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Chapter 3

AUTO-REFLECTION ON THE PROCESSES OF CULTURAL RE-MEMORATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY SPANISH MEMORY NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines how the contemporary Spanish novel that re-memorizes the Spanish civil war and the period of post-war repression reflects auto-referentially upon the very social processes that negotiate the cultural memory of which the novelistic discourse is itself an essential part. The Spanish civil war ended in 1939, but the dictatorial regime survived until General Franco's death in 1975. The transition to democracy in Spain did not represent a clear break with the former dictatorial regime, but was initiated and directed by moderate forces from within its heart. Due to the character of this process, both parties – the regime and the formerly illegal political parties, the socialists and the communists – agreed to grant amnesty for all politically motivated crimes except murder and to focus on a common future, a stance which contributed to the process of cultural forgetting. This meant that the sufferings of the victims of the repression were kept in silence for several decades. Since the turn of the millennium, however, Spanish society has been engaged in an intense public and political debate about the civil war,

the post-war repression and the subsequent transition to democracy. The chapter discusses the role of literary novelistic discourse within this movement, and examines the mutual influences between social movement and artistic discourse.

1. INTRODUCTION

After decades of silence, Spanish society is now engaging in an intense public and political debate about the civil war, the post-war repression and the subsequent transition to democracy. Since the turn of the millennium, the number of publications giving voice to the victims and their sufferings has exploded within all genres, and narrative fiction has become one of the main sources of reflection upon the very process of negotiation between differing social discourses that is leading to the creation of a cultural memory in Spain. One hypothesis presented in this chapter is that the contemporary Spanish novel is creating a mimetic and self-conscious representation of this negotiation of cultural memory; a second hypothesis is that the strong engagement with the agenda of a popular movement that is visible in the novels is affecting the very form of the predominant novelistic discourse. The chapter therefore explores how social dialogue has influenced the form of the novelistic discourse, giving way to a hybridized discourse that lies between autofiction, docufiction and historiographical metafiction, which I term the chronotope of the present past.

Contemporary interest in Spain in the civil war has been discussed from a sociological perspective at an early stage by, among others, Juan Ramón Resina et al.(Resina, 2000), and in the later part of the period by Bernecker and Brinkmann (Bernecker and Brinkmann, 2009; Bernecker, 2011). Since the mid-2000s, we have witnessed a series of publications focussing on the question of aesthetic form in the cultural-aesthetic discourses. First and foremost José Colmeiro's excellent book of 2005 should be mentioned, a contribution that discusses not only the novel, but also representations of cultural memory in other forms of popular culture (songs, theater, film etc.) from the end of the war to the end of the century (J. Colmeiro, 2005). We should also mention a series of Ph.D. dissertations published between 2004 and 2010. Ana Luengo examines in her dissertation the development from 1991 to 2001 of the memory novel devoted to the civil war, and she discusses how these novels contribute to the construction or deconstruction of certain historical myths (Luengo, 2004). Carmen Moreno Nuño analyzes four novels

published between 1982 and 1996 with the intention of discussing the relationship between myth and trauma in the representation of the civil war (Moreno-Nuño, 2006). Fiona Schouten studies the novels of the last 20 years dedicated to the representation of the civil war, but does not discuss the question of a possible change of form in the novelistic discourse of this period (Schouten, 2010), while María Corredera González focusses on the narrative between 1999 and 2003 on the same topic from the perspective of how the novelistic discourse is able to establish or facilitate an intergenerational dialogue about the role of the civil war in the country's cultural memory (Corredera González, 2010). Finally, two issues of the journal of historical studies *Hispania Nova* (6 and 7, 2006 and 2007), as well as an issue of the *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* (9:2, 2008), have been dedicated to the topic of the politics of memory in contemporary Spain. However, none of these studies has addressed the question of a change of narrative form in the contemporary Spanish novel since the turn of the century that is attributable to the very close relationship between creative writing and social movements in this period. This, on the other hand, has been the focus of two recent publications from the University of Aarhus (González Martín and Cruz Suárez, in press; Hansen and Cruz Suárez, 2012).

In order to examine the two proposed hypotheses, it will be necessary to discuss contemporary memory processes in Spain, both from an empirical and a theoretical perspective. The section that follows, "Spanish Memory Politics", examines the development of memory politics from the transition up to today and explains the phenomenon *grosso modo*so as to enable us to understand the role of the memory of the civil war in the heavily polarized political landscape. Section three, "Spanish Cultural Remembrance between Postmemory and Affiliative Memory", raises the question of the character of this intergenerational cultural memory of the civil war from a theoretical point of view—how it is generated, circulated and transformed—in order to be more specific about the possible influence it may exercise on narrative forms in the contemporary novel. Finally, the last section, "The Spanish Affiliative Post-Memory Novel", will examine some important characteristics of the contemporary Spanish novel dedicated to the memory of the civil war and the Francoist dictatorship. Having described three different narrative modes, the chapter analyzes three formal characteristics of two of these narrative modes: (1) the chronotope of the present past; (2) the use of autofiction and docufiction; and (3) the question of how the contemporary Spanish novel self-referentially reflects its own performance within the context of the cultural re-memoration of the civil war and post-war repression.

2. SPANISH MEMORY POLITICS 1975-2010

Historians estimate that when the Spanish civil war ended in 1939, 136,913 soldiers had been killed in battle (Salas Larrazábal, 1977: 336), and that almost 200,000 citizens had been liquidated behind enemy lines: 50,065 on the republican side and 141,951 on the side of the nationalistic forces (110,000 during the war and the rest during the post-war period) (Prada Rodríguez, 2010: 436-438). It is also estimated that 450,000 Spaniards went into exile (Vilar, 2006: 33), while 363,000 were jailed (Rodríguez Tejeiro, 2007). Despite these overwhelming numbers, the sufferings of the victims of the repression were kept invisible and inaudible, not only during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, but for several decades after his death in 1975. Why? Maybe because the transition to democracy in Spain did not represent a clear-cut break with the former dictatorial regime, but was initiated and directed by moderate forces from within the very regime. Due to the political character of this process, both the regime itself and the formerly illegal political parties, the socialists and the communists, agreed on an Amnesty Law in 1977, giving amnesty for all preceding politically motivated crimes except murder. At the time the Amnesty Law was considered a basic precondition for the legalization of the mentioned parties and the beginning of the transition process that culminated in the 1978 democratic constitution. It was also seen as a necessary means of keeping the army from pronouncing another *putsch*. It seems that all the major political actors of the time were agreed upon focussing on the future and on economic growth. As congressman Marcelino Carmacho from the Communist Party argued during the 1977 debate in Parliament:

> We thought that the most important item of the politics of national reconciliation had to be amnesty. How could we be reconciled, we who had been killing each other, if we did not wipe out the past once and forever?
>
> In our understanding, amnesty is a national and democratic policy and a reparation of the injustices committed during the 40 years of dictatorial regime. It is the only and most consequent means able to close this past of civil wars and crusades. We want to open up a path to peace and freedom. We want to close one era, and open up another. We, the very communists who were hurt so badly and suffered so much, we have buried our dead and our grudges. We are determined to march forward on

> the path of freedom, on the path of peace and progress (Camacho, 1977. My translation)[1]

One might say that the Amnesty Law became a constitutional framework for future political development, in the sense that both the reform-oriented parts of the former dictatorial regime, represented first by Adolfo Suárez (who won the first two elections) and subsequently by the Socialist Party of Felipe González (who won the 1983 elections and continued in government for the next 12 years) chose *not* to address the country's traumatic past, but concentrated on the issue of economic growth and political integration in Europe in the near future. As a consequence of this political agreement, the many millions of citizens from the losing republican side who had been politically persecuted and socially marginalized for 40 years did not get the restitution they felt they were entitled to. Their experiences continued to be invisible and inaudible in the official discourse, and in this way the Amnesty Law paved the way for what was later named the'Pact of Oblivion'(Aguilar Fernández, 2002;Labanyi, 2007: 93).

The first time the civil war was used as an argument in public political debate was during the general election campaign of 1996, when the Socialist party was about to lose after 12 years in power (Bernecker and Brinkmann, 2009: 259). The party was worn down, corrupt and torn by political scandal, and in a last desperate bid to maintain power they dragged the skeleton from the closet: "Do you really want to give power back to the people responsible for so many years of suffering"? And once out, the skeleton transformed itself into the ghost that has increasingly haunted the political debate ever since (Labanyi, 2002). The victory of the Partido Popular (PP) in the 1996 elections inspired the more radical part of the intellectual right to launch a crusade against internationally established interpretations of the civil war (Pío Moa, Stanley Payne et al.). In their eyes, rather than a coup against a democratically elected government, Franco's rise to power in July 1936 was a step necessary

[1] The original Spanish text reads: "Nosotros considerábamos que la pieza capital de esta política de reconciliación nacional tenía que ser la amnistía. ¿Cómo podríamos reconciliarnos los que nos habíamos estado matando los unos a los otros, si no borrábamos ese pasado de una vez para siempre? ...Para nosotros, tanto como reparación de injusticias cometidas a lo largo de estos cuarenta años de dictadura, la amnistía es una política nacional y democrática, la única consecuente que puede cerrar ese pasado de guerras civiles y de cruzadas. Queremos abrir la vía a la paz y a la libertad. Queremos cerrar una etapa; queremos abrir otra. Nosotros, precisamente, los comunistas, que tantas heridas tenemos, que tanto hemos sufrido, hemos enterrado nuestros muertos y nuestros rencores. Nosotros estamos resueltos a marchar hacia adelante en esa vía de la libertad, en esa vía de la paz y del progreso."

to save Western civilization from the Bolshevik threat - a view not essentially different from the image created by the Falange Española themselves, which served as an argument for the political cleansing processes of the early 1940s. While this ideological position has been contested by renowned historians like Javier Tussell and Santos Julia, it has nevertheless drawn a great deal of public attention to the issue of historical interpretation. And although the PP itself officially wanted to leave the past behind – many leading members had been trusted collaborators of the *ancien regime* – José María Aznar's absolute majority in the 2000 elections served as further inspiration for this kind of historical revisionism. This, of course, was seen as unbearable provocation by the many citizens who had spent their childhood and youth in families marked by experiences of defeat and suppression. Inspired by the general increase of Holocaust memory in the Western hemisphere during the 1990s, and by Judge Baltazar Garzón's lawsuit against the former general and Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1998, interest in the history of the repression in Spain became increasingly widespread. When one individual, Emilio Silva Barrera, took the initiative to locate and exhume the mass grave where his grandfather, together with 12 other republican victims, was buried by the Falange in October 1936, something happened. Silva Barrera, a journalist, published an article called "My grandfather was also a Disappeared" (Silva Barrera, 2000) in a local paper, and this initiative became the starting-point for the organization of a national movement dedicated to the recovery of historical memory, La Asociación por la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH). This and similar movements have for the last 12 years promoted a long series of localizations, exhumations and DNAidentifications of civilians illegally executed during and after the civil war (Peinado Cano, 2006). Even today, there are still more than 88,000 victims waiting to be exhumed from the 2,246 mass graves around the country that though identified have not yet been exhumed: numbers that give Spain the world's second highest total of unidentified victims scattered around in the landscape, a position second only to Cambodia (Torrús, 2012).

The broad popular movements engaged with the recovery of the historical memory of the civil war and post-war repression have been – and still are – strong and influential players in the negotiation of the cultural memory of the past. They are also important agents in the political landscape—so strong that the PSOE, which was reduced to the role of political opposition by the elections of 1996, felt obliged to support the popular movement's claim of the right to know what really happened during and after the war, even though party policy for decades had been to focus on the future rather than dwell upon

the conflicts of the past. When the PSOE regained power in the elections of 2004, they therefore had no alternative but to support reform of the way the country was handling its recent past. In 2007 they passed an Act on "The Recovery of the Historical Memory" in the Spanish parliament. The law contains a broad range of initiatives. It recognizes the suffering of the losing side in the political persecutions that followed the end of the civil war; it offers a very modest economic compensation to the few republicansstill alive, for income lost through unemployment and the abolition of their pensions; it requires all public memorials of the Francoist regime to be removed (sculptures, road names etc.); and it allows access for historical research in the military archives and recognizes the right of survivors to gain knowledge about the whereabouts of missing persons. In other words, the state undertakes to support the opening of the mass graves and the identification of the victims through DNA tests (Boletín Oficial del Estado, NUM .310, 2007). This last point excepted, the law is first and foremost to be considered as a merely symbolic recognition of the sufferings of the victims: even the promise of exhumation for of the victims was not consequently carried through. The indictment against Judge Baltazar Garzón for breaking the Amnesty Law of 1977 with his investigation into responsibility for executions of victims in a series of mass graves (Burbidge, 2011), and his subsequent conviction and suspension from duty due to another case regarding illegal wire-tapping of corrupt politicians, not only shows the limits of the 2007 law on historical memory, but throws the legitimacy of the whole political and juridical system in Spain into question (Kaufmann, 2012).

