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The Bridge between History and Literature: the Representation of Memory in
Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and Lee's *A Moment of War*

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The work presented in this MA thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. The work in this thesis has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

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ABSTRACT

The English intellectual and artistic spheres spontaneously reacted to the Spanish Civil War, travelling to the country, writing about their experiences in Spain, and forging what was to become a popular literary phenomenon. Ever since then, works contextualized in the conflict have been approached through historicist standpoints. These have neglected to consider a central aspect of this kind of literary productions: that they normally recount personal experiences, and thus, they are acts of remembrance. This study will be looking at intertextuality in two prominent works, *Homage to Catalonia* and *A Moment of War*, in order to explore the methods employed by both authors to reconcile their intimate insights on the war with external data which, after their experiences, has been regarded as historically relevant. This thesis will suggest that both George Orwell and Laurie Lee, even if differently branded with regards to objectivity, employ similar techniques in the incorporation of impersonal information.

genotext, phenotext, history, memoir, intertextuality, Spanish Civil War

Con el comienzo de la Guerra Civil española, los círculos artísticos y literarios ingleses reaccionaron casi de manera espontánea, viajando al país, escribiendo sobre sus experiencias y forjando lo que más tarde se convertiría en un fenómeno literario muy popular. Desde entonces, la crítica ha analizado aquellos trabajos contextualizados en el conflicto desde puntos de vista historicistas que pasan por alto uno de los aspectos centrales de este tipo de producciones literarias: en su gran mayoría, estos escritos relatan experiencias personales y son, por lo tanto, actos de memoria. Este estudio se enfoca en la intertextualidad de dos trabajos prominentes, *Homenaje a Cataluña* y *Un instante en la guerra*, con el objetivo de explorar las técnicas utilizadas por ambos autores para reconciliar sus recuerdos en la guerra con información externa que, tras sus experiencias, ha sido considerada de relevancia histórica. Este trabajo concluirá que, a pesar de que hayan sido tildados de manera completamente diferente en cuanto a su nivel de objetividad, tanto George Orwell como Laurie Lee utilizan métodos muy similares en la incorporación de información no personal.

Genotexto, phenotexto, historia, memoir, intertextualidad, Guerra Civil española

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“Si se nos dice que toda historia es ficción, los novelistas entendemos que la única forma de revelar el pasado es tratarlo como un producto narrativo, susceptible por lo tanto de ser recontado de cualquier forma.”

Juan Gabriel Vásquez, *El Arte de la distorsión*

“It is very dangerous to write the truth in war and the truth is also very dangerous to come by... when a man goes to seek the truth in war he may find death instead”

Ernest Hemingway, in *The Last Great Cause*

1. Introduction

During the first half of the 20th century, war events drew the European population's interest. After the huge expectation arisen from WWI, the Spanish Civil War held the attention of the media and different intellectual spheres. During the conflict, numerous artists decided to travel to Spain in order not only to fight in the International Brigades, but to cover and broadcast the incidents taking place. As a result, after the war, the literary production set in this specific period was abundant and actually very popular. The specific context used in those works was a beckoning tool not only for the writers to declare their idealistic and political affiliations and to move the audience to take action, but for the readers to fathom the intentions instigating the war and assimilate the historical turmoil taking place during the 30s and 40s –because, as it is well-known, the Spanish Civil War was only the testing ground for what was to come in WWI. The quintessential example of this literary stream is, probably, George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* (1938). His historical inspection is infused with a sense of disclosing truth: not only does he present a historical reality, but an unknown situation which was masked by the press and official institutions at the time. His final aim was to illustrate society on the real panorama in Spain and to bring to light the evil strategies operating in the war. Orwell is, indeed, the antithesis of the literature in vogue during the first half of the conflict.¹ Because of the contradictory political ideologies on both sides, the war became the object of a widespread mythologization that derived into

¹ Until July 1937, critical approaches to the Spanish Civil War celebrated what was known as the literature of fervour and enthusiasm. However, the Battle of Brunete involved a turning point in the spirit of the combatants: after the massacre, brigadists and war correspondents started to visualize a possible defeat. From then on, writers projected a disillusioned tone in their works.

an idealistic discourse which in many cases consisted in ignoring blunders and infractions committed by the Republic. The Spanish cause was idealized as the noble battle that would bring liberation and equality as well as the final opportunity to end Fascism –an enthusiastic discourse masterly represented by W.H. Auden's "Spain" (1937). It may be inferred, therefore, that the outstanding popularity of literary works set on the Spanish front was not only conceived for the sake of History. In many cases, the Spanish Civil War was the perfect literary setting for the topos of the hero to flourish as well as for giving free rein to universal passions: death, comradeship, love, and justice were admired and celebrated while realism, in many cases, abandoned. Accordingly, two dominant literary discourses blossomed during this period: that romanticizing the conflict, as was the case with Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), and that following a historical concern.

However, both streams share certain aspects – which somehow contributed to their popularity. Most of the literary productions at the time were primary sources, molded on memoirs or autobiographies. Although some artists such as Upton Sinclair wrote about the Spanish Civil War without having ever set foot on the country, the fact that many intellectuals became embroiled in the conflict facilitated non-fictional literary production. At the same time, this had a positive impact in their reception:

El reflejo de la Historia a través de la memoria de sus protagonistas es una fórmula que funciona en las producciones más recientes, donde los relatos en primera persona consiguen una identificación colectiva y llegan a un amplio número de espectadores (Sánchez and Jerez 300).

However, first person narratives have also given rise to discord. An internal-focalizer, especially if it is autodiegetic, always implies subjectivity, and, because of the political interests implicit in every war, the literary production of the Spanish Civil War is expected to contain a higher degree of fictionalization: the stories cast a personal approach to the situation, which is always perceived through the author's eyes and

pretensions. The problematic issue of this focalization is obvious: how is the author's personal story conciliated with the historical importance of the Spanish Civil War?

In this respect, the Brigadists' accounts may be described as an hybrid between history and romantization in an individual sense – that is to say, for an identity purpose,– and in a collective one – that is to say, for a propagandistic objective. However, the scholarly mainstream has been mainly concerned with the discussion of this literary trend from a historical perspective, disregarding those works which do not fit the historicist and presumed objectivity of a memoir or report. The creative formulation of significant episodes set in the war was acceptable, and in many cases acclaimed, as long as the writer only took part as an external narrator. Even if the circumstances lacked credibility and the historical background and contextual information were uncorroborated, the non-involvement of the author allowed him to take some literary licenses. Some writers of historical fiction have been celebrated for beautifully depicting and elevating the experience of warfare and for translating a historical experience into human terms: Hemingway, for instance, is not concerned with history, but with the passions and feelings that it produced in individuals. Meanwhile, Lee's *A Moment of War* (1991) has been branded as unrealistic and dismissed because it portrays a very intimate perspective of Lee's reality during the war, instead of flaunting a historicist interest. On the contrary, as far as a novel acquires or discloses historical significance, their other myriads of interesting sides are laid aside. For instance, Orwell, revealing a historical and political concern, has not been analyzed in aesthetic or narrative terms. One of the problems of this neglectful, historicist outlook is the fact that it does overlook two central aspects of this phenomenon: the fact that these novels are written using literary and aesthetic strategies and the mnestic nature of every personal

account. That is why most of the scholarly criticism on this period has ignored Lee's *A Moment of War* and have also failed to truly appreciate all the resources used by Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*. In this work, I will analyze the different strategies to which Orwell and Lee resorted in order to conciliate incidents which a great historical importance with their own intimate experiences. This piece of research aims to explore the relationship between History, in its traditional sense, and individual memory as well as to contemplate not only how some literary and aesthetic strategies help to incorporate information presumably acquired a posteriori, but also how History facilitates the reconstruction of memory and completes mnemonic shortages. The final aim of my thesis is to widen the spectrum of approaches applied in the analysis of historically pertinent novels.

2. State of the Question

There is an essential difference between the ways in which both *Homage to Catalonia* and *A Moment of War* have been approached and the reason lies behind the amount of data compiled on both author's lives. While Lee's work has generally been studied with skepticism and branded as "pure fiction" or as a mythobiography, Orwell has usually been extolled as the representative of objectivism. Orwell's lifetime is well documented and has been taken into consideration, while most of the events of Lee's life remain in shadows –not because he did not give account of them, but because it is hard to verify them with official documents. In this section, I aim at providing a general overview of how the work of both artists has been addressed from an academic point of view.

As is well-known, George Orwell was born as Eric Arthur Blair at Bengal in 1903. His experience in the country strongly prompted him to write on political affairs, publishing *Burmese Days*, a strong critique against British imperialism, in 1934. This concern is also so much present in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, published in 1933 and based on his own experience – thus, often regarded as a memoir in which the writer condemns the poverty and economic inequalities of 1920's Europe. From this onwards, the writer adopted his famous pseudonym. However, his consolidation as a political writer came with *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), which, as Masters points out, acts as the "crucible" of some of his best-known works: *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteenth-Eighty-Four* (1949) (qtd. in Wallhead 189). This work represented the turning point in Orwell's conception of literature. As he explains in *Why I Write*, there are four reasons for a writer to start composing: sheer egoism –that is, for recognition,

aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse, and political purpose. And, of course, he acknowledges how the latter outweighs the rest of the matters in his works:

Political purpose –using the word “political” in this widest possible sense. Desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people’s idea of the kind of society that they should strive after. Once again, no book is genuinely free from political bias. The opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude... The Spanish war and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it (Orwell, *Why I Write* n.p.).

