georgetown College in Kentucky, from where he was expelled for questioning his president's theological ideas. Being transferred to Brown University, he had a stronger contact with Hegel's ideas. After college he moved to Warren County, Missouri, where he lived for several years in a cabin

Brockmeyer, who attended that meeting, thought Harris was the sanest person there. Together, they went outside for a walk and kept chatting when Harris quoted Victor Cousin, quote that Brockmeyer refuted. That was the beginning of their friendship and also the beginning of the group of Hegelian philosophy scholars located in St. Louis.

Divoll, who had been appointed Superintendent of Schools in Saint Louis in 1857, admired Harris' discretion during the American Civil War, trying not to agitate the pupils. At the end of the conflict, this quality earned him respect among all students and parents, regardless of which side they had fought for. Certainly, he realized in those years the importance of encouraging radical changes in his country to pursue greater equality between races and social groups. Not only due to the eradication of slavery from American culture, but because society had to make sure that different racial and cultural groups could live and grow together, an idea that was extended to other countries. Greenwood emphasized the importance of those years when he made contact with Hegel's ideas. He had gathered a group of intellectuals around him who wondered about what other educators were thinking in different parts of the world, and who held animated discussions at the Philosophical Club that he founded himself.

When Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*, published in 1862, appeared in the United States, Harris read the book with such interest that he made a critical remark amongst his friends, feeling that what Spencer maintained was essential. He then sent his text to *Atlantic Monthly*, a magazine edited by James Thomas Field, but his publication was rejected, so he offered it to the *North American Review*, with the same result. It was the beginning of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, the magazine he published between 1867 and 1893, after having founded the Saint Louis Philosophical Society along with Brockemeyer in 1866. It allowed him to contact some of the most important thinkers of other countries, and to publish the work of relevant intellectuals on the field as William James,

surrounded by nature, with his dog and a shotgun. He wanted to think freely but also wanted to have a farm, so in 1858 he moved to Saint Louis looking for work, where he met Harris.

Stanley Hall and John Dewey.¹⁶ He met the latter when he was very young. Although they later had important intellectual discrepancies, Dewey was then seduced by the idea of Harris' organicism as much as Spencer's evolutionism¹⁷ and both thinkers are the basis of his formulations on progressive education.

On the same year he started publishing the magazine, he was appointed Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Saint Louis, a position still held by Divoll, whose weakened health forced him to resign the following year. The end of the Civil War in 1865 had created substantial internal migration of Confederates and Unionists. The frictions between new and old residents were almost inevitable and Harris was aware that, in order to build the country, no group could be excluded. In 1868 he commissioned a series of reports on the situation of children from port and industrial areas, and found that most failed to be schooled before the age of ten. Harris then aimed to bypass the requirement that schooling was not necessary before being six years old. He tried to make himself understood when in 1871 Susan E. Blow returned to the city. She had stayed in Germany, learning how the kindergarten worked. After several conversations with Harris, she moved to New York to study Froebelian methods along with Maria Kraus-Boelte,¹⁸ returning in May 1873 at Harris' request. The first public kindergarten in the United States opened its doors in September of that year in Des Peres School, Carondelet, Missouri.

During those years, Harris was also supporter of the Normal School at Kirksville, founded by Joseph Baldwin in 1867. Between 1870 and 1874 he visited it twice a year, inspiring, giving advice about education and

¹⁶ As Gumersindo de Azcárate called in 1879, echoing an article by Stanley Hall, the magazine was then the main broadcaster of Hegelianism in the United States and an important link with the German philosophy. There was an intense exchange between many young people going to study to Germany and Germans who were to live in the United States. They were not only helped by sharing the Protestant thought but also by the spirit of Unitarianism that made simpler acceptance of scientific truths from religious positions. See «La filosofía de los Estados Unidos», *BILE*, III (51), (1879): 43.

¹⁷ Lewis S. Feuer, «John Dewey and the Back to the People Movement in American Thought», *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20 (4), (1959): 568.

¹⁸ Selwyn K. Troen, «Operation Head start: The Beginnings of the Public School Kindergarten Movement», *Missouri Historical Review*, 66 (2), (1972): 213-218. Accessed at <http://statehistoricalsocietyofmissouri.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/mhr/id/34014/show/33904>.

reviewing the students' progress.¹⁹ There he met his biographer James M. Greenwood, who recalls Harris as the central figure of a very prominent group of educators including G. C. Swallow, Louis Soldan, C. M. Woodward, Cook, Baldwin, Geo. L. Osborne and Anna C. Brackett. After his first trip to Europe in 1880,²⁰ he left his position as Superintendent in Saint Louis and began working at the Concord School of Philosophy (Massachusetts), he financed it and lived there in retirement. It was a philosophical school for adults, it responded to their concerns and was directed by Amos Bronson Alcott. There he was able to develop his ideas and find an environment to continue with discussions that began in Emerson's house. Thomas Davidson²¹ was also there, Cossío had met him in Rome, at Terencio Mamiani's²² residence. Unfortunately, Bronson died in 1888. Two days later his daughter, the famous writer Louisa May

¹⁹ For further information about this institution, see E. M. Violette, *History of the First District State Normal School Kirksville, Missouri* (Kirksville: Journal Printing Company, 1905).