Since the outbreak of the financial and economic crisis in 2008, the still-increasing unemployment rate and the severe cutbacks in public spending have been the main issues of public debate in Spain, as in the rest of the Western world. Economic tensions between the PP on the one hand and the PSOE on the other have sharpened, and Mariano Rajoy's victory for the PP in the 2011 elections made the situation even more acute. The harsh political division of the country currently threatens to contaminate all aspects of political discussion, including identity-policy-related fields like the memory culture and the question of national autonomy for the Basque country and Catalonia. The proposal by Artur Mas, conservative leader of Convergencia I Unió and President of the Catalan Regional Autonomy, to call for a referendum on Catalan independence in the fall of 2012 did not make it any easier to distinguish between distinct political agendas. The current demonstrations against the government's economic policies are at one and the same time also a response to questions of regional autonomy and memory politics, as Catalan

banners mix with the purple, red and yellow banners representing the Second Spanish Republic (1931-36). It may well turn out that the Spanish civil war was actually a series of particular wars, fought by each region, each social class and each political tendency for their own particular goals. It may thus be impossible to speak of a single memory culture in Spain today (Bernecker and Brinkmann, 2009: 303). What *is* possible, though, is to single out two clear-cut overall positions on the memory of the civil war and the post-war repression. Where the conservative government and the political right seem to think that digging into history and opening up the mass graves means opening up old wounds, the opposition and the political left defend the slogan *Fosas cerradas, heridas abiertas* (Closed graves are open wounds). In this sense, there is one highly polarized and politically invested memory culture. Of this memory culture, the contemporary Spanish memory novel is an integral part.

3. SPANISH CULTURAL REMEMBRANCE BETWEEN POST-MEMORY AND AFFILIATIVE MEMORY

The concept of 'historical memory', used in the official Spanish discourse to designate the recovery of the memory of the sufferings of the victims of the civil war and post-war repression, was originally coined by the French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs. According to Halbwachs, historical memory is a kind of frame-memory to which each subject's autobiographical memories, as well as the collective memories of the various groups to which (s)he is affiliated, are dialectically related (Apfelbaum, 2010: 91). This supposed historical frame-memory, belonging to the society as a whole, was not Halbwachs' primary area of investigation: his interests were directed more specifically towards the relation between the individual subject's memory and the social frames that constitute it (family, religious groups, class), and the scant elaboration of the term in his writings leaves many questions unanswered. How can a society as a whole be considered one social group? What are the relations between this group and the historical memory? Which are the borders of the society to which the historical memory is related? And are we talking about nation states, about states or about nations (for as we can see in the case of Spain, these are not one and the same thing)? Last but not least, is it possible to talk about historical memory as a singular phenomenon at all? Should we not at least talk about differing or competing historical memories? To apply the term 'historical memory' in the Spanish context, all

these questions would need a convincing answer. As these are beyond our power to supply, we therefore propose to use an alternative set of concepts.

The American social anthropologist James Wertsch prefers to talk about collective cultural remembering rather than memory, in order to emphasize that what is at stake is not some kind of solid or stable entity, but processes of communication, or, as he calls it, 'mediated action'(J. Wertsch, 2002: 13 ff and 2009: 119). For Wertsch, it is important to understand that when we speak of collective entities like groups and societies, the use of the word 'memory' is a metaphor, because there is no incarnated subject which remembers in a physical manner. What we have are texts in the broadest sense of the word (written, acoustic and visual), produced, circulated, consumed and disputed in an ever-ongoing series of social processes. Wertsch elaborates his understanding of cultural remembering on the basis of Michael Bachtin's concept of dialogism (M. M. Bachtin, 1996). Each of the texts partaking in the cultural remembrance processes should therefore be interpreted in its own complex dialogical relation to the other texts which take part – or have taken part – in the negotiation of the case in question. Understood in this way, it is evident that aesthetic-artistic discourses, including the contemporary Spanish novel, also participate as individual voices in the cultural remembrance of the civil war and the post-war repression, in dialogue with other social discourses such as the political discourse, newspaper journalism, and academic historiography. As Ann Rigney, among others, has pointed out, cultural memory is like swimming: in the very moment you stop, you will sink (Rigney, 2010:345). The moment society stops circulating texts on a historical issue, cultural recollection is brought to an end.

There are various reasons for a society to keep up the production and circulation of texts bearing upon a given historical incident, but among the most important are two: first, when the incident in question has been transformed into what the French historian Pierre Nora has called a 'memory cite'—a place loaded with symbolic meaning for the self-understanding of a particular group, typically a nation (Nora, 2007);and secondly, when a given society strongly disagrees over the way in which a given historical incident should be recollected. Barring these, the normal process is that with the death of the last individuals of the generation that witnessed a historical incident, typically after 40-60 years, the memory of the incident disappears along with the communicative memory (J. Assmann, 2010). In certain very special cases, as society begins a circulation of texts negotiating the collective recollection of an incident or the interpretation of an extended period—the civil war and the postwar period, in Spain—voices of novelistic discourse take on an important

role in such an inter-discoursive dialogue, in at least two ways. On the one hand, authors contribute to the collective recollection process by digging up new material from the historical archives and playing the roleof detective in history, dragging new stories and new interpretations of known stories into the light of public attention and the arena of public debate, transforming the archival material into new information (A. Assmann, 2008 and, 2011) and thus revealing possible new sites of memory for collective remembrance. On the other hand, literary discourse can also mediate between the particular and the universal so as to play out universal ethical and moral principles in the setting of particular destinies, providing these destinies with individual identities with whom we, as readers, can identify. Like oral testimony, literature contributes to the understanding not only of what happened, but of how it felt to be part of what happened (A. Assmann, 2006).