From 1952, when Thrilling first wrote a moving introduction for *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell has been considered “A Man of Truth,” a “characterization” which has been maintained to the present day (Rodden 75). As Orwell claims:

My book about the Spanish civil war, *Homage to Catalonia*, is of course a frankly political book, but in the main it is written with a certain detachment and regard for form. I did try very hard in it to tell the whole truth without violating my literary instincts (*Why I Write* n.p.).

During this decade, Orwell was canonized in school curricula: he was “an embattled hero persecuted for having spoken the truth” (Rodden 15) –a portrayal due not only to his presence in the war, but to the plentiful supply of historical, or preferably, officially documented details. In addition, intellectual circles have usually considered the correlation between the man and his work. The popularity of Orwell is partially due to his way of living, always in harmony with his oeuvre –the best illustration being *Down and Out in Paris and London*. For this reason, *Homage to Catalonia* has induced little discussion on his literary attributes –although there are numerous analyses focusing on Orwell’s approach to politics in a literary sense, from which I will highlight *A George Orwell Companion*².

² This approach, however, has been uniquely applied to his fictional works (mainly *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*). His first-hand account novel, *Homage to Catalonia*, has been treated as journalism or as a historical report rather than as a piece of literature.

The critical practice has been based on a compare-and-contrast activity in which the collected writings of Orwell during his stay in Spain and the biographies about the author have largely surpassed the pure literary essays on his oeuvre –in spite of the author’s reiterate requests that no biography should be written about him. Literally speaking, Orwell has been dismissed and usually acknowledged as a journalist “lacking in literary sophistication” (qtd. in Rodden 19). One of the main purposes of this paper is to acknowledge that, as Gutkind has noted, “the primary goal of the creative non-fiction writer is to communicate information, just like a reporter, but to shape it in a way that reads like fiction” (xi).

Outstanding and useful pieces for the analysis of *Homage to Catalonia* are the twenty volumes forming *The Complete Works* (1988) and *The Lost Orwell* (2006), edited by Peter Davison and constituted by assembled first hand material. *Orwell Diaries* (2009) and *George Orwell: A Life in Letters* (2010), also edited by Davison can be regarded, according to the editor, as the non-written autobiography of Orwell (Masters 190). Regarding biographies, there are two which stand out among the others: Bernard Crick’s *George Orwell: A Life* (1980) and D.J. Taylor’s *Orwell: The Life* (2003). As Masters acknowledges, these biographies highly clash with the first approaches to Orwell’s life (90). Although most of them have followed Trilling’s enthusiastic outlook on Orwell, both pieces took into account the literary and subjective nature of Orwell’s oeuvre. In Crick’s words:

None of Orwell’s novels and documentaries is entirely clear as to its genre. The reader must either lower his guard completely or constantly be on guard against assuming that he is faced with either undiluted ‘fact’ or undiluted ‘fiction.’ (96)

However, for whatever the reason, the standpoint is different when dealing with *Homage to Catalonia*: “like all other biographers before him, Bowker makes it clear that whatever Orwell’s faults may have been, his time in Spain was characterized by

honesty and integrity,” (Masters 206). Certainly, Orwell was one of the few writers who dared to confront the Communist Party, criticizing and disclosing the surreptitious machinery employed by its organizers and officials, who ruined the Republic hand in hand with the rebels. Indeed, figures like Dos Passos and Koestler— as disappointed as Orwell— resolved to censure the Communist politics with no direct reference and only after a time did they dare to explicitly manifest their disenchantment. Thus, it is undeniable that Orwell wrote for his truth without minding the repercussions. However, and as Berga points in his preface to *Orwell en España* (2010) (a translation of Davison’s collected material), the dignity surrounding Orwell’s figure is due to his early vision of anti-Stalinism and to time: it clearly fits into our contemporary opinion about the twentieth century panorama and politically accepted vision on communism (Davison 24). However, and it is at this point when the problem emerges, it must not be extrapolated that his account completely fits reality and, therefore, readers may not assume that Orwell’s perspective pertains to the old concept of History, to an organic and objective past. In a review on Koestler’s *Spanish Testament* (1937), Orwell displays himself skeptical about the veracity of the stories told:

No hace falta decir que todo el que escribe sobre la guerra civil española escribe con parcialidad. Lo que tal vez sea menos obvio es que por culpa de las tremendas disensiones que han sacudido y amenazado con dividir el bando republicano, todo partidario de la República está en realidad implicado en varias polémicas... la verdad es que no es posible saber qué ha visto el autor personalmente ni en qué páginas se limita a repetir lo que le han contado. (Davison 311)

In my opinion, exactly the same approach must be applied to his own work —especially if we take into account his literary and political motives.

From a literary point of view this time, Crick made a fascinating analysis of the Orwellian method —although his object of discussion is *Shooting an Elephant* (1936). By comparing Orwell’s personal journals on his early impressions, Crick exposes that,

far from giving a raw and direct vision, Orwell re-constructed his writing and insights by reorganizing and customizing certain episodes in his life (Masters 187-188). His sober reporting style is, indeed, a perfectly deliberated artistic creation which would later on inspired figures like Truman Capote. And this basic notion has, nevertheless, extensive implications. The truthful narration to which Thrilling refers is, indeed, inexistent. Orwell veils his narrative with an ambience of truth by arranging facts and events, which, taken singularly, are chaotic and senseless: in Orwell's works, truth is not reached through objectivity, but through artistic creation and recreation, through imagination masked and embroidered by objectivity. When Orwell ironically criticizes Koestler's quote³, he is not only making allusion to his pro-conflict message, but to his style. In Orwell's literary conception, the overt and unmediated presentation of the message spoils its content.

With Lee's *A Moment of War*, on the contrary, criticism has blasted its lack of credibility. Laurie Lee's was born as Laurence Edward Alan Lee in England in 1913. Although he considered himself a poet and extensively wrote poetry, Lee is better known for his autobiographical works – consisting of five novels or memoirs which, nevertheless, were not published chronologically. Although *A Rose for Winter*(1955) and *Two Women* (1983) contain autobiographical material, his best known works are *Cider with Rosie* (1959), *As I Walked out One Midsummer Morning* (1969), and *A Moment of War* (1993). The most outstanding critical work about Laurie Lee, which is

³ In the passage mentioned above and belonging to Orwell's review on Koestler's novel, Orwell is specifically criticizing the following quote by Koestler: "No puedo seguir pensando que soy objetivo... Quién haya vivido el infierno de Madrid con los ojos, con los nervios, el corazón, el estómago, y luego diga que es objetivo, miente. Si los que disponen de prensas y tinta para expresar sus opiniones afrontan con neutralidad y objetividad estas barbaridades, entonces Europa está perdida" (qtd. in Davison 312-313). Thus, the overt exposure of impartiality is, in Orwell's opinion, censurable.

in part a biography, is probably Valerie Grove's *Laurie Lee: The Well-Loved Stranger* (1999), although another two authors have also written about him – both knowing him very intimately: Jock Gallagher, a good friend of the writer, finished *Laurie Lee: A Many-Coated Man* in 1998, a few months after Lee's death; and Barbara Lover, a former lover, wrote *Cider with Laurie: Laurie Lee Remembered* (1999).

From the very beginning of his career, Laurie Lee encountered unfavorable criticism on his work, which has mainly been judged according to its veracity. Although *Cider with Rosie* was welcomed by the critics, Lee had to confront a demand of defamation. In his novel, Lee wrote that a factory in Slad burned and, after a trial, he had to plead that it was an imaginary episode. This incident gave rise to the reiterated problem of “truth” or “fact” in literary –yet autobiographical– works. As reflected in Grove's biography, Lee had a clear opinion about this problem:

But argument persisted over the principle of using fictional stories in biography. 'If we know that the episode in the book is untrue, can we have any confidence in other episodes?' one R. Rowland Hill asked in *John O'London's Weekly*, whose editor defended Laurie: 'An autobiography is "recollection in tranquility." It need not be true in the sense that a legal document is true.' Laurie added his 'nine pennyworth': 'My book was classified as "an autobiography" [...] but [...] it was an attempt to give the *feel* of my early days, of a countryside & people.' Hence his short preface: 'The book is a recollection of early boyhood, and some of the acts may be distorted by time.' (327)

The question was aggravated with the publication of *A Moment of War* (1991): besides the fact that Lee had lost his diaries in 1969, and that a huge amount of material had already been written about the Spanish Civil War, the critics excoriated his work for the fifty-four years of temporal gap between the highly impressionist novel and the events being narrated. In addition, Laurie Lee had given oral versions of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War and, as Wallhead has noted, these had varied over time before the publication of *A Moment of War*:

Press stories revealed that Laurie had gone to Spain for a second time, had joined the International Brigades, had been arrested as a spy, and finally invalidated home. His versions had included pneumonia, being shot at, and being condemned to death. (287)

As a result, the critics were unfavorable to the work. Although there are some of them who advocate the truthfulness of Lee's accounts, veterans of the International Brigades claimed that Lee had never bore arms in the conflict and, even, that he had not been in Spain during the war – although one of his diaries, recovered in 2014, demonstrates that, at least, Lee visited Spain during that period. These veterans based their claim, as unfortunately most of the scholars focusing their studies on this period, on a scrupulous historical scrutiny of the novel: when comparing the novel with official documents, the timing, the facts, and the details are not accurate. Probably the most critical study on Lee's work is "A Not Very Franco Account" (1998), published by Simon Courtland in *The Spectator*.