²⁰ He left New York for London on August 14, 1880 moving immediately to Brussels in order to participate in the International Conference on Education organized by the Ligue de l'Enseignement, but it seems he had no conversation with Cossío at that time. See K. F. Leidecker, *Yankee Teacher. The Life of William Torrey Harris* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946), 390-393.

²¹ Thomas Davidson (1840-1900). His ideal of *apeirotheism* (there is an infinite number of gods) influenced William James and John Dewey. In 1880 he had traveled on foot around Greece for eight months, thing that Cossío used to admire when they met in Rome. As a result of this trip he wrote, prefaced by Harris, *The education of the Greek people and its influence on civilization*, (New York, Appleton and Company, 1895). For further information about the influence on James and Dewey, see Michael H. De Armey, «Thomas Davidson's apeirotheism and its influence on William James and John Dewey», *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48 (4), (1987): 691-707. Just like Harris, Davidson was a very concerned thinker about immortality and the existence of an afterlife.

²² Davidson arrived in Boston in 1867 introducing himself in the circle of Amos Bronson Alcott. His relationship with transcendentalism is complex. In those years he was mesmerized with Comte's positivism. At the same time, being interested in German transcendentalists criticism of the Bible, he believed that Christianity should be purged of its rigid dogmatism and institutions. Between 1875 and 1878 he moved to Cambridge where he became tutor of James Eliot Cabot's children, but feeling disappointed with Protestantism he decided to travel to Europe. He went to Athens to try to understand the basics of the Orthodox Church, which did not convince him, and while visiting the ruins of ancient Greece he had an intense religious experience that led him from an initially pantheist position to consider that reality consists on an infinite number of spiritual substances. When Cossío met him in Rome, Davidson was experiencing these intellectual transformations that once even led him to discuss with Pope Leo XIII. He was fascinated by Antonio Rosmini Serbatì's writings (1797-1855) which he studied along with the writings of Giordano Bruno, Leibniz and Kant, concluding that there was a «monadological pansychism» and that while God was everywhere, he also existed in each monad. The reality, he said, is *Göttergemeinschaft*, a society of gods. Although Davidson was a professor and a fellow member in the Concord School, he did not feel comfortable with the atmosphere he considered as «too ethereal» and during three summers between 1888 and 1890, after Bronson Alcott's death, he created his own school in Farmington, Connecticut. See James A. Good «The Value of Thomas Davidson», *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 40 (2), (2004):

Alcott, also passed away and the center immediately fell into decline. By that time Harris was already, according to Smith, one of the twelve most influential educators in the United States.²³

Upon returning from his trip to Paris in 1889, Harris was appointed Superintendent of the National Bureau of Education²⁴ by President Benjamin Harrison on September 12th of that year, on Nicholas Murray Butler's proposal.²⁵ He was inducted into office on November 12th and during the next seventeen years he directed the most important educational institution in the United States until June 30, 1906.²⁶ He exercised a strong intellectual leadership on changes and reforms performed in school and secondary education during that period. He was intelligent and had deep convictions due to his long experience: he presented his views with appeal and expressive strength, as well as showing great patience and generosity to his partners.²⁷

He shared similar features to Cossío, who like him, faced a strong conservative opposition that did not accept such a personal style with so much influence amongst teachers. On the year of his resignation James Hulme Canfield, writing in the year that Harris resigned from the Bureau of Education, noted that he was «quoted more frequently and with more approval by educational journals and by public-school teachers than any other American--not even excepting Horace Mann».²⁸ Mowry referred

289-318. See <http://www.autodidactproject.org/other/TD.html> (accessed on 18-VI-2016) with the title «The Development of Thomas Davidson's Religious and Social Thought».

²³ Leonard G. Smith, *A History of the United States Office of Education, 1867-1967* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma, 1967), 95. Dissertation: <https://shareok.org/handle/11244/2204> (accessed on 20-V-2016).

²⁴ The Washington Bureau of Education was created by a law on March 2, 1867. Among its goals was to unify and circulate information among all schools and education centers in the United States and set the conditions for education progress and ensure the efficiency of the school system. For further information about the birth of this organization see the brochure written by Alexander Shiras, *The National Bureau of Education: Its history, Work, and Limitations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875).

²⁵ Butler was Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. He was the first person Harrison proposed for the position of superintendent, but he resigned because he was engaged during those years in the creation of the *Teachers College* of Columbia University.

²⁶ Nobody would serve in that position for such that long period. Harris died on November 5, 1909.

²⁷ Smith, *A History of the United States Office of Education, 1867-1967*, 96.

²⁸ Smith, *A History of the United States Office of Education, 1867-1967*, 98-99. James Hulme Canfield (1847-1909) was president of the Ohio State University. Smith suggests that although Harris was an extraordinary intellectual, his management was controversial, and that by 1900 his own philosophy,

him as the most open and tenacious educator ever born in the United States. He had good argumentative skills to convince his opponents and he was a resourceful intellectual: «He was a skillful and successful teacher; superintendent of schools, a polished writer and an easy and forceful speaker, always expressing deep thoughts, a correct reasoned and an astute philosopher, perhaps the best exponent of Hegel this country has produced», Mowry said, recalling Harris' time as a commissioner.²⁹ When John R. Howard published *Educational Nuggets* he chose eight universal educators to explain the trends of the new education, finishing his anthology with three compatriots: Harris, Butler and Charles William Eliot,³⁰ probably the three most representative educators of the pedagogy in the United States in the late nineteenth century.