Summarizing, we might say that Spain, currently in the process of losing its last witnesses to the civil war and post-war period, is negotiating the interpretation of this period from competing political and cultural points of view. And in these processes of dialogic negotiation between various social discourses, literary narrative can creatively enhance the archival material in active circulation, as well as offering a perspective of empathetic identification that no other social discourse is capable of. The question that remains is how to describe the kind of historical engagement that characterizes these narratives.

The transmission of the communicative memory of the generation of witnesses into the intergenerational remembrance of subsequent generations has been studied by, among others, the American literary scholar Marianne Hirsch, whose concept 'postmemory' has had an important impact on memory studies. Marianne Hirsch defines the concept in this way:

> Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up (Hirsch, 2008: 106)

The concept of postmemory is explicitly inspired by Halbwachs' hypothesis about the importance of social memory frames. Marianne Hirsch applies this concept to the role of the family as a frame of intergenerational transmission of the Shoah in Jewish families. According to Hirsch, this filiative or intergenerational transmission of traumatic experiences from one

generation to the next plays an important role not only for the family's self-understanding and cohesion, but also for the maintenance of Jewish cultural community. The community to which the individuals belong becomes dependent upon the transmission of these memories, and this dependence places a certain responsibility on both generations: the older generation has the obligation to communicate their experiences, and the younger generation, the 'hinge generation' in Marianne Hirsch's terms, feels obliged to receive them and make them their own through some kind of hermeneutic appropriation. According to Hirsch, this intergenerational commitment can even generate a kind of appropriation of memories, as if they were a part of the younger generation's own communicative memory (Hirsch, 2008: 105-106). Postmemory in Marianne Hirsch's original sense is therefore an exclusive and rather rare phenomenon, closely tied to the experience of genocide, filiative transmission and cultural community maintenance, and Hirsch's concept therefore seems to be too narrow to capture the kind of engagement we are looking for.In Spain it is the generation of the grandchildren that is actively engaged in the recuperation of the historical memory, and the movement they have organized represents a profound and broad commitment in the population. However, Hirsch also mentions another, related kind of intergenerational memory transmission related to the process of postmemory, 'affiliative memory'.

If we consider filiative, intergenerational postmemory as a process of vertical transmission between parents and children within the family frame, affiliative, intergenerational re-memorization represents the horizontal transmission of this postmemory throughout the generation of the children (Hirsch, 2008:114). According to Hirsch, the kind of commitment for the younger generation to identify with the traumatic memory of a generation of people to whom they only have a secondary relation resembles the kind of compromise required in modern professional relations. According to Edward Said, from whom Hirsch borrows the concept, the affiliative commitment is the kind of commitment required for professional socialization in modern society, for example, when a young scholar wishes to become a member of the order of distinguished professors of comparative literature (Said, 1984: 16ff). The young scholar chooses independently to do so, but in the process he must assume a set of norms and values and in so doing becomes assimilated into this community, with its specific professional traditions and structures of authority. One might say that if Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory within the family frame corresponds to intergenerational memory transfer and cultural maintenance in a traditional sociological setting, the concept of

affiliative memory reflects the way in which modernity has freed the subject from traditional social frameworks and corresponds to the modern challenge of individual identity-formation.

The concept of affiliative postmemory transfer has been applied to the Spanish context by the German Hispanist Sebastian Faber, according to whom the act of writing as well as reading novels dedicated to the remembrance of the civil war and post-war repression can be considered acts of affiliative engagement in regard to the central divide in the country's memory politics. For Faber, in order for the wounds to heal, it is not enough to exhume the victims of the Francoist repression from the mass graves; the untold stories must also be told and read (Faber, 2010:103). In stressing the role of ethical choice, rather than affiliation to a strongly value-oriented community, as the guideline for the individual affiliative act (the reading or writing), Faber gives the concept of affiliative engagement a particular twist. Faber's interpretation of the concept becomes comparable to the kind of virtual-memory transfer termed 'prosthetic memory' by Alison Landsberg (Landsberg, 2004). According to Landsberg, prosthetic memory can be found when memories of traumatic experiences anywhere in the world are offered as merchandise in a free market over the internet. Today, Landsberg says, it is each subject's individual choice whether to appropriate the experiences of the Holocaust, the sufferings of the Afro-Americans, Franco's political cleansing of Spain or something else as the point of departure for an ethically reflected construction of self-identity. In this way Landsberg liberates individual identity-construction from all ties to history and culture and focusses exclusively on the affiliation to a particular memory culture as an act of individual choice. Alison Landsberg's text provides a radical vision of the role of electronic visual media in relation to intergenerational memory transfer and future construction of self-identity, but it seems too extreme for the Spanish case.

In Spain, the country's political polarization is duplicated in the sphere of memory politics as a divide between two opposed positions, and in this political context, as Sebastian Faber states, people feel obliged to take a position. It may well be that memories of the civil war are determined by their geographical origin and the political perspective within which they are formulated. Individuals may even choose to mediate the question of the violent past by applying differing experiences from other traumatic events in a multidirectional manner (Rothberg, 2009). But it is the Spanish state that is the overall frame within which the remembrance discourses are being produced, circulated and dialogized, and the overall frame that determines the elaboration of the passionate engagement, whether in favor or against the

recuperation of the historical memory. Summarizing, we might say that Spain is experiencing a process of intense intergenerational postmemory transfer, driven by an affiliative compromise with the memory of the civil war and post-war repression on the part of the generation of the grandchildren of the victims. The very acts of writing, buying and reading novels on this topic can be considered acts of affiliative compromise with one part of the country's polarized memory culture, and the question that remains is how this close relationship between popular movement, social compromise and novelistic discourse has influenced the aesthetic forms that characterize these narratives.