The approach to these works should, in my opinion, be based on its literary and textual characteristics, as we can no longer refer to truth, but to credibility and verisimilitude. Indeed, if we are completely critical of Orwell's accounts, there are plenty of historical inconsistencies as well. For instance, in chapter III, he claims that the fascist side "occasionally flew the flag of the Republic (red-yellow-purple)," (Orwell, *Homage* 26) although he later admitted: "ahora no estoy totalmente seguro de haber visto alguna vez la bandera republicana en una posición fascista, aunque creo que a veces la enarbolaban con una pequeña esvástica encima" (Davidson 87). My analysis would then attempt to establish a link between how both authors incorporate history in their literary works –whether it may be regarded as fictional or non-fictional–, and of how their personal memory is transmedialized and reflected in their works.

3. Personal Memory and History: the Reconciled Siblings

Despite their substantial differences, both *A Moment of War* and *Homage to Catalonia* share the same nature: these works are acts of memory; specifically, as they are personal accounts, they are individual remembrances. Both are, therefore, memoirs. It is necessary to highlight here the possibility of encompassing the novels distinctively into different genres, such as autobiography, personal narrative, or report. But before delving into the categorization of the texts, it must be assumed that when referring to memoirs, I do so in the strict etymological sense: a reminiscence or memory, in this case articulated in written form. In addition, both novels are set in a historically significant context, a context which has been incorporated into History, an old sense of collective memory which I will discuss in depth below. These specific works overtly allude to this historical framework and, in many cases, literature from this period has been analyzed for historical purposes. But, as Nelson has noted, any given personal memory is indeed arranged according to historical records: “autobiographical memory does not exist in non-narrative form; indeed, it also takes into account a particular point in human evolutionary and socio-historical time” (125). Therefore, the link established between history and personal memory in both novels is not only confined to this contextualization. Although separate entities, history and personal memory are not a long way off each other. As will be discussed in this section, history is not a memory in the strict sense of the word, as it is not factual reminiscence, but it is a socially constructed memory, a presumably objective recreation of the past taking as point of departure scientific “traces.” In this part of my analysis, I discuss how literary memory and History share the same imaginative processes of formation and construction. In the same way that the recounting of personal experiences can diverge from the actual

phenomenon, “History isn’t what happened. History is just what historians tell us” (Barthes 242). This section will also explore how the relationship between History and autobiography has become problematic with the new critical approaches arising during the 70s.

To start with, it is essential to differentiate individual memory as a psychological act from personal memory in the literary, or even historical, sense. Unlike other types of memories, like flashback memory, both historical and literary memory (which include both oral and written media) are conscious recreations of past episodes – however, only in literary memory, the individual is strictly implicated in the action. In addition, both literary and historical memories are meant to be externally reproduced and, in most of the cases, shared with an audience – although literary memory may be individually manifested. Taking into account these previous notions, it is necessary to note that any kind of shared or externalized memory undergoes a complex process of formation, or rather of imaginative construction. As Lowenthal has noted, “the past as we know it is partly a product of present; we continually reshape memory, rewrite history, refashion relics” (26). Although it is not my aim to orient my thesis towards a psychological approach, I consider it essential to at least borrow some basic notions in order to provide a simple delineation of which processes are involved in personal memory, and then to extrapolate these processes to a cultural sense of memory.

In this sense, I shall no longer refer to memory, but to the act of remembering because, as Bartlett has noted, the human mind traces “memory,” but it goes beyond this storage information to (re)create what we know to be a full-memory (qtd. in Brewer 70-71). According to the author, every time mnemonic content is remembered, without taking into account if it is consciously or unconsciously brought to mind, it inevitably suffers a transformation: it implies addition of material or new nuances. The mood of the

situation in which the memory surfaces, involving both inner feelings and outer context, leaves an imprint in that memory modifying its primary conception. Indeed, memory is reshaped from the very moment of perception. As Consenstein explains using Bergson's theories,

the instantaneous moment of pure perception provides the brain with initial information about matter and memory completes the perception by adding further information, such as the word assigned to it, its uses, and previous reactions, to create a sense of duration. (14)

To this notion, it is useful to add other nuances essential for the study of pieces of literature in particular. When the act of awakening a personal experience is conscious, the memory can be considered to be episodic or autobiographic, a term coined by Tulving (x). As it is obvious for its designation, this kind of memory is central in the discussion of memoirs or autobiographies, as it is the collection of past experiences that can be explicitly stated. The process by which an episodic memory is expressed encompasses what may be defined as "verbal transmedialization:" there is a necessity of, first of all, associating words to mental imprints, –usually evoked as sensorial impressions–, and, then, of implementing discourse and textual coherence to these words. That is to say, the tangled mnesic experience is narrativized in an ordered way. One way of achieving an organized discourse is by arranging the events into a temporal continuum, even if the recalling of *mnesic* imprints occurs in a subjective and unordered way. In this respect, Paul Fussell has demonstrated that personal memories are structured according to "cultural paradigms," which "pre-form our experience and influence recall (of memories)" (qtd. in Erl 38). For instance, the pastoral tradition in England or the tradition of gothic and grotesque literature in Germany may leave an imprint in the way a memory is not only remembered but elicited. This activity is even more obvious when dealing with literary memory, whether it is oral or written, because, as Contestein has noted, it implies a moving from "internal language" to "external

language” (144): the interior memory is publicly expressed –and then, the memory is more likely to be shaped according to previous popular models. He has noted that the externalization or verbalization of a memory implies its “public consumption” (Conteststein 145). This entails a purpose: why does the individual want to recreate a specific memory? In literary memory specifically, these purposes are of a wide variety, amongst which I will highlight nostalgia and identity shaping as the most habitual. In the first case, memory is likely to be altered positively in order to make the past more appealing or to shape it according to current needs or ideals. In the second case, alterations will look to revalidate and reaffirm attributes or episodes to which the individual has previously identified. Audience, then, is essential when analyzing memories of this kind: for which audience is the text intended? What does the audience expect of the text? Narrowing this question to the target of analysis, it may be argued whether both authors presupposed that their works would be read because of a historical concern, as it is going to be discussed in the following section. This has a clear impact on the arrangement of the texts.

It is interesting to note that the shift from private and personal to public and, therefore, collective memory is a trait interfering with a discipline which has been traditionally considered the antithesis of literature: History. The distinction between fiction and fact was considered an insurmountable barrier between both genres, a barrier which has been demolished in the last few decades. Poststructuralist approaches dismantled mainstream discourses during the 80s, including the perception of history as undisputable phenomenon: history was no longer a ubiquitous science. It started to be denominated “historiography,” a recent term which implies the conception of history solely as a simple discourse. This term also discusses how the telling or study of the

past involves a construction, which is inevitably influenced by different social, economic, and intellectual trends –in the same way that they influence our personal memory shaping. One of the main ideas that the new theories address is the fact that history does not incorporate every single event occurring in the past, but rather those to which power has given cultural prominence: in the remote past, emphasis was established by those holding the political power, and, nowadays, I will maintain that it is basically determined by mass media and communication. In this sense, history is formulated similarly to literary memory: firstly, it is set in the past; secondly, it is shaped; and finally, it is shared –with all the implications that it entails⁴. By referring to shape, I mean that it is not only conditioned by the act of remembering but consciously reconstructed. Simply to narrow the question to the episode under discussion, the Spanish Civil War has undergone several historical approaches: that is to say, that it has been recreated differently. In Spain, it was altered during the conflict and Franco’s dictatorship in order to fit the propaganda: it was consciously faked by different means of communication. However, it was considered factual by the audience, and its reconstruction at the time, therefore, implied a real memory. During the first years of democracy, it was ignored under the belief that harmony would be reached by removing its consequences (a practice coined as “social amnesia”) (Aguilar 242). And finally, the

⁴ It is pertinent to note here that the external recreation of memory does not usually work in the same way in historical spheres as compared to literature. History always implies the sharing of a public memory while literature can recreate a public or a private memory publicly. This makes the study of *A Moment of War* and *Homage to Catalonia* even more interesting, as both authors manage to create both a public and a private sense on the Spanish Civil War using their private experiences. As Majumdar has noted, "it is impossible to determine where private ends and the public begins even within a single human mind. But we all remember even the same set of events differently, and the private aspects of memory lie in this difference. But social and national groups also have collective memory, to which customs, rituals, traditions act as vehicles. Both public and private memory have played important roles in literature" (n.p).

conflict is currently approached from poststructuralist standpoints, usually by examining personal accounts, oral history, and individual reports.