ON HARRIS' EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

Harris fundamental issues on education were raised from the perspective of the tension between reason and feelings. He examined the role of tragedy compared to comedy in education, an issue often judged by the value that the school gives to literature. He believed that a person

which imbued the Bureau, was being relegated by the development that John Dewey's ideas began to reach.

²⁹ William A. Mowry, «William T. Harris», *The Journal of Education*, 83 (4), (1916): 90-91.

³⁰ John R. Howard, *Educational Nuggets: Plato, Rousseau, Herbart, Spencer, Harris, Butler, Eliot* (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1899). Eliot had some educational ideas reminiscent of the ILE: he defended a harmonious progress of students from kindergarten through college. Harris and Eliot became members of the Committee of Ten in 1892, which promoted the National Education Association where many of the contradictions of the American educational system were proved in the late nineteenth century. Contradictions also present in the European countries, including the weight that classical and experimental programs should have in the curriculum. Harris, who defended the importance of the Humanities in secondary education, became embroiled in a heated controversy with Charles De Garmo, president of the National Herbart Society, in which he was defeated. See Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for American Curriculum, 1893-1958* (New York-London: Routledge Farmer, 2004, 3rd ed.), 16-17. Discussions were so intense that the National Education Association expanded the committee to fifteen members (Committee of Fifteen) in February 1893, designating Harris as president of the subcommittee responsible for the education curriculum in elementary education. While the subcommittee responsible for defining the teachers' training program made a single report signed by all its members and there was only a note of disagreement in the organization of urban schools, Harris's section report was only signed by him, while the other members submitted dissenting votes to his proposal. See *Report of the Committee of Fifteen on Elementary Education with the Reports of Subcommittees: on the training of teachers; on the correlation of studies in elementary education; on the organization of city school systems* (New York-Cincinnati-Chicago: The American Book Company, 1895). According to Kliebard, the reaction of the Herbartians to Harris's proposals was fierce.

could be in harmony or in disagreement with the society in which he/she is immersed. When someone lives in harmony with the social environment, the limits of individuality are not shown. They only appear when there is a collision with the established order.³¹ Whilst comedy represents the defeat of the plans of the individual by its own contradictions, tragedy embodies the spirit of innovation, not yet understood by his contemporaries. Sometimes it ends in an extraordinary gesture involving its own life but teaching a lesson, a human conquest that lasts throughout the centuries. Harris gave several examples paying special attention to Socrates' death. He also cited Don Quixote, to explain the abandonment and desertion of the classical ideals of Christianity and the adoption of new ones after the discovery of America.

A child begins life «as a savage that ignores civilization» and has to be taught about everything: «how to take care of himself, how to behave himself in front of the others, how to perform his role in the world and earn an honest living, observing and thinking». It is in the family where the child is taught to be inhibited. The school's purpose is primarily to educate the will and the spirit of citizenship. While the child is «only raised in the feeling/idea of a *clan*» in the family, school must educate him on civil obedience. As the teacher says, school has «to counteract the apprentices' tendency to an arbitrary and capricious behavior; reason must be imposed rather than their wild nature, and always insist on the adoption of prescribed forms».³² Harris is heavily influenced by Horace Mann when he defends the importance of the school to spread the spirit of civility. In fact, his study of Mann begins by analyzing the change from rural to urban culture in the United States. The study ends highlighting the importance given to education for everyone, to illustrate the entire population, to separate it from the darkness and to show not only the path to prosperity and honor but also to beauty.³³

Furthermore, Harris was no stranger to American transcendentalist thought. He was a follower of Ralph Waldo Emerson's ideas, especially of

³¹ William T. Harris, *The Educational Value of the Tragic as Compared with Comic in Literature and Art*. [Read before the Department of Superintendence, N. E. A., at Chattanooga, February, 1898. No publication information. Microfiche copy preserved in the library of the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte]

³² William T. Harris, «Los dos aspectos de la educación». *BILE*, XIX (422), (1895): 113.

³³ William T. Harris, *Horace Mann*, (Syracuse, N. Y.: C. W. Bardeen, Publisher, 1896), 30-31.

his first book *Nature*, published in 1836. Just like that, before immersing into German idealism, he already had assumed the assumptions he outlined in this work that combined nature and art. At the same time, he considered the first one as a scenario that was equally suited to comedy and tragedy, whose pleasures must be used with moderation «for, nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy today».³⁴ In 1885, Harris published a study which highlighted that Emerson's poetry abounded in metaphors drawn from modern theories about nature. He admired his poems which he compared with Shakespeare's «Under the Green Wood Tree». He believed that the beauty of nature demanded the abandonment of the ideas of regularity and symmetry in art, because it suggested infinite resources in forms, thus making us free.