4. THE SPANISH AFFILIATIVE POST-MEMORY NOVEL

A clear majority of novels published since 2000 on the topic of the civil war and the post-war period serve the explicit purpose of recognizing the sufferings of the victims of the war and post-war repression (Winter, 2005: 26, 29; Hansen, 2011and 2012). Through their specific poetics the novels try on the one hand to authorize the historical description as authentic or 'true', and on the other hand to make the reader feel how it was to live these experiences and thereby to identify with the depicted persons and understand the conflict from 'within'. The means used to achieve the effect of historical truth are the deployment of real historical characters and events and the inclusion of historical documents and real testimonies, while the means used to engage the reader in empathetic identification are the fictionalization of historical events (Hansen, In press, a).

a. The Mimetic, the Reconstructive and the Challenging Modes

In what follows I will distinguish between three different modes in the affiliative post-memory novel on the civil war, roughly corresponding to the modes described by Elina Liikanen in *La memoria novelada* (Liikanen, 2012). I will call them the *mimetic* mode, the *reconstructive* mode and the *challenging* mode. It is my hypothesis that these modes correspond, covertly or overtly, to different ways of conceivingof the relation between past, present and future. In the following section I will briefly describe each of these modes as a preliminary introduction to a more detailed analysis of some common characteristics of the second and the third mode.

The first mode, the mimetic, engages itself in a mimetic reconstruction of everyday life during the Second Republic, the civil war on the republican side, and to a certain extent also life among refugees after the war, depicting the Second Republic as the primordial 'home' of modern society and the outbreak of the war as the fall of man. This implies that many of these novels reject the transition period and the current political system as false and pseudo-democratic, finding a more authentic democratic model in the Second Republic of the 1930s. We might characterize this kind of literary discourse as 'restorative nostalgia' in the sense used by Svetlana Boym (Boym, 2001). These novels idealize the Republic as a paradise lost and the war as a struggle between the powers of good and bad, in a discourse that both describes the historical environment as a detailed historical setting and develops a conclusive narrative plot. As a rule neither future nor present are treated explicitly in this kind of historical novel, but a certain vision of the future can be deduced as a kind of return to the primordial home of modern society (understood as the Republic), seen as a more genuinely democratic socio-political organization that might remedy the flaws of the pseudo-democratic transition. As a representative of this mode we might mention *Inés y la alegría* (Inés and the Joy) by Almudena Grandes (Grandes, 2010). In this novel the difference between the two Spains is materialized and ontologized in the young upperclass republican woman, Inés, and her fascist brother. Inés lives a protected life until the outbreak of the civil war, but when she is left alone by accident in the besieged Madrid, she becomes aware of her need for independence and recognizes that only the Republic can offer her that. She becomes a communist, she is jailed after the war, and she participates as a volunteer in the republican invasion of the Valley of Arán in October 1946, the episode that forms the central story of the book. In the army of volunteers she meets wonderful, loving people, while the mean fascist brother is held in the background, together with his evil-minded fascist collaborators.

The novels of the second mode, which I term reconstructive, often depict two temporal diegetic planes: the story of the past and also the story of the present as the vantage point from which the story of the past is being told. In these novels the past is conceived of as the result of a transgenerational memory process; the world of the past is consequently represented as a reconstruction, as the result of an investigation of this past in the present. The past, that is to say, does not exist in its own right, but appears as a result of a reconstruction in the present. The majority of these novels describe the war as a catastrophe, and recognize the transition as a success inasmuch as it was characterized by a necessary political compromise. Most novels of this mode

do not conceive of the transition as characterized by a 'Pact of Oblivion'; rather, they seem to understand the plea for amnesty and the subsequent absence of testimony to the sufferings of the victims as a deliberate and mature act by the majority of the population in order to secure the transition process (Juliá, 2005; Molinero, 2010). Nevertheless, the authors who apply this mode find it necessary to engage in a critical revision of the past in order not only to overcome the political and ideological polarization of contemporary Spanish society, but also to re-read history and to acknowledge the flaws and virtues on both sides in the name of reconciliation. They intend, as it were, to use artistic creation to integrate historical memory with modern citizenship. Representative novels might be *Soldados de Salamina* (Soldiers of Salamis) or *La anatomía de un instante* (The Anatomy of a Moment) (Cercas, 2001; Cercas, 2009) and *La noche de los tiempos* (The Night of Times) (Muñoz Molina, 2009)[2]. In this kind of literary discourse, the future might be seen as a dialogical reflection on the historical past from the vantage-point of the present, with the intention of contributing to the perfection of the democratic mechanism.

The novels of my third, *challenging* mode also display the two temporal planes of the past and the present, but the past is never conceived of as a coherent world parallel in time to the present, from whose vantage point it is being recounted. Here the discourse is predominantly auto-referential, ironical, inconclusive and fragmentary, corresponding to what Svetlana Boym would characterize as reflective nostalgia. The challenging mode is developed by a politically re-engaged literary discourse, which agrees with the mimetic mode in critiquing the deficiencies of the transition period, but disagrees with that mode's presentation of the historical past as a contemporary alternative. Here the utopias of the past belong to the past, and the contemporary political commitment must engage with contemporary society. It is my hypothesis that this literary discourse can be seen as the appearance in Spain of a kind of post-postmodernist tendency in art and literature (Vermeulen and van den Akker, 2010, Bourriaud, Champeau, Carcelén, Tyras, and Valls, 2011). As obvious representatives of this mode we might mention *El vano ayer* (Yesterday in

[2] The case of Muñoz Molinas novel is different because the diegetic plane of the present only is made explicit by a limited number of small comments from the narrator, in which he is making reference to the activities of inventing and writing the novel. I believe, nevertheless, that the novel does belong to this mode because in my view, Muñoz Molina deliberately takes advantage of the reading public's being familiar with the reconstructive mode in the moment of publication (2009), a fact that allows him to only indicate the diegetic plane of the present in order to activate the reader's knowledge of the genre.

vain) and *Otra maldita novella sobre la Guerra civil* (Another damned novel about the civil war) by Isaac Rosa (Rosa, 2004 and 2007) and in a somewhat different sense *Mala gente que camina* (Bad people walking) and *Operación Gladio* (Operation Gladio) by Benjamín Prado (Prado, 2006and 2011). In these novels the future necessarily implies a break with the pseudo-democratic transition period, because this period is considered to have been a continuation of the social relationships that characterized Spain under Franco's regime. According to Rosa and Prado, however, the alternative to the contemporary political system is not represented by the virtues of the past; instead, they seek to show how contemporary Spanish society continues to produce the same blindness to the violation of human rights as in the past, and they portray the circumstances and consequences of engaging in the struggle for these universal values today. They try to create voices that make audible the suffering that until now has been invisible; and they intend us to understand how this invisibility is the legitimate successor to the moral guilt accruing to the silent majority that accepted the crimes of the past.