What are, then, the differences between personal memory and history? These are usually blurred, especially when dealing with historical memory. Eyewitness reports have usually been examined as historical evidence for the study of the World War II and the Spanish Civil War. That is to say that an individual and private memory undergoes a process by which it is made public and contributes to the expansion of a collective and cultural memory. Although reports may be arranged into different formats, such as interviews or oral accounts, no narratological discussion has been carried out for the establishment of an undistinguishable aspect differentiating reports and memoirs – although the latter is usually meant to be of a literary nature while report is concerned with historical data. Indeed, it has been proved that many reports, personal memories used as historical documents, project an aesthetic concern as well as narrative strategies: for instance, the reports by the Basque Children, exiles in Great Britain during the Spanish Civil War, usually indicate literary intertextuality (references to the *Divina Commedia*, for instance), as well as literary devices such as metaphors and parallelisms. According to Nelson, the difference lies in the fact that “autobiographical memory is individuated knowledge based on self experience that may be shared with others, whereas social and cultural stories draw on broader sources of group experience and imaginative construction” (Nelson 125). This distinction is, however, completely inapplicable to the works under discussion as, on the one hand, both Orwell and Lee are well aware that they are fomenting a collective sense of experience and acknowledge the nurturing from other sources (as will be fully developed in the following chapter), and on the other hand, their works are based on individuated knowledge.

Within the scope of literature, the concept of memory has not been properly categorized, although again nuances may draw a distinction between literary genres. The most remarkable variation established between autobiography and memoir is the amount of time covered: Zinsser says,

Unlike autobiography, which moves in a dutiful line from birth to fame, memoir narrows the lens, focusing on a time in the writer's life that was unusually vivid, such as childhood or adolescence, or that was framed by war or travel or public service or some other special circumstance. (15)

Others, as Weber, have discussed that the memoir is centered on external facts, while the autobiography is focused on how that external reality is experienced, how it is understood (qtd. in Weintraub 822).

Categorizing *Homage to Catalonia* and *A Moment of War* as adhering to either of these approaches –both within history and within literature– may be moot in multiple ways: both Orwell and Lee were eyewitnesses of the Spanish Civil War and both give a historically pertinent account of the war; their works, as Orwell said in *Why I Write*, keep a literary interest; and in the case of Lee, his work is devoted to a significant episode of his life while at the same time it is part of a trilogy arranged in a temporal progression from his youth to his adulthood (*Cider with Rosie*, *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*). At the same time, Lee acknowledged that *A Moment of War* is a memoir, even if his account is more focus on his inner experience than Orwell's.

Where, then, should we lay the boundaries between sub-genres? The problematic categorization and distinction between these sub-genres were begotten, indeed, from a historical germ. In his discussion on autobiography, Weintraub claims that the term autobiography is a relatively new one and that other older terms like “vitae”, “confessions”, or “hypomnemata” shared a myriad of characteristics recently attributed to autobiography.

The language being used here clearly suggests that the differentiation of memoir from autobiography cannot be a tight and definitive one. Ideal types, in Max Weber's sense, are as heuristic devices, as merely conceptual tools, always purer than the complex reality they are meant to explore. ... It is thus not surprising that in the middle region of the spectrum we can find many works which are hybrids of memoir and autobiography." (823)

Going further, it may be argued that the inability to establish unequivocal limits between personal accounts or memoirs and history also goes back to the time in which history as a discipline was being forged: early historical analyses are based precisely on the examination of first personal accounts like *vitae* – although they also include other collective memories (for instance, annals.) This fact leads us to question whether an indisputable distinction between disciplines can be instituted.

Although there is a certain degree of debate around this question, I consider any representation of the past a public memory, whether it is personal or collective and, following scholarly approaches like Tony Bennet's, I will argue that trying to identify pure, organic and undefined past episodes is a hopeless attempt. With this, I am not suggesting that there are no differences between distinct types of memories –as many of these differences are substantial. But it is crucial to point out that an extensive part of what has been traditionally and unequivocally categorized as literature may rather be recognized as a bridge between history and literature. I am here referring to biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs –of course to those which have not been fictionalized. Overall, and in a very broad sense, both history and biographies explore the past, looking for real evidences (whether the past is concerned with an individual or with a collective unit as nation), and both biography and literature, looking for an aesthetic effect, use a completely different discourse from that of history (whether it is central or not to the work in question). In the following chapters, I will discuss the techniques applied for the incorporation of both collective and individual memories.

4. Building the Bridge: Mnestic Genotexts and Historical Phenotexts/Hypotexts

The relatively problematic obstacle of involving in an autobiographical or first-hand account contextualized in a recognizable historical setting is to establish a nexus between two textual spheres which, even if operating at once, present a completely different core. In this section I will expose and analyze these textual spheres and the way in which both are integrated in Lee's and Orwell's memoirs.

When examining or reading a piece of literature, there is a preconception that assumes that the literary work owns an immediate meaning by itself or, in other words, that we would be able to understand the text by uniquely reading it. However, literary theory has recently challenged this perception in favor of more complex and integrating ideas. Every text is a semantic net organized and conformed by different threads – traditions, discourses, and systems–, which in most cases do not strictly belong to literature as a discipline, and therefore the meaning of a text relies heavily on these smaller units. The practice by which a network of connections builds any given text is known as intertextuality and, in the works under discussion, this aspect is crucial⁵. The binary opposition between the so-called independent text—that is to say, the author's original contribution –and the intertexts– the extrinsic influences conforming the final work – is tantamount in the correlation between social and personal memory to which I have previously referred. Therefore, the concepts internal/personal/independent can be respectively dichotomized with external/collective/intertextual. Focusing on the last pair

⁵ The term has been widely discussed and different connotations have been attributed to it. The first author to coin the text was Kristeva in the 1960s, although the notion of intertextuality had been previously glimpsed by Saussure and Bakhtin. Barthes and Genette later referred to it using different perspectives – from deconstructive and poststructuralist standpoints respectively.

of terms (independent/intertextual), it must be clarified that the concept of “independence” is not trustworthy at all. As has been previously argued, every personal narrative includes an individual approach or focalization in the narration of the experiences being told. In other words, it presents an intrapersonal level or an intradialogue, a reflection on the feelings arising from the experience: it can be a moral reaction, a judgment, or an association with other incidents. From a personal perspective, personal accounts also include a certain degree of auto-narration or auto-interpretation: the telling of oneself, a way of shaping personal identity by narrating life. Although these practices may be interpreted as part of an intimate and highly individualized memory and therefore they may be considered independent from the rest of intertexts, personal narratives are also a way of corrupting the initial memory. In the same way that whenever a memory is invoked some imprints mould and modify it, cultural and social aspects, language, as well as socially induced preconceptions shape the author’s utterance/text: that is to say, that even the most intimate textual productions are highly intertextualized. As Kristeva explores in *Semiotike*, there is a distinction between what she coined as the genotext and the phenotext: the former makes reference to a pre-linguistic and semiotic subjectivity, whereas the latter are “threads that issue from societal, cultural, syntactical and other grammatical constraints” (qtd. in Allen 51). Thus, it can be concluded that a memory as such is a genotext which is later impregnated by numerous phenotexts, both during the act of remembering and during the process of making it a public and narrated memory.⁶ Therefore, “in rational, scientific or legalistic texts, for example – the traces of the genotext will be almost

⁶ It is interesting to note how this idea is related with the previously discussed conception by Bergson: the shaping of memory starts from the very moment in which we perceive and give a name to what is being perceived.

obliterated. In others, ... the potential of the genotext is unleashed” (Allen 51). Although some aspects related to the genotext will be discussed below, it may be concluded that most texts are a series of phenotexts which may be more or less originally arranged. In the pages that follow, I will explore the moods of these phenotexts. Although Kristeva’s oeuvre offers deeper insights on genotexts and despite the fact that she masterly settles the point of departure for the categorization of intertextuality, I shall now consider Genette’s theory on intertextuality, what he calls hypertextuality. His perceptions on intertextual networks follow a structuralist approach, and his classification, based on the implication that any given text follows immutable discourses and structures, is more effective for the target under discussion. Hypertextuality involves “any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall of course, call I the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (Genette 5). Unlike Kristeva’s theory, Genette dedicated his work to hypotexts consciously referenced in a hypertext. Then, before approaching the different sources of intertextuality, it is paramount to look at the intentionality of each of them. From now on, I will refer to those intertextual webs which I considered to have been unconsciously established as phenotext and to any kind of textual referentiality overtly conscious as hypotext.