Emerson argued that nature was the vehicle of thought because it made the man aware of «an universal soul». Through it we reached the «final unit» that contained the truth and virtue that transcended beauty. Harris pointed out that Emerson found four important benefits in nature: the resolution of basic needs (food, clothing and housing), beauty, language and discipline. Focusing on beauty, he stated that the beauty of nature had three faces: delight, the sign of the divine virtue and self-knowledge. A work of art was a miniature of nature's expression that sheds light on the mystery of mankind.³⁵

It is very likely that his admiration for Emerson's thought would facilitate his approach to fröebelianism, in a synthesis of Hegelian idealism and transcendentalism. That combination would also make easier the intellectual approach between institutionist pedagogy and Harris' thought, because despite the differential traces separating transcendentalism from institutionism, as Pernas says, between the two there are «meeting places significant enough to watch them together». One is the approach to the landscape, as a dimension forging identity and a moral reference that can exorcise the distance between the cultured and

³⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Naturaleza* (Palma de Mallorca: José J. de Olañeta, 2007), 30-32.

³⁵ William T. Harris, «Emerson's Philosophy of Nature», in *The genius and character of Emerson. Lectures at the Concord Scholl of Philosophy*, ed. F. B. Sanborn (Boston, James R. Osgood and Company, 1885), 346.

the popular and where nature plays a key role in «identity regenerations», sometimes in conflict with entrenched vernacular traditions.³⁶

Moreover, Harris, a supporter of the public school, was perhaps the first American educator who tried to bring together black and white people in the same classrooms. He said that all children, regardless of their origin, should share the same school space for three, four or five years. All segments of society should have common experiences by living together in school. However, he understood that individuals should maintain control of their own destiny. The school had to fulfill the fundamental purpose of providing mental discipline, tools and intelligence for the children to help themselves, but then, as individuals they should continue their learning beyond school. He strongly believed in educating people on the idea of self-help and even argued that a year of kindergarten could be crucial for a person's life because the exposure to its games, «empowered them with the ability of successfully acquire a wide variety of occupations from needlework to molding, or food preparation at home».³⁷

ART AND NATURE IN HARRIS

It is unknown whether Cossío and Harris saw each other again after that meeting in Paris in 1889. Harris returned to Europe in 1895, accompanied by Greenwood and traveled to Germany and Italy. Cossío did not record an interview with him on his trip to the United States in 1904. However, they shared many ideals: they were two educators who liked to think of a world with higher levels of social welfare, intelligence and humanity, for which an effective educational work was needed to reach the entire population. They both had valuable intellectual concomitances, despite the geographical distance and life paths developed in very different cultural circumstances.

After studying each ones' writings one could find many common themes: the interest in promoting school libraries, training of teachers,

³⁶ Gonzalo Pernas, «De Concord a Guadarrama. Una semblanza compartida Del trascendentalismo norteamericano y el institucionismo español», *Revista de Occidente*, 408 (2015): 91.

³⁷ Selwyn K. Troen, «Popular Education in Nineteenth Century St. Louis», *History of Education Quarterly*, 13 (1), (1973):35-37

rural school, early childhood education, kindergarten and physical education. But if something could made them intellectually similar is the importance granted to the cultivation of art education at school, how to awake aesthetic feelings in children, both with art and nature. In their writings we can find certain coincidences, a shared intellectual universe that is reflected in the school achievements of distant countries. Cossío could certainly be identified with three of Harris' texts: *Beauty in Art vs. Beauty in Nature* (s.a.), *Art Education, the True Industrial Education* (1889), and *The Aesthetic Element in Education* (1897). The relationship between art and nature is probably one of the subjects that could raise a lively debate between the two. In this paper we would like to show the importance of these issues for these two extraordinary educators.

Harris, as well as Cossío, understood art was a fundamental element in the education of people because it comes before any intellectual manifestation. Art involves feelings, the first psychic manifestations that do not need to be explained through reason. Whilst Cossío appreciated it more from a perspective that allowed to enjoy in its contemplation and creation, Harris appreciated it from the perspective of the expression of freedom both in the body (Greek art), from the body (Christian art) or from the unawareness of body and soul (symbolic art). Beauty in nature is perceived, says Harris, after leaving the city: «When we come to the country and are alone with trees, mountains, meadow brooks and other inanimate objects, we have a sense of relief from duty and from the worry which a net-work of relations brings us».³⁸ But at the same time, he argued that nature provides a sedative feeling rather than beauty, because we don't always appreciate nature by its beauty: it is a remedy against the pressure of social obligations and offers freedom. But at the same time, he believed that a symbolic correspondence between landscape and spirit could be established. In order to develop this idea he referred to Frederic Edwin Church's landscape painting, «Heart of the Andes»,³⁹ and after a description of the painting, Harris suggested:

³⁸ William T. Harris, *Beauty in Art vs. Beauty in Nature*, 4. [No publication information. Microfiche copy preserved in the library of the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte]. The brochure is not dated, but it is later than 1889, because it features Harris as «U. S. Commissioner of Education».