b. The Chronotope of the Present Past

I propose to understand the novels belonging to the second and third novelistic modes as the generic literary representation of affiliative postmemory, i.e. the succeeding generations' memory of traumatic experiences affiliated through the circulation of texts in the broadest sense (both oral testimony and written texts like diaries, photos, documents and objects of all kind). If we apply Michael Bakhtin's concept of the 'chronotope' to these two temporal parts of the novel[3] like a sort of composite chronotope of the present past, it is my hypothesis that the contemporary novel in the most successful cases obliges the reader to engage in a critical revision of his or her own ideological horizon of historical expectations through a dialogical relation between these two parts. A second hypothesis is that the reader's horizon of

[3] Bakhtin developed his concept of the chronotope as a denomination of the way in which a narrative combines time and space in a way specific for the genre to which it adheres (M. Bachtin, 1981). The chronotope is thus on the one hand necessary for the construction of the fictional space and the incarnation of the fictitious characters, and on the other hand a genre-specific item. In the case of the novels of postmemory, we will have to speak about a sort of composite chronotope, combining one genre-specific chronotope of war tales of the past with another genre-specific chronotope of detective stories and / or auto-referential narrative of the process of creative writing.

historical expectations is guided by certain narrative schematic templates, and that the reader's critical revision of his or her expectations therefore is due to the novels' deconstruction of the narrative templates lying behind.

I borrow the notion of the narrative schematic template from James Wertsch, according to whom cultures unconsciously tend to apply a certain schematic narrative template to the recollection of important historical events over time (J. Wertsch, 2002:88). Analyzing the historical narratives of Russia and the Soviet Union, Wertsch proposes *the triumph over the alien forces* as a schematic template that represents the continuity of culture in the face of radical political and ideological changes from one historical period to another (J. Wertsch, 2002:93).

As Wertsch himself says, this narrative template is not exclusively Russian: on the contrary, it can be found in historical settings almost everywhere. What is characteristic of Russian culture, though, is that the Russians tend to use it to recount almost all decisive historical events from all eras of the nation's history.

If we look for a similar grand narrative for the history of Spain, I think that the story of the two Spains might be understood as such a schematic template (Hansen 2012).

According to the Spanish historian Santos Juliá, the narrative of the two Spains was invented in intellectual circles in the early nineteenth century in order to tell the story of the fall of the nation from empire in the Renaissance period to the loss of its colonies and marginalization in a European context in the nineteenth century (Juliá, 2004: introduction). While this template has been severely criticized by historians, who have questioned its capacity to capture various historical forces in their specific contexts, it has nevertheless been used over the centuries as a schematic template in the construction of a popular cultural memory (Luengo, 2004:72-75; Juliá, 2004). If we were to give this story a form comparable to the four bullets used by Wertsch to give shape to the Russian schematic template, it might look like this:[4]

1. An initial situation of relative stability is characterized by tension between two ideological tendencies, of which one is dominant and the other is subsidiary.
2. A change occurs in the power relation between the two forces, which gives privilege to the previously subsidiary tendency.

[4] This model has previously been presented in Spanish, in a slightly different form in Hansen (In press a) and in a revised, identical form in Hansen (In press b).

3. A trial of strength follows between the two forces. This struggle implies great suffering for the people of Spain, and alien forces are often seen as collaborating with one or the other tendency.
4. The trial of strength ends with the victory of the formerly dominant tendency and the re-establishment of relative stability.

Insofar as it might be considered to constitute the cultural DNA of a community, such a template might be expected to emphasize what unites it. The narrative of the two Spains, in contrast, gives priority to the description of what divides: the religious, ideological, political or regional differences within the Spanish state. (Constructivist approaches to cultural identity formation might find this observation interesting, in the light of Spain's eternal discussion of whether the concepts of nation and national identity are to be applied to the Spanish state or to the regional autonomies.) However, although this schematic template repeats itself in the narratives of Spanish cultural memory, each period and each author applies it differently. This being so, it is possible to identify some variants that are more disseminated and more representative of a specific historical moment than others (Hansen, 2012). If we concentrate on a specific time-period like the period from the end of the civil war until today, we can identify a smaller number of differing versions. In the immediate post-war period and up to the early 1950s, the dominant literary discourse, ideologically ultra-right-wing and revanchist in its orientation, used the template as a means to tell the story of a national Catholic crusade against social chaos and the Bolshevist threat. Later, the cultural discourses of the 1950s and early 1960s followed the same template in order to portray the civil war in the image of the myth of Cain and Abel as a way to argue for shared responsibility for the war (Bernecker, 2011:82). Meanwhile, international discourses followed two divergent interpretations: official historiography saw the Spanish civil war as the first rehearsal of the Second World war, i.e. as a fight between fascism and democracy; while the anti-authoritarian new left after 1968 focussed on the narrative of the Communist Party's betrayal of the social revolution. Both interpretations were subsequently adopted as variations on the same template by a Spanish audience in the post-Franco era: the subject positions were switched from one discourse to another, but the schematic template remained more or less the same. As many contemporary novels engage in dialogue with one or the other of these variants, we might conclude that they form part of the same endeavor: the deconstruction of the template itself.

The deconstruction of the template of the two Spains consists basically in a diversification or complication of the simplistic division of the characters into heroes and villains, victims and executioners. A means often applied in order to achieve this is the use of a multi-perspectival narrative focus (Hansen, 2011). This multi-perspectival focus on the past does not mean that the novels in question fail to recognize the sufferings of the victims, but as the suffering in and of itself is not seen to make the victim noble and free of guilt (Todorov, 2003:166) and there is no DNA specific to murderers (Todorov, 2009:453), the distinction between victims and perpetrators might be seen to change in moving from one situation or perspective to another. According to Todorov, the recalling of the past in public life needs to go through a process of transformation, whereby the particular cases are transformed and mediated by general ethical maxims (Todorov, 2003:173); memory discourses need in general to break the easy Manichean distinction between the forces of good and evil in order to be able to contribute to a process of reconciliation in countries with a violent and traumatic past (Todorov, 2009:457). From this perspective, it can be seen that many contemporary Spanish novels, in this moment of intense political polarization and crisis, are trying to question the reproduction of the dichotomous gaze upon the past which has dominated for so many years. Let us give two examples.