To start with, one of the main forces of influence in both novels is of a literary nature. The Spanish Civil War became a challenging literary phenomenon. As such, and although the topic has not been so widely argued as other literary periods, there are figures in the phenomenon who have been firmly canonized. Despite the extensive scope of intellectual and political streams reflected in the massive literary production at the time, the canonical works have some points of intersection: in most of the cases, these narratives are moulded, in the same pattern as a *künstlerroman* or *bildungsroman*,

on a development from a stage of initial excitement about the revolution which was later to become a progressive disillusion, in which the chimera of the war (even if initiated for noble purposes) is ironically exposed in a Marxist-like discourse. From this canonic model, different phenotexts arise: a tone of disillusion, the thematic imagery of the evil machinery of the war, and the syntactical, lexical and grammatical constraints of a leftist discourse. Especially in the case of Laurie Lee, who was the last literary eyewitness to write about the Spanish Civil War, the two former phenotexts were highly influential in his work. Although this type of intertextuality is harder to detect, it is undeniable that the content of *A Moment of War* does not deviate from what has been previously stated as acceptable and that, moreover, he emphasizes it: for instance, he includes two whole chapters (“Tarazona de la Mancha” and “The Tarazona Trap”) dedicated to the corrupted machinery of communism in the tone previously adopted by Koestler or Orwell – especially by the latter, who at the time of publication had become one of the most outstanding figures of the interwar period and whose fame has been endorsed by having sold almost 40 million copies of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This shaped discourse and thematic conscription is even more evident if we bear in mind the different plot-changes that Lee adopted in his oral retransmission of the experience. As Wallhead remarks:

Laurie Lee did much research: he read '(and dismissed)' (Grove 481) Hemingway; *he read Orwell and Koestler, who, curiously, had a similar experience, being held in solitary confinement for three months*. Most of all, he studied the authoritative and definitive history of the Spanish Civil War by Hugh Thomas (Thomas 1961), and had written to the former battalion commander Bill Alexander asking for a list of Civil War survivors. (286-287. Emphasis mine.)

Although there is no way of proving that other authors exerted their influence in Orwell, it is clear that his reporting style owns its nature to the grammatical and syntactical features of the “Marxist dialectic” phenotext. As Bourdieu explains, the communist discourse evolved according to two phases. During the 30s, the Russian linguistic

panorama was dominated by Culture Two, which “restores the simplicity and transparency of common sense, the feeling of obviousness and necessity” (qtd. in Petrov and Ryazanova 3). This new dialectic was inspired by the Marxist aesthetics. During Stalinism, syntactical constructions were simplified and word plays eliminated to achieve a direct discourse which seemingly communicates a straightforward message, even if it was semantically subversive⁷. Marxism and neorealism recreate “a discourse of political consciousness based on a moralistic model that is designed to exclude textual ambiguities – any obfuscation of the separation of good from evil” (Ravetto75). It is precisely the simplicity and morality of Orwell’s work which has been admired by different critics. Orwell proposed a moral dichotomy, establishing a binary opposition between the *militias*, which he described as the ideal of social freedom and justice, and the communist and government power. In this respect, Laurie Lee, probably because of his non-political concerns and his poetic preoccupation– is closer to a *genotext* (in this case emanating from his memory) which nevertheless is not completely semiotic as I have previously pointed out. I will focus on this idea in the chapter “Memory and Genotext” of the present thesis. Nevertheless, he interestingly mentions this quality as a mainstream rhetorical technique at the time, describing communist discourses as “undergraduates’ stumbling dialectics”: “For the moment there were no half-truths or hesitations, we had found a new freedom, almost a new morality, and discovered a new Satan - Fascism” (Lee 32).

Interestingly, the previous quote on Lee’s research also hints at the central hypotext in these literary productions: historical and communicative media documents.

⁷ Obviously, Orwell does not show a semantic correspondence with this discourse and the semantical codification of certain phrases and words is not developed in his work - although other writers like Koestler do so.

With this concept in mind, it is obvious that both novels make explicit reference to relevant historical –or rather historiographical– accounts: there is an obvious, documented revision of the episodes which, in the first instance, gives coherence and consistency to the text in non-fictional terms –which of course is essential in an eye-witness account. In the case of Orwell, the conscious introduction of this information is directly expressed by the citation or reference to different sources, which appear recurrently in his work. It is interesting to note, in addition, that these references are introduced differently: sometimes he does not provide full reference of the information because it was not officially obtained (1), there is an instance in which he gives full citation (2), and in other cases he paraphrases and gives a brief description of his source (3).

1. Of course I assumed at once that Smillie had been shot. It was what everyone believed at the time ... Later the cause of his death was given out as appendicitis, and we heard afterwards from other prisoners who had been released that Smillie had certainly been ill in prison. (Orwell, *Homage* 343)

2. The Duchess of Atholl writes, I notice (*Sunday Express*, 17th October 1937): I was in Valencia, Madrid, and Barcelona ... perfect order prevailed in all three towns without any display of force. (Orwell, *Homage* 316)

This story came from several sources, including Federica Montsenys, an ex-member of the Government. (Orwell, *Homage* 329)

3. Some of the journalists and other foreigners who travelled in Spain during the war have declared that in secret the Spaniards were bitterly jealous of foreign intervention. (Orwell, *Homage* 20)

In addition, as Orwell introduces us to what was chapter XI in the first edition of *Homage to Catalonia* and Appendix II later on, he makes an explicit reference to the importance of comparing and contrasting these kinds of accounts with official documents, even grasping the historical pertinence of the events of May:

It will never be possible to get a completely accurate and unbiased account of the Barcelona fighting, because the necessary records do not exist. Future historians will have nothing to go upon except a mass of accusations and party propaganda. I myself have little data beyond what I saw with my own eyes and what I have learned from other eyewitnesses whom I believe to be reliable. (*Homage* 239)

Although Lee does not overtly acknowledge his sources, he assumes his importance in a historiographical sense: he is well aware that his account will be historically attested. That is why he incorporates comments about the historical transcendence of his account:

It was a small, brief horror imposed on the sleeping citizens of Valencia, and one so slight and routine, compared with what was happening elsewhere in Spain, as to be scarcely worth recording.
(38)

Along with the inclusion of purely historical passages, which I will explore in depth below, these comments reveal certain historical intentionality in his work and, therefore, they expose the conscious introduction of historical intertexts.⁸

However, as literary pieces, it is imperative for both Orwell and Lee to integrate these hypotexts into their literary style, and the authors do it differently. Just to give some brief instances, both works display passages in which they unveil the disparity between the “official” historiography and the way in which the events were appreciated or received at the time or they incorporate historical data to shift the narrative line into the action which is to come. In this sense, both novels open a dialogue with the past which is mainly sustained through the evocation of history. In the following chapter, I will explore the strategies and purposes under these intertextual associations.

⁸ It is interesting to mention how Lee incorporates other kinds of historical intertexts. For instance, at some point he makes a comparison between the Spanish and the English Civil War, mentioning Cromwell and the way in which his army destroyed religious iconic representations (109).

5. Intertextual Strategies

In pursuance of pointing out the diverse strategies and methods that both Orwell and Lee apply to shape their account in a historical frame and to facilitate contextualization, it is essential to delve into the narrative focalization in the literary productions

In their respective narratives, both Orwell and Lee present a narratological storytelling which consists in placing the narrative voice in a strategic perspective: as focalizers, both writers are able to present a retrospective voice which knows the future events to come. It is obvious that, as both authors and protagonists of their own accounts, the production of their works is located in the future with respect to the moment in which the action took place. Yet, the focalization being adopted in autobiographies may vary. Autodiegetic narrators writing in a past mode usually mask their retrospective nature by presenting incidents strictly as they were experienced: that is to say, that they follow a rigorous temporal progression. On the contrary, and even if both *A Homage to Catalonia* and *A Moment of War* convey an autodiegetic narrator, some devices employed in the novels may also be attributed to omniscient narrators: somehow, both narrators disclose an overt retrospection of actions from a future perspective. It is important to note that when referring to omniscient, I do not do so in the exact narratological sense: narrators are not able to penetrate the characters' minds nor are they aware of each phenomenon taking place at the time. They, nevertheless, have access to an ample range of contextual information which is not available at the diegetic level: it is material amassed afterwards by the real authors. Therefore, there is an active exchange between the extradiegetic narration of the novels and the implied production of the texts –and therefore an interplay in the narrative focalization of the

events. That is to say, in some way, there are transitory alterations in the temporal perspective of the narration, entailing variations in the focalization in the sense that the narrative voice is occasionally conscious of what is to come while in most of the cases it is not: in other words, the narrative voice sporadically turns from the autodiegetic, non-historically aware narrator placed in the conflict, to the historically aware post-war author.