³⁹ Church painted the picture in 1859, as a result of an expedition to Ecuador in 1857. The large canvas was displayed immediately in New York causing a public disturbance and was subsequently exhibited in London with equal success, where Ruskin could admire it. That same year Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, and Alexander von Humboldt died. He had made a great praise of

Such a composition with variety in the foreground and sublime heights in the background bathed in sunlight is a ready symbol of the human nature which has petty details consisting of daily occupations, amusements and disappointments, diversions and griefs, efforts and intervals of repose –for ourselves and for our neighbors– these are in foreground of the picture of human life. In the background arise, the moral elements of our character, the structure of reason itself, especially its moral laws, its intuition of the Divine, its religious faiths and its philosophical insights, these are abstract like the white snows on the glaciers. No green thing grows on them but they furnish, all the same, the fertilizing streams which descend to the vales of the mortal life. The stream of life and the stream of goodness that come from the Divine make glad the terrestrial abode of man.⁴⁰

He claimed that the connection between the material and divine things is the basis of poetry and art, and that people feel this correspondence in proportion to the degree of a cultivated imagination they possess.⁴¹ He carefully analyzed the painting, considering symbolic art was not the highest degree of art, but classical art when it expressed a sacred idea, because morality and holiness are higher than the beauty orders. At the same time, he claimed there was no perfect religion if it condemned beauty, because beauty in itself is always good.

Nature is the revelation of divinity, he said, and its laws govern the universe, but it does not create human institutions, it does not produce art or laws that ensure justice. Nature does not create sculpture or literature; both arise in highly developed civilized environments. The divine, he claimed, is not the immediate wild nature, a violent scenario where the

landscape painting a few years earlier in the second volume of his work *Cosmos*. See Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, A. T. E.: «Scientific sources of the full-length Landscape: 1850», *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin New Series*, 4 (2), (1945): 59-65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3257164> (accessed 14-II-2016).

⁴⁰ Harris, *Beauty in Art vs. Beauty in Nature*, 5.

⁴¹ Harris used to give poetic examples to express his ideas. In this case used Tennyson's poem «The flower in the Crannied Wall» that enables to know, pulling it from the wall, everything man and God are. He believed that a man, as an immortal being, was on the highest rung of nature and nature connected him with the divine spirit. *The Educational Value of the Tragic*, 3. It is a poetic image that contrasts with the picture of Church: the immensity of the material world represented by mountains, gradually transformed into the endless greenery of nature. Humanity appears as almost imperceptible and within it the greatness of Christianity that gives full meaning to existence arises.

destination is more prevalent than freedom. The divine purpose ends when the man emerges from nature, immortal, free and responsible, in the image of its creator. Nature is beautiful but does not create art because art is freedom, and nature is beautiful by chance. Hence, he concluded, the beauty of art transcends the beauty of nature.⁴²



Frederic Edwin Church. *Heart of the Andes.* 1859. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nueva York (<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/10481>)

A few days before coming to Europe in 1889, Harris read a report in the *National Educational Association*. He was still linked to the Concord School although he was listed as Commissioner of Education in the publication, published months later.⁴³ It is a dissertation in which he appeared, just like Giner and Cossío, very concerned with the linkage between the technical and vocational education and general training, because the latter is considered essential for the formation of citizenship and better training for industrial workers. Harris argued that a nation in which all employees are educated in the taste for beautiful forms, this

⁴² Although is still fairly close to Hegel's three stages of art theory, unlike the German thinker he does not consider the romantic art (including Christian art) to be higher than classic art.

⁴³ William T. Harris, *Art Education. The True Industrial Education. A Cultivation of Aesthetic Taste of Universal Utility* (Syracuse, NY: O. W. Bardeen Publisher, 1889).

taste would be reflected in the productions, and that this would result in the welfare of the country and a better trade.

To reinforce his argument, he appealed to artistic training that young Swedes received, remembering that Sweden was the leading country in the world in teaching by manual labor and also pointing out the task developed by the South Kensington Museum in London since 1851. Harris established a theory of development for industrial productions summarized in three ideas: regularity, symmetry and harmony, which he explained at length. For him, harmony is a superior quality that allowed the agreement between the will and the body, between the idea and its expression. After a review of the Hindu, Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian and Greek religions and their artistic manifestations, he concludes that Greek art is central because it explains the divinity from human corporeality, as an expression of personal freedom.

However, Harris would not notice the importance of teaching art as a work area for the common school until 1897. In *The Aesthetic Element in Education* he claimed that there are five lines of intellectual development that have profound significance in school learning: math, grammar, organic and physical world, history, and aesthetic training, gathering in the latter concept literature and art. Both are manifestations of the power of the mind, of a person's own activity making perceptible the inner world of the senses. However, he complained that the school has always been concerned with literature, but not other arts, except for music, and he believed that architecture, sculpture and painting could add «a good lesson» to the curriculum.

Based on this reflection he presented a comprehensive plan to develop fine arts in school. He considered the use of five in an ascending scale: architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry. Other arts such as dance, landscape gardening, engraving, eloquence, drama or oratory, were considered derivations of these five great arts. His analysis was very Hegelian: symbolic art (Egypt), classical art (Greece), romantic art (Christian Europe), but with nuances about the importance of the influences he saw in each of them. For him, there was nothing better in the architecture and sculpture than the achievements of the Greeks, while he believed that the painting was sublime in Christian art.