Although it is futile to attempt to determine an unequivocal reason for this practice, it may be proposed that the writers are adapting the narrative progression taking into consideration the available data easily accessible to an ordinary audience and the widespread awareness of Spanish Civil war affairs. This carries two implications: on the one hand, both authors are mindful of the fact that the reader may be familiar with the material being reported, which somehow dismantles the sense of suspense present in a regular and traditional composite; on the other hand, they are required to create a plot-line inducing expectation and curiosity in a literary sense. In order to conciliate these antithetical premises, the narrators employ two different mechanisms with particular concerns or purposes and levels of interaction: they may be categorized into textual/diegetic and intertextual procedures of anticipation.

Diegetically, the texts display *prolepsis* and *foreshadowing* amid the storytelling. As Genette explains, prolepsis is “any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later” (64). From the myriad of distinctions he makes between diverse modes of prolepsis, it is useful to emphasize what he calls “repeating prolepsis” or “advanced notice”: this procedure announces, generally at the end of a chapter, an incident which has not yet befallen. In the case of Orwell, this mechanism is especially habitual. At the very end of chapter VII, Orwell asserts “we were in Barcelona by three o’clock in the afternoon of the 26th. And after

that the trouble began” (*Homage* 172): yet, the resolution of these troublesome affairs is not immediate. Chapter VIII portrays Barcelona ordinarily and Orwell’s experience progresses with no remarkable circumstance, even if the tone which is cast on this chapter somehow evokes the tragic outcome. Finally, as the reader approaches chapter IX, problems arise. Then, Orwell is applying prolepsis in chapter VII, concocting a fateful end and generating expectation in the audience, while in chapter VIII he projects the suitable atmosphere for the reader to eventually consummate an impression of closure in chapter IX. Simultaneously, in order to renew the reader’s curiosity throughout until the conclusion of his narrative, he again resorts to foreshadowing in this latter chapter: “however; we managed to get a cup of coffee each and buy a wedge of goat’s-milk cheese which I tucked in beside my bombs. *A few days later I was very glad of that cheese.*” (Orwell, *Homage* 204. Italics mine). As chapter X is the central episode recording what would later be officially known as the events of May, the narration accomplishes its paramount climax in this section. After this capstone, Orwell one more time applies foreshadowing as chapter XII opens, captivating the audience’s attention up till the completion of his report:

In Barcelona, during all those last weeks I spent there, there was a peculiar evil feeling in the air – an atmosphere of suspicion, fear, uncertainty and veiled hatred ... Nothing was happening and yet, I myself had not even any mental picture of what was going to happen; and yet there was a perpetual vague sense of danger, a consciousness of some evil thing that was impending. (*Homage* 310)

Lee also turns to this sort of procedure, although his application is not as effective as in the case of Orwell, who arranges foreshadowing at the beginning of every crucial chapter. Nonetheless, Lee adopts it quite strategically to insist upon the dangerous nature of his adventure after the criticism received after the delivery of his experiences in different media (to which I have previously referred in chapter *State of the Question*) and before the release of *A Moment of War*: “I felt the seal of fate on me, and a certain

grim intoxication, alone in this buried silence. But macabre as things were, *I had no idea then how very near to death I was...*" (26. Italics mine). Ergo, he is underlining the suspicion of espionage upon his self as a threatening plight, whereby his account should be interpreted gravely. Although the latter example contributes to foretell specific lines of narrative development, Lee does not normally employ foreshadowing for plot-line purposes, but rather to cast a sense of pessimism and fatalism radiating integrally throughout the production: "But the effect on the victims of that bombing – as it was often to prove in other cities later – was never the major cause of a people's defeat" (96). In this sense, Lee is not so narratologically effective, but the side effects of the war are exquisitely projected in the ambiance of the book.

As the major intertext intervening in the diegetic level in both accounts is historiography, it precludes the possibility of integrating foreseeing or prolepsis: plot plays are disavowed as the reader is conscious of the crucial incidents taking place collectively – especially in the case of Lee, when the Spanish Civil War had been deeply scrutinized.⁹ This may be inconsistent with the discussion previously established on Orwell's passage of the tragic week of Barcelona, but it must be taken into account that at the time of publication, only a few months after the incident, it was deafened by institutions and the press: the turning point that the author foresees in chapter VII was noteworthy for the audience of the time. As he says at the end of the book, there was, and still continues to be, little documentation about the dark week of Barcelona and much of the press at the time was manipulated for propagandistic purposes—we must not overlook that the novel was published in 1938 (Orwell, *Homage* 255-256). The decision

⁹ Indeed, taking into account the poor criticism that he received after the publication of his novel, it is not misleading to argue that he probably avoided including numerous historical details, not only because of the great memory lacunae, but to avoid committing mistakes and being inaccurate.

to link the idea of anticipation with intertextuality is straightforward. In some way, historical intertextuality also presupposes anticipation, although not in the sense of expectation. Anytime the authors introduce a new historical detail, they must bear in mind that the reader may recognize what befell afterwards in a historical sense of the novel. And this has an impact on the natural progress of both narrations. On the one hand, Orwell commonly formulates juxtapositions between relevant information communicated at the time and material consulted later on in order to unmask the manipulation carried by the different institutions and ideological organizations at the time. Hence, he is incapable of prolonging certain incidents as he experienced them – that is to say, that his narrative voice does not incorporate historical details in the temporal progression in which he got in contact with them and nor does he refute them in the specific narrative point in which it transpired they were deceit. This peculiar procedure is a clear illustration of what I have previously referred to as omniscient features. The following passages illustrate this point, as the writer discerns between a posteriori acquired knowledge and his war experience while he anticipates information, creating an unnatural development of a homodiegetic, diegetic level:

He told me that Salas, the Chief of Police responsible for the attack on the Telephone Exchange, had been placed under arrest. (Actually, as we learned later, he had only been deprived of his post. Nevertheless the news confirmed the general impression that the Civil Guards had acted without orders). (Orwell, *Homage* 202)

Douglas Moyle, who had been a sailor, said that they looked like British destroyers. As a matter of fact they were British destroyers, though we did not learn this till afterwards. (Orwell, *Homage* 218)

Contrarily, Laurie Lee administers historical data in a more coherent way. He usually adds information concerning the ongoing incidents of the Spanish Civil War as his personal experience progresses: not mentioning the main episodes of the war until he was actually aware of them is an effective way of refraining the reader from

predicting the next narrative action. For instance, he does not mention the dreadful condition of the Republican front in Teruel until he eventually arrives to the city after his expedition to Madrid. As he does not disclose exact dates, the reader fails to historically locate the narration and, therefore, he or she is unable to anticipate that, on his return to Teruel, the city will look absolutely different— something inconceivable in the well-documented account of George Orwell.

Franco has held Teruel for three years, a vulnerable line towards the coast, and when the Republicans recaptured it that Christmas it was thought that fortune had changed at last, that the days of retreat were over. The worst was only beginning. The occupation of Teruel had been by Spanish troops only. No International Brigades were called on. Then Franco began his counter-attack with artillery so heavy, they said, that it clipped off the tops of the hills and completely altered the landscape... Such was the situation as we got back from Madrid. (Lee 145)

Nevertheless, on some occasions he incorporates historical details of which he became aware afterwards in the same fashion as Orwell— that is to say, by establishing a, sometimes indirect, comparison. This practice is, nevertheless, not so commonly used by Lee. It is interesting to bring up that, in contrast with Orwell, the data provided by Lee are not very specific but loose, probably because he does not intend to contribute to a historiographical gathering: his antithetical commentaries on knowledge available at the time and posterior insights— clearly introduced by formulas like “I learned only later,” “few of us yet knew,” and “few acknowledge at the time”— contribute to a sense of naive characterization and chaotic historical disinformation throughout the novel¹⁰.

I learned only later that this great build-up of shelling marked the end of the Teruel Battle. Franco’s troops, helped by Italian tanks and planes, were hitting back at the fortress city. The Republican forces, together with the International Brigades, began their inevitable withdrawal, clinging briefly to the open heights and little gullies round the walls, before continuing their retreat southwards and towards the sea. The gift of Teruel at Christmas had become for the Republicans

¹⁰ These characterization is part of Lee’s self-projection in the novel: it helps him to establish a empathic bond with the reader.

no more than a poisoned toy. It was meant to be the victory that would change the war; it was indeed the seal of defeat. (Lee 107)

Few of us yet knew that we had come to a war of antique muskets and jamming machine-guns, to be led by brave but bewildered amateurs (Lee 32).

Few acknowledged at the time that it was General Franco, the Supreme Patriot and Defender of the Christian Faith, who allowed these first trial-runs to be inflicted on the bodies of his countrymen, and who delivered up vast areas of Spain to be the living testing-ground for Hitler's new bomber-squadrons, culminating in the annihilation of the ancient city of Guernica. (Lee 38)

Did we know ... that we had ranged against us the rising military power of Europe, the soft evasions of our friends, and the deadly cynicism of Russia? No, we didn't. (Lee 62)

Something worth noting about these quotes is the introduction of first person plural, which, in contrast with Orwell's abrupt historical insertions¹¹, helps to avoid an alien or non-coherent effect in his narration. In this sense, he is able to appropriate as his own suitable information about the war, even if he did not witness certain incidents mentioned. This procedure is enhanced by a collective sense of belonging, in this case to a group like the militias: the reader is able to identify the plurality to which the narrator is alluding and to encompass the narrative voice in this collectivity, as in the following example:

Gradually news from the front was ferried down from sierras, news we could scarcely believe. ... (O)ur army, without artillery and at the height of a blizzard, had attacked and surrounded the city of Teruel, and was even said to be fighting in the streets. After the remorseless decline and atrocious defeats of the summer, we had at last a hope to believe in. Slowly, bloodily, month after month, Franco's forces had been sopping up Spain, pushing our lines back towards the eastern coast. Now we were aimed at a forward city, at a point of greatest threat and danger. (Lee 81)

The incorporation of news of which the author was not an eye-witness is achieved through different means. While Orwell does not include any retrospective summary on the previous development of the war, simply deciding to uniquely deal with the month in which he arrived in Spain, Lee includes a sort of prelude on the situation in Spain

¹¹ The quote by Atholl introduced in *Homage to Catalonia* to which I have previously referred is an illustration.

resorting to an external agent: the prisoner with whom he shared the pitch in which he was being guarded. This character, who is probably a literary invention, helps the reader to historically contextualize the action:

Patiently, drowsily, with no complaint or self-pity, my companion explained the situation to me. The Civil War was eighteen months old, and entering bitter winter. The Republican forces were in retreat and could afford to take no changes. Franco's rebels were better armed, and had powerful allies abroad, while our side had few weapons, few friends, almost no food, and had learnt to trust no one but the dead. (Lee 10)

This passage contains a number of remarks which are incongruous. While Lee introduces this character as a newsman figure announcing the lousy plight of the country, he contradictorily assures his unfamiliarity with the circumstances in Spain – as I have already recounted. This indicates either that this informative figure is a purely literary invention serving as a prologue, or that Lee's pathetic rhetoric and emphasis on the insufficient available information about the militias at the time are an embroidery for reinforcing the candidness of his characters and emphatically moving the audience. The incorporation of characters whose unique contribution to the plot is to update the reader on the recent episodes in the war is recurrent. For instance, after mentioning the rumors circulating about the Teruel combat, Lee introduces a figure which has attended the front and announces news taking place at the city:

Then I remember the see-saw of news, reports and rumours. A van-driver arrived seeking a supply of blankets ... Here was no hero or victorious eagle, but a shivering and ragged man. He told us of pain and snow-blindness, panic, and exposure of the road ... He'd seen the dead stacked like faggots of wood round the walls. (82)

Hence, the assertion of external events or non-personal affairs is more effective by the corroboration of an eye-witness. The driver's vision recapped by Lee is breathtaking and highly vivid: it details frozen corpses, massacres and mutilations. This intimate and pathetic tone clashes with the analytical quality of Orwell's historical descriptions. Thus, Lee is more literarily effective since the linkage between personal account and

history is not so abruptly accomplished. Lee's strategies for the incorporation of these out of scene events while being literarily constant are not exploited by Orwell, who straightforwardly includes external sources. Just to give a brief example, he thoroughly recounts how his room was being searched, later stating: "As a matter of fact that search was very interesting business, and *I wish I had seen it*" (Orwell, *Homage* 355. Italics mine). Still, Lee and Orwell reveal a few points of confluence. Very indirectly, Lee and Orwell express a sour critique against propagandistic press. Both insinuate several reflections on the suspicion over the communist circles through the introduction of peripheral figures. Both address the media manipulation similarly: Orwell gives preference to a grim tone on the war over the Duchess of Athol's optimistic outlook by incorporating a description of the real situation with which her quote can be contrasted; Lee resorts to Bill Rust, "the editor of the *Daily Worker*"(83), who delightfully describes the situation in Teruel and whose enthusiastic description, omitting the battle's aftermath, collides with that offered by the driver:

Now he had a pink glowing look of half-suppressed triumph, like a football manager whose team had just won the cup. Teruel had fallen, he told us; the mountain fortress was ours, and he'd walked in the liberated streets of the city. (83)

6. Memory and Genotexts

In this section, my aim is to explore the ways in which both authors dig into their personal memories. As I have previously expounded, any given text comprises intertextual units, as the exercise of reliving a memory incorporates external or non-mnemonic components to the remembrance. Interestingly enough, this process is echoed in both works, in where Orwell and Lee contemplate the process of verbalizing a recollection, addressing the complexity of faithfully and verbally projecting the exactness of their impressions. I shall not only pay attention to these reflections, but also to the aesthetic effects employed by both authors to project certain mnemonic recalls of unusual importance: in other words, I will explore how some psychological aspects are translated into a literary idiom.

Concentrating now on *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell recurrently flaunts his inability to correctly verbalize those mental insights retained in his memory, making evident that his writing has been devoted to recording relevant and outer events rather than depicting his intimate experiences: “I suppose I have failed to convey more than a little of what those months in Spain meant to me. I have recorded some of the outward events, but I cannot record the feeling they have left me with” (366). Although his purport may be historical, this idea is reiterated in the conclusion of numerous chapters. Interestingly, these passages frequently incorporate a similar reflection: Orwell opposes the way in which he has unfolded the narrative and the factual way in which he feels his memories. Besides, he also reveals a divergence between how he experienced some episodes at the time, and how he understood them at the moment of writing:

I did not make any of the correct political reflections. I never do when things are happening. It seems to be always the case when I get mixed up in war or politics—I am conscious of nothing save physical discomfort and a deep desire for this damned nonsense to be over. Afterwards I can see

the significance of events, but while they are happening I merely want to be out of them—an ignoble trait, perhaps. (*Homage* 338-39)

The way of addressing this issue entails a high level of intertextual reconstruction, as it does not only suggest the arrangement of his impressions into a coherent narrative, but into a rational progression of ideas fitting a political logic. That is to say, that he is not merely reconstructing his experience into a personal narrative, but contriving his own political discourse. This aspect is especially interesting. Previously, I have referred to how any literary memory undergoes a process by which it is not only transmedialized into verbal language, but also arranged into a logical structure in order to be externally expressed. In this specific passage, it is worth noting how this arrangement is not only due to an individual concern –like identity or nostalgia, but to a collective interest. Just like historiography does, Orwell is providing memory with logic in order to reach a collective sense of relevance. Even more interesting is the way in which he argues highly subjective, psychological aspects of his insights. Orwell shows himself aware of the inconsistency of memory: although he repeatedly points to the objective tone of his work throughout the novel, the author concedes to his memories certain subjectivity. The special circumstances under which the insights were stored had a direct impact on the recalling. Although it may be inferred that these observations can induce the reader to mistrust the narrator or to expect a certain degree of misjudgment, Orwell masterly turns these comments into a tool for reinforcing his suspicion upon the communist party: “The details of that final journey stand out in my mind with strange clarity. I was in a different mood, a more observing mood, than I had been in for months past” (*Homage* 322). This passage, which belongs to Chapter XII, makes reference to Orwell’s state of alert after the POUM and other anarchist groups started to be persecuted in Barcelona: he was not safe, so he was watchful. According to him, these special circumstances endowed him with a peculiar vision. Therefore, even some

unconscious mnestic processes are reinterpreted and connected to a political dialectic. In this sense, Lee is closer to a genotextual discourse: he also makes reference to the subjective perception of his memories, although his comment is identified with a mnestic nature. These subjective nuances respond to the moment of perception, which have not been either altered or modified:

But that sandwich, even whiter, smaller than the nun's quiet hand, flavored on the inside by a thin scraping of mincemeat and on the outside by her ineffable fragrance of touch, what a feast it was to our shackled appetites and hungers. And how voluptuously remembered since. (Lee 117)

One of the most fascinating aspects present in both narratives is the way of acknowledging the sensorial nature of the insights described. It has already been mentioned how the psychological imprints to which we refer as memory are experienced in the same way that we perceive through our senses. Furthermore, Downey, an expert in literary psychology, notes that most of the images that we remember are based on mixed or indifferent types of thought: in other words, although thoughts were traditionally categorized according to a specific sense –f.i. "visile" or "audile" memory–, "(m)ost of us are dexterous enough in shuffling our mental cards and are able to pull out at demand picture, echo, odour or what-not," (17) conceiving images composed of multiple-sensorial impressions. Therefore, from now on, it is important to take into account the difference between image, which may be comprised of sensory qualities of any sort, and picture, which is strictly visual. As Orwell notes, his memories are of a mixed type: "it is all mixed up with sights, smells, and sound that cannot be conveyed in writing" (*Homage* 366); and as Lee says, he "remembered again the concentration of the senses, of smell and flavour" (94). At the same time, the way of projecting these sensorial pictures is worth noting, because they seemed to be composed of negligible details, as if they were just abrupt impulses: "One of the things that stick in my mind when I look back is the casual contacts one made at the time, the sudden

glimpses of non-combatants to whom the whole thing was simply a meaningless uproar" (Orwell, *Homage* 235-236). Both authors proceed to present their sensory imprints in a concatenation of diverse elements, composing a mosaic for the five senses.