El Greco. *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz.* Iglesia de Santo Tomé (Toledo) 1587.

(http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:El_Greco_-_The_Burial_of_the_Count_of_Orgaz.JPG)

THE ROLE OF ART IN EDUCATION ACCORDING TO COSSÍO

In one of his best known writings about art education,⁴⁴ Cossío begins by saying that his instructions are only related to architecture, sculpture and painting. Establishing a comparison with Harris' concerns, his ideas could be placed in the peak of a very new pedagogy. The important thing about Cossío's reflections is that, like Harris, he understands very well that there are no «fine arts and crafts that are not beautiful», in a clear inclination to value the industrial arts and items made by craftsmen and industries. In a clear reference to the strong rural imprint of popular arts in Spain, he always showed curiosity on elements such as: earthenware jugs, peasants attire, embroidery and lace, farm implements and rural architecture. He used to give them as an example of the genius of the people. Things are done at first because they are useful. Some others, said Cossío, «are only made for fun, for us to enjoy, because we simply obtain pleasure by watching them». The «pretty» or «beautiful» things are often a child's accessible idea of beauty.⁴⁵

He believed the contemplation of works of art exercised «critical judgment and a sense of beauty», even before children have age to reason. Because art allows them to «love the beautiful, ennoble their tastes, enjoy the more pure and healthy pleasures and use, in short, their artistic culture to live in a more refined and beautifully way». This requires putting the child in contact with objects, as he stated in 1879: «Teach them how to think of everything that surrounds them and make their rational faculties

⁴⁴ Preceded by the introductory heading of «Conferencias normales sobre la enseñanza de párvulos», his work «La enseñanza del arte» was published in the *BILE*, IX (1885): 348-352 and X (1886): 57-62 and 100-101.

⁴⁵ Manuel B. Cossío, «La enseñanza del arte», in *El maestro, la escuela y el material de enseñanza y otros escritos*, ed. Eugenio Otero Urtaza (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2007), 165.

active by showing them the way to true knowledge, which then serves in life».⁴⁶ Cossío thought the contemplation of art breathed «freshness and freedom of thought» providing elements to intelligence to create something with your hands.

This simplicity of art in order to awaken thought is what made him carry forward the idea that the peasants could recognize the Spanish painting masterpieces in the travelling museum exhibitions of the Educational Missions. The important thing for him was to raise the awareness, opening gates to unusual worlds to those who first watched them, serving no particular or utilitarian desire.

Cossío had a great ability to get in front of a painting and making those accompanying him vibrate with excitement. Just as Harris knew how to draw conclusions from a painting in order to understand the nature, Cossío used art not only to understand the history of a country, but to access the inner layers expressed in all range of emotions. Amongst all El Greco's paintings, there still is an outstanding description and we can contrast it with the analysis conducted by Harris on the work of Church. I am talking about to *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz*.

The first thing we see in Church's painting is the magnificence of nature. Then we approach the details of humanity that are enclosed in it. In the painting by El Greco, we see a celestial region above and human life below, a familiar face experiencing death with emotion and naturally, in a magnificent image. In both paintings there is a symbiotic relationship between earth and sky, suggesting that the transit through life can be represented with suspended moments that fulfill a pedagogical function: the immensity of nature and death, the human littleness before them. Watch the passage of time between a mysterious celestial world, where the fragility of life has the hope of eternal glory, and a nature that floods everything, where humanity also discovers the grandeur of the divine.

Cossío's description is very different from Harris'. He compares *The Burial* with *Don Quixote*, as masterworks of a culture and a time

⁴⁶ Manuel B. Cossío, «Carácter de la pedagogía contemporánea. El arte de saber ver», in *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y Francisco Giner de los Ríos: Nuevas perspectivas. 3. Antología de textos* (Madrid: Fundación Francisco Giner de los Ríos & AC/E, 2013), 151.

remembered as memorable, but the work of El Greco, he says, stands for a «deep contemplative intensity» which gives some of his figures «an air of alienation». A painting that proposes a «naturalistic and ascetic mysticism» representing a time very differently than Cervantes does. A closed space where everything looks inward: «everything is essentially contemplative; corpse, saints, monks, clerics and knights, they all seem trapped inside the castle and reveling in it».⁴⁷

Without establishing a comparison that might seem unlikely, it is interesting to note that both educators had a strong aesthetic sensibility, and they were aware that the school had to develop a taste and interest towards art.

In addition, Cossío gave art a central place in the education of a person because, he declared radically, a life that deserved to be lived had to be transformed into work of art. He said that the origin of art is in games, and that children are artists when they play. Education consisted in «teaching the child to be an artist of his own life, to play his life artistically» and hence he concluded that being educated was the «art of good living» because «knowing how to live, is a work of art itself». Art was not determined by need, but by the free will of the mind, and he pointed out that reality was presented in three different dimensions: scientific, practical and creative. When the latter has no other purpose than aesthetic and disinterested enjoyment whose sole product is the beauty, we are at the core of art education. According to Cossío this was the hub of a person's education, because he defended a «beautified soul» could not make rude or brutal actions, reaching the ever beautiful truth.⁴⁸

TWO EDUCATORS WHO FORGED EDUCATION AHEAD

The comparative analysis of their educational thinking shows that during those years in the Western world there was a strong influence of pedagogy with a certain Germanic origin and it was accepted with successive transformations and local adaptations in many European and American countries. In the background lies the idealistic philosophy

⁴⁷ Manuel B. Cossío, «El Entierro del Conde de Orgaz», in *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y Francisco Giner de los Ríos: Nuevas perspectivas*. 3. *Antología de textos*, 417.

⁴⁸ Eugenio Otero Urtaza, *Manuel Bartolomé Cossío: pensamiento pedagógico y acción educativa* (Madrid: CIDE-MEC, 1994), 136-140.

(Krause in Cossío, Hegel in Harris) and beyond it, the *Naturphilosophie* and the mind represented by Alexander von Humboldt. And perhaps stubbornness in seeking educational values of nature in the wake Rousseau had opened. Art and nature, and even art, science and nature, it is not only a constant of the ILE. Their ideas, which Cossío represented so well, must fit into a transnational movement that shares an educational ideology. This ideology is characterized by: the rejection of dogmatic forms of existence's organization, the acknowledgment of the superiority of scientific thought over religious beliefs, opening a new horizon of well-being and optimism. It also understands that nature, as a science space and emerging environmental culture, stretched his cloak to art, aesthetic landscape, freedom and creative imagination.

This is more noticeable if we approach the Anglo-Saxon influences. Both Harris and Cossío follow an open line for the English Pre-Raphaelites, continuing the *Arts and Crafts* movement founded by William Morris, who defended the handcraft against the growing mechanics of manufacturing imposed by the Industrial Revolution. This is where we can see some differences between the two educators. Harris is excited by the perfection of an object that can be reproduced thousands of times, and hence his enthusiasm for industrial designs. On the contrary, Cossío was astonished with the skills of the artisans and their unique works. But both can be considered as fans of Ruskin's thought because they assumed that manual work had a central place in the education of young people, not only due to the development of mental and creative abilities, but because it leads a person to obtain many moral qualities.

Despite being advocates of technical education and that young people may learn by working with their own hands, they understood that the acquisition of skills and technical skills and development of industrial arts themselves could create chaos if educational efforts were misdirected and they lacked the understanding that these actions produced on our feelings. Beyond being an engine of creativity in pupils, education of aesthetic sensibility affected the life of the soul. Cossío believed in the educational power of nature and he led the students of the ILE there every time he could, but his most intimate passion was painting, and especially the paintings of El Greco. In the mysticism that surrounded these paintings, he saw the expression of something sublime that formed the core of the spirit, an inner

world in every person who could hardly be constructed with other learning. In contrast, Harris marveled with nature expressed in a canvas possibly seen as the expression of unapproachable power of divinity. In turn, he was ecstatic with classical religious painting, and concerned about the immortality of the soul. He had «spiritual hunger» and had devoted much effort to understand the *Last Judgment* of Michelangelo or *The Transfiguration* of Raphael.⁴⁹

However, Cossío advocated more strongly that the school was installed in a natural environment. Harris defended school more as an instrument to discipline the indomitable spirit, which restrains the passions and trains people in rationality and sociability. Meanwhile, Cossío claimed that personal values developed, aesthetic taste and curiosity refined through the efforts of an outdoor excursion; and character strengthened in a way that could not be achieved in the classrooms. Certainly, they both saw the landscape and the elements of nature as a powerful educator, attending all dimensions of the person. Just like art, it inspired and formed the recreation of the spirit, without forgetting the existence of the body (both in its classical and Christian sense and its eminent examples shown in art), its care and health, and the need to abstract from mental work with pleasure. For this reason, going out into nature and enjoying the air, the sun and the landscape, it was a task that could not be neglected by wise teachers. Cossío stated that the campus had no limits and that school should be located out of town.

While for Harris recess was the pupil's work intermission that allowed physical exercise and mental strength to recover,⁵⁰ Cossío's idea of school was closer to pure recreation of the spirit. He not only sought for «sober and intense intellectual work», after which playing and being in frequent contact with art and nature was necessary, but going outside expanded «the social formation that is treasured in the range of impressions, in the clash of characters, in the close solidarity of a free and friendly harmony between teachers and students»⁵¹ because the field trip is the «real school».

⁴⁹ C. H. Ames, «William Torrey Harris», *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, VI (26), (1909): 708.

⁵⁰ William T. Harris, «Recess», *Popular Education Document n.º 20*. [Microfiche copy preserved in the library of the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. No publication information, speech delivered in Washington on February 13, 1884]

⁵¹ Manuel B. Cossío, «Principios pedagógicos de la Institución», in *De su jornada*, (Madrid, Aguilar, 1966), 25.