I remember the horsy smells, the quavering bugle-calls ..., the tramp-tramp of hobnailed boots in the barrack yard, the long morning parades in the wintry sunshine, the wild games of football, fifty a side, in the graveled riding-school. (Orwell, *Homage* 12)

Otherwise I remember the noise, the near frenzy, in a basement dining-room, a winter night ...; the war posters on the walls with their flat, cut-out heroes and their slogans of arousal, defiance, hope; the plates of ordinary steamed potatoes, many of them black with frost; the cheeky militia-girls ...; and the soldiers ... (Lee 86)

This peculiar way of arranging memories may be due to the incompleteness of mnemonic recovery. As these glimpses cannot be properly identified, temporally placed, or annexed to a particular experience, the images and sensorial imprints are perceived as snapshots, isolated from any narrative processed by the authors. The inability to completely call up a memory which is yet latent is evidenced by Lee: "I can't, at this length of time, recall all the characters in the group; many are shapes in a shadow play only" (68).

Some of these sensory images are especially vivid: they are what Downey calls eidetic or *Anschauungsbild* images. This term makes reference to the imagery recalling a former perception, especially to those images that are particularly vivid and usually spontaneously remembered (Downey 15). This imagery is unlike to appear in adults, as it is "something of an anomaly" (Downey 16). However, both Orwell and Lee make reference to an abnormal clarity in the recalling of certain images and experiences. Although Downey points that eidetic imagery may be common to artists (16), this lucidity is probably due to the fact that, as psychology has demonstrated, memories involving a traumatic experience are remembered most vividly. In this regard, the most interesting example to look at is probably the passage in which Orwell describes how he

was shot: “Suddenly, in the very middle of saying something, I felt –it is very hard to describe what I felt, though I remember it with the utmost vividness” (Orwell *Homage* 295). In addition, those memories acquired under special circumstances in which the stream of sensorial information is unusually high imply an acute cerebral and perceptual activation, and therefore the evocation is stronger. That is probably why, after introducing us to the moment in which he was injured, Orwell places the audience inside an explosion, depicting a strident bang and a blinding flash of light before unveiling he was shot (*Homage* 295). In contrast with Orwell, the vividness of Lee’s accounts is projected into a traumatic and constant recalling of the bombs: “The sound of war, several days old and imprinted in the back of my head, seemed ready to return at the touch of a button” (111). These insights were originated in the bombing of Teruel, in which Lee was forced to participate for ten days with no chance of escaping.¹² Therefore, the unconscious recalling may be associated with post-traumatic syndrome, in which intrusive images are extremely common. Interestingly, trauma has physical symptoms and has been usually described by war victims as an ever-present feeling in the head (Kaplan 52).

In addition to the sensorial stimuli that both authors associate to these traumatic experiences, it is important to note the aesthetic effects that they apply to some of their images. It seems that the depictions given by both authors reflect cinematic techniques: snapshots rapidly moving forward from one image to another, almost like a filmic flashback effect, and slowed down images which accentuate experiences that could hardly be forgotten. In the case of Lee, the lucidity with which the bombing of Teruel is

¹² Numerous brigadists have claimed that Lee did not actually participate in the battle and that this passage is pure fiction.

reenacted conveys an impression of stillness. When he describes the explosion of a bomb, time seems to slow down and snow hangs in the air: “When a shell hit the ground and exploded nearby, the snow rose in the air like a dirty ghost, and hung there spikily billowing, before collapsing into the ground again” (Lee 106). Interestingly, in Orwell’s account, the very moment in which he was shot seems also to be dragged out: he provides a protracted description before affirming that “all that happened in a space of time much less than a second” (*Homage* 295). These aesthetic effects are known as kinetoscopic imagery, which is also the result of sensory input and which projects motile imprints recalled in the mind. Interestingly, Downey has noted that sensorial and eidetic images are more likely to abandon their mimetic nature in order to convey the artist’s intimate mood, becoming images of “perceptual adjustment” (185). He also asserts that by applying individual impressions to descriptive images, writers do not only project their humor, but facilitate a psychic participation on the part of the reader, driving him or her to feel empathy (Downey 186). The empathic image is, in most of the cases, aesthetically conveyed by impressionist techniques – as in both *A Moment of War* and *Homage to Catalonia*. It is important to note that neither Orwell nor Lee is characterized by the use of modernist or avant-garde techniques. This makes the analysis of these impressionist effects even more interesting, as they clearly are the result of highly impressive memories instead of the product of an aesthetic movement with which the authors affiliate. One of the most interesting perceptual adjustments in both memoirs is the change of focalization: although the works are written in first person singular, the narrative voices usually offer a general picture of the situation. However, the focalization is, in the traumatic passages, completely placed within the individuals, imitating the stream of consciousness. Both authors focus on specific details, as if a camera had zoomed in on a particular object or aspect: Orwell especially

calls our attention to sound, while Lee visually concentrates on the small particles of snow. This is due to a psychological response. Under unusual circumstances of fear or pain, emotion surpasses our capacity of thought – which is in charge of regulating and giving meaning to sensorial input. Mental processing is, then, interrupted: the senses are in alert, paying attention, but the perception process is incomplete. That is why both the bombing of Teruel and Orwell's shot give the impression of being unmediated: the experiencing of these instants is not processed or arranged coherently. As a result, the general picture of the situation is blurred. As Downey notes, when “the mental eye concentrates on some detail, it loses a comprehensive view of the whole” (14). Orwell says that “everything was very blurry” (*Homage* 295), and he is no longer meticulously discerning as he cannot intertwine the events to reflect on their significance; Lee situates the reader in a motionless scene in which nothing seems to temporally and truly happen and his confusion is reflected in the incorporation of a ghostly figure (106).

Finally, I want to draw attention to the way in which Lee projects the humor of these vivid memories on the landscape, providing a really impressionistic insight. After the bombing, and even if brightness is usually associated with positive notes, Lee's impressions on the attack prevent him from feeling relief and the atmosphere is deluged with a gloomy spirit, becoming a tangible environment– an aspect which again recalls posttraumatic syndrome: “The white daylight was like pain; I could see it and feel it – a plastic stretch of silence pulled over the face” (162). As Downey affirms, aesthetic empathy is mainly concerned with “the projective of affective reactions into the external world; an objectification of emotions” (177). Therefore, it is not surprising that Lee projects his inner feelings into the landscape, facilitating empathy and enriching the narrative reception.

7. Conclusion

The target of this study has been to explore not only how personal memories comprise an intricate network of units from completely different sources, but also how these elements underwent similar processes of incorporation in two different authors: both Laurie Lee and George Orwell employ comparable techniques in order to, on the one hand, be historically accurate and relevant, and, on the other, reflect an intimate experience. Firstly, they develop tools to introduce intertextual data. This point is particularly interesting when dealing with literary authors. While the historical reflection on the Spanish Civil War is ever-present in eye-witnesses' reports without being striking for the audience, those authors literarily concerned have to deal with two antithetical premises resulting from the intertextual relationship between historiography and literature. They have to develop an appealing narrative for the audience while providing a detailed background, and, at the same time, the incorporation of historical details may spoil the sense of narrative progression. In order to reach the right balance, Orwell and Lee play with the narrative focalization, which also makes their works especially intriguing for the analysis of historiographic intertextuality. Orwell and Lee are placed in a distant future in relation to their respective narratives and, what is more important, the availability of information on the conflict had highly increased at the moment of production. Both authors establish a dialogue between their historical awareness as brigadists and as post-war writers, adapting the historical details they provide to the narratological necessities of the plot.

It is also worth noting that the historical intertextuality in both memoirs helps enrich the works in a literary sense: for instance, Orwell, after applying prolepsis in previous chapters, finally unveils an unknown historical episode by the audience,

reaching a bright literary climax; and Lee contrasts his unawareness at the time with widespread historical information in order to literarily project himself in an empathic way. At the same time, their individual experience is not only narrated, but also, in many cases, unconsciously examined: some reflections draw on the process that an insight needs to undergo in order to become a literary memory. In addition, both novels present impressionist techniques which do not only unveil psychological aspects of memory, but which provide the memoirs with a higher aesthetic quality.

The implications of these findings in relation to the new historicist lines of research –those focusing on the analysis of historically relevant events through first eye–witness accounts– are intriguing: the phenotextual or hypotextual factors, including previous historical records, political streams, or other experiences recounted by eye-witnesses, influence and regulate any given account or report. Therefore, what has been traditionally addressed as historical objectivity is only a construct. Truth understood as historical events should not be an affair. Individual experiences in the war are neither historical nor political: they are just intimate memories. Therefore, the standpoints from which the Spanish Civil War literary phenomenon has been approached should be revisited: the works written on this period should be analyzed as mnestic processes. Therefore, literary psychology can reveal pertinent information: that is to say, that the interesting features of eye-witness accounts is the way in which impressions are recalled and verbalized by their authors. This approach should also incorporate an analysis of how the social, political, and historical discourses shape the remembrance of personal experiences.

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