There is nothing in Harris' work to suggest a walking comradeship between teachers and pupils, nor had he the interest for walking tours that were made in the ILE. For him, nature was a religious reference more than teaching reference. A space that approached man to divinity. Giner, rather than Cossío, could share that passion for great outdoor spaces, the enthusiasm of sitting and watching the horizon from the top of a mountain and think about the infinitude of things, but he does not have the Emersonian fervor of Harris. When Giner wrote *Paisaje* in 1886, the same year as the Society for the Study of Guadarrama was created, he had a challenging impulse, more scientific than metaphysical and of course with educational desire, perhaps accentuated in the search for a Spanish national identity, but not essentially mystical. He does not exclude that the landscape could lead to «religious devotion» but without going so far as Harris and other transcendentalists that placed the time of fascination of experiencing the natural landscape as a door of communication with the divinity. «Nature is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and the struggle to lead the individual back to him», said Emerson.⁵² Giner's claims were simpler and of course pedagogical, as shown in its evocation of the sunset from the hills of Guarramillas:

I do not remember having ever felt an impression of a bigger, more solemn, more truly religious and deeper meditation. And then, overwhelmed by emotion, everyone thought about the vast mass of our urban people, condemned by poverty, shortsightedness and exclusivism of our detestable national education to lack this kind of enjoyments, that in its misfortune, perhaps even mumbles, mutters as the savage about our social refinements; losing in this way the living stimulus that favors the expansion of fantasy, the ennoblement of emotions, dilation of the intellectual horizon, the dignity of our tastes and love of moral things that always springs to the purifying touch of nature.⁵³

There is no doubt that Cossío shared Giner's thought, but he did not have such passion for hiking as his master. When Giner was tense he used to go for a walk, while Cossío preferred to lock himself in his

⁵² Emerson, *Naturaleza*, 104-105.

⁵³ Francisco Giner de los Ríos, «Paisaje», in *Por una senda clara*, ed. de José García-Velasco y Eugenio Otero Urtaza (Sevilla: Centro Andaluz de las Letras, 2011), 43-44.

room and read. Cossío admired the solemn nature landscapes but, unlike Harris, he liked being in contact with rurality and admired the activity of the peasants. He saw in this a treasure enhanced by centuries of history and generations, and even a germ of social transformation and a healthy lifestyle that contrasted the noise and coarseness of the city. None of this can be found in Harris, whose support to the public formal education was based on the development of cities, in promoting a productive citizenship in a democratic society.

Cossío searched a momentum for modernization in the rural world. He was more interested in inhabited nature, not as the portentous phenomenon Harris highlighted in Church's painting or Tennyson's poem, but by his admiration for human communities that had managed to easily adapt to a natural environment. Cossío was a great admirer of folk art whose products «always root strongly into the depths of social life, regardless of class, nest there and last forever». From this background «differentiations emerge, schools, transport of inspiration, accents of creative geniuses, and all that was born, reverts back to folk art again, incorporated into it and feeds from it, as mother earth lives and thrives at the expense of the beings that fruitfully engendered».⁵⁴

Despite some differences between these two educators, so influential in their time and in their countries, a set of similarities deserve attention in reference to the ability of art and nature as educational powers. Both are part of the «transatlantic community of discourse», a complex process of intellectual convergence beyond national frameworks, seeking mediation between idealism and positivism, which Kloppenberg called *middle way philosophy*.⁵⁵ A debate that was very much alive in Spain in the early years of the Restoration after the emergence of «krausopositivism». It was certainly not a domestic phenomenon, but a branch of a debate which then spread throughout Western high culture and was continued by thinkers of the next generation, with more contributions and new perspectives. Unquestionably, Giner and Harris are from the same generation and similar age. Cossío, younger than them, would be in

⁵⁴ Manuel B. Cossío, «Elogio del arte popular», *De su jornada*, 251-252.

⁵⁵ James Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory. Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought 1870-1920* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 10.

the next generation that would overlap with John Dewey's generation in the United States. This makes it much more interesting to examine these generational crossings and perhaps leads to keep looking for new similarities and differences in this complex web of thinkers who have shaped the foundations of contemporary education. ■

Note on the author:

EUGENIO OTERO URTAZA is BA in Arts & Humanities (Pedagogy) from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (1976) and Ph.D. in Philosophy and Education Sciences from the University of Oviedo (1990). Professor at the University of Santiago de Compostela (Lugo Campus) since 1979 and since 1995 full professor at the Escuela Universitaria de Teorías e Instituciones Contemporáneas de la Educación. He was director of the previous Escuela de Formación del Profesorado de Lugo between 1994 and 2003.

Specialist in studies on the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Free Teaching Association) about which he has published several books in addition to more than sixty articles and book chapters dealing with diverse aspects surrounding the cultural and educational flowering undertaken by Francisco Giner beginning in 1876. He has carried out in-depth studies of the Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas and the intellectual trajectory of Manuel B. Cossío as well as some of his unpublished letters, his travel logs and his pedagogical ideas. Much of his research in recent years has focused on the international dimension of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* and its relationship with German, Portuguese, Belgian, French and English educators. He coauthored two of the most-used manuals in the field of teacher training for kindergarten and primary school teachers (published by Biblioteca Nueva and Graó) and he is at present the coordinator of the research group GI2124 of the USC (Edunartex) Education, Nature, Art, Excursions. As of 2011 he is coordinator of the Master's program Educational Activities in Nature.