The novel *La mitad del alma* (One half of my soul*)* by the Catalan female author Carme Riera was published in 2003, and belongs to what we have characterized as the reconstructive mode. The protagonist and first-person narrator of the novel is herself a Catalan female author named C., whose tale begins when an unknown man hands over a portfolio of documents about her mother, who died in an accident when the narrator was only a child. As the documents seem to indicate that her mother had a much more complex life and identity than the daughter had ever imagined, the narrator's curiosity is aroused. While she had supposed that her dead parents were a well-known establishment couple belonging to the upper class of the Francoist regime, the narrator's investigations indicate that her real father might be her mother's French lover—possibly Albert Camus himself—and also that the mother may have been in the secret anti-republican resistance. And maybe – just maybe – she was a double agent, informing on the resistance to the regime. Here the easy distinction between victors and losers becomes blurred in the labyrinths of the mother's various possible life-stories: as mother and housewife belonging to the Francoist regime, as secret agent of the resistance movement, and as double agent of the intelligence service. The narrator has no firm/certain knowledge of her mother's life, and as she teases out in her

imagination the ways in which the various traces she finds might add up to a coherent life-story, the book which the reader holds in hers or his hands takes form. The autofictional similarities between the empirical author and the narrator give the text such an authentic aura that many readers, according to the author, have assumed that the novel is an autobiographical document (Riera, 2012:269).

The narrator does not attain any secure knowledge about her mother's political identity or fate or about who her father really was, and this might be read as the novel's ethical stance: that memories form an essential part of our personal and cultural identity because they explain how we became who we are, and why; but that we can never have absolute certainty about this past. It is up to the individual to make up the interpretation of his or her own story and identity. This stance also hints at the interpretation of the title, because the narrator only gets to know one half of her own family's story; while History is always open for interpretation, it is never possible to acquire absolute certainty.

The other novel, *Mala gente que camina* (Bad People Walking) was published in 2006 and belongs to what we have characterized as the challenging mode. The novel, written by the young Spanish author Benjamin Prado, also engages in a deconstruction of the black-and-white picture of the post-war period, but in a more subtle and ironical way, as he combines this multi-perspectival view with the first-person narrator's very explicit and direct critique both of the past and of contemporary Spanish society. The narrator is a high-school teacher and would-be university professor and literary scholar, who falls in love with the mother of one of his pupils. In their conversations, she tells him about her mother-in-law, a woman called Dolores Serma, who in the early 1960s published a long-forgotten novel entitled *Óxido*. As a way of approaching the mother, the narrator begins an investigation of the life and afterlife of this novel and of Dolores Serma herself, who turns out to be alive, but severely affected by Alzheimer's disease. When the narrator uncovers a paradox in the old lady's story, he becomes personally engaged in the story. The character Dolores Serma, in the novel known as a vehement supporter of the Francoist regime all her life, was enrolled in the Sección Feminina of the Falange Española and worked for many years as personal assistant to the historical figure Mercedes Bachiller, wife of one of the fiercest fascists of post-war Spain, Onesimo Redondo. The narrator discovers, however, that in the 1940s she was a close friend of the real author Carmen Laforet, and that they were working side by side when Laforet wrote her famous novel *Nada*, which won the prestigious Nadal Prize in 1945 and is credited with beginning

the social-realist literary movement in Spain in most textbooks on literary history. The novel that Dolores Serma was writing at the same time was published only 20 years later. And when the narrator finally gets his hands on the original manuscript of *Óxido*, he finds out that it reveals, in handwriting written between the lines of the manuscript, the systematic abduction of newborn babies from their republican mothers, certified by the regime and carried out by Catholic nuns.

Dolores Serma's motive for revealing this secret is the theft of her own sister's child while she was in prison; when the sister dies from her injuries in prison, Dolores Serma finds a way to trace the child and adopt it as her own. The conservative and conformist husband of the narrator's secret lover then turns out himself to be a victim of the Francoist regime. In this way the novel shows, on the one hand, how supporters of the political Right can also be victims in contemporary society, and how, on the other hand, resistance to the regime was nurtured from within the very heart of the regime itself. In this way the story contributes to the deconstruction of the idea of Spain as constituted by two opposed parts of the population. But, typically for this mode, the theme of the two Spains is explicitly approached with an ironical wink. In a passage where the narrator's lover is talking about her husband, she says that although he politically belongs to the Right, he is a democrat and "he never has been a supporter of bringing up the theme of the civil war and the two Spains" (Prado, 217). This prompts the narrator to think the following:

> "The same as with all the Fascists", I thought. It's understandable. Why should they dig up what has been buried so well by the Amnesty Law of 1977, where "all the crimes of rebellion and sedition, the same as the crimes and offences committed on order to motivate it, considered in the Code of Military Justice" were absolved (Ibid. My translation).[5]

The jealous and somewhat infantile reaction of the narrator is evidently triggered by his relationship with the woman, a fact that cannot but create a certain ironical distancing of the narrator's character in the process of reading. And this distance is supported by the language of the supposed internal dialogue. Although the first set of quotation marks flags only the first sentence

[5] The original Spanish text reads: "Lo mismo que todos los fachas", pensé. Es comprensible. ¿Para qué iban a desenterrar lo que tan bien enterrado dejó la Ley de Amnestía de 1977, en la que quedaban absueltos "todos los delitos de rebelión y sedición, así como los delitos y faltas cometidos con ocasión o motivo de ellos, tipificados en el Código de Justicia Militar?"

as direct thought, the following discourse is only understandable as internal thought as well, until the next set of quotation marks, where we are evidently witnessing a slide of enunciation in the appearance of the voice of an implied author, the very same entity that arranged for the ironical distance between reader and narrator in the beginning of the paragraph. It is also the implied author who in what follows is responsible for a long enumeration of Spanish memory sites known to be locations for mass graves of victims of the Francoist repression during and after the civil war. It is therefore rather difficult to determine whether it is the voice of the narrator or that of the implied author that ends the long internal monologue with the following reflection:

> Now I hear somebody say: and what about the killings that the Communists perpetrated at Paracuellos del Jarama? Well, another unjustifiable atrocity, one of those committed when the assaulted try to respond with the same weapons as the aggressors. As if one bullet could be the opposite of another (Ibid. My translation).[6]

There is no doubt whatsoever about who are the perpetrators and who are the victims in *Mala gente que camina*, and in this sense the novel is not ambiguous. The protagonist narrator presents a severe critique both of the authoritarian regime of the past and of the pseudo-democratic society of the present, but the ironical distance created between narrator and reader opens up a space that allows for a polyphonic dialogue where the narrator is discussing with his own mother. The perspective of the mother – a woman who always knew how to find her own way both during and since the dictatorship, and who has no interest in digging up the unpleasant past – gives perspective to the critical and sometimes facile attitude of the son:

- (...) if you reduce everything to a question of angels and devils, you cannot understand a thing. Things aren't that easy.
- OK, if you wanna hear the truth, after having read hundreds of books, (...) I have come to the opposite conclusion, and I think that it's very easy: in this country there were Fascists and Democrats. Nothing more. (...) You see: people who believed in ballot boxes, and people who believed in guns.

[6] The original Spanish text reads: "Ya oigo algunos dicen: ¿y la matanza que llevaron a cabo los comunistas en Paracuellos del Jarama? Pues otra atrocidad injustificable, de esas que los agredidos cometen cuando intentan responder con sus mismas armas a los agresores. Como si una bala pudiera ser lo contrario de otra bala."

- Yes, but they were on both sides, and that's what you do not want to accept.
- Do you wanna accept that the Republic was elected by the citizens and Franco by the tanks? (Prados, 265, My translation).[7]

The voice of the mother, according to the empirical author of the novel, is created in imitation of the voice of his own mother, and with her the voice of all Spaniards who, after the death of Franco, only wanted to forget the repression and atrocities committed by the regime in order to concentrate on the agenda of economic growth and European integration (Friera 2009). By dialogizing the all-too-confident point of view of the narrator, which in many ways resembles that of the implied author, the text opens up a space for the reader to take a stance of his own.

c. The Use of Docufiction and Autofiction

In the major part of contemporary novels on the civil war and the post-war repression it is possible to detect an ambition that resembles what Carme Riera expressed so emblematically when she in *La mitad del alma* quoted the inscription on Walter Benjamin's tombstone in Port Bou: "It is a much harder work to honour the memory of the anonymous, than that of the famous. The construction of history should dedicate itself to the memory of those without voice" (Riera, 2004. My translation).[8] If we apply this epigraph to the affiliative postmemory novel of the present past, it would explain the search for authenticity that we find at work in the representation of the past in these novels. The authenticity is like a stamp, an indexical mark of the past which appears in the present and makes us aware of the fact that the story of the past is no invention, but belongs to the same ontological world that we, the readers, inhabit. The use of historical persons, events and memory sites are widely used as plot components in order to create this effect, as well as other docufictional

[7] The original Spanish text reads: (...) si lo reduces todo a una cuestión de ángeles y demonios, no comprenderás nada. Las cosas no son tan sencillas. Pues, si quieres que te diga la verdad, después de cientos de libros,..., yo he llegado justo a la conclusión contraria, y me parece que las cosas con sencillísimas: aquí hubo fascistas y demócratas. Nada más. ... Ya lo ves: gente que creía en las urnas y gente que creía en las pistolas. Ya, pero los había de las dos clases en ambos bandos, y eso es lo que tu no quieres aceptar. ¿Aceptas tú que la República la habían elegido los ciudadanos y a Franco lo eligieron los tanques?

[8] The original Spanish text reads: "Es un trabajo mucho más arduo honrar la memoria de los seres anónimos que la de las personas célebres. La construcción histórica debe consagrarse a la memoria de los que no tienen voz".

means like the inclusion of original photos, facsimiles of historical documents etc. (Tschilschke and Schmelzer, 2010). An example of docufiction in this sense could be the reproduction of a handwritten page from Sánchez Maza's diary in Javier Cercas' novel *Soldados de Salamina* (Cercas, 2001).

In this novel, the first-person narrator, named Javier Cercas like the empirical author, tells how he learned about the historical person Rafael Sánchez Mazas, co-founder of the Falange Española in the 1930s and later minister in Franco's first government. He tells how he first heard about the story of how Sánchez Mazas escaped from under the nose of a republican firing squad in the last days of the civil war, and how he survived in the woods with the help of various republican and Catalan soldiers and civilians. The reproduction of the page from the diary Sánchez Mazas wrote during his hiding in the woods situates the chronotopic, fictitious universe within the ontological 'real' world, but contributes at the same time to transforming the 'pure past' of historigraphical writing into a present experience for the reader. If the rhetorical means of docufiction on the one hand produces the effect of historical authenticity, then the chronotopic imagination produces the opposite effect, of experienced present. And if the traditional historical novel, told in the third person and the past tense, represented the past as a stable entity with clear-cut relations between good and bad, between heroes and villains, the major part of the novels characterized by the chronotope of the present past conceive of the past as an entity with a present importance, i.e. something submitted to eternal interpretations from different points of view.

In her reading of the novel, María Corredera González states that "the most direct access to history is given by the testimonies of the witnesses, and it is their remembrances which have the power to bring the living memories of the past back into the present"(Corredera González, 2010:129. My translation).[9] This observation is important, not only for interpretation of this novel, but for most novels characterized by the chronotope of the present past. It is this capacity of the novelistic discourse to bring back to life the voices of the past that transforms the remote historical event into a living memory within the present. We understand by the concept 'voice' here that expression characteristic of a subject and determined by his or her circumstantial and cultural context, i.e. as an actualization of a perspective on the world, in Bachtin's sense (Mey, 2000: 378 ff.;M. Bachtin, 1981: 332 ff.). This allows us

[9] The original Spanish text reads: "son los testimonios de los testigos el acceso más directo a la historia, y es la memoria de éstos la que tiene el poder de traer al presente recuerdos vivos del pasado".

to understand the recuperation of the voices of the past as a means by which the narrator can rescue the past, if not as something alive in the present, then at least as a present postmemory of the past.

In *Soldados de Salamina* the historical memory sites and memorials included in the novel do not prompt any kind of remembrance or emotional reaction in the narrator, because he did not take part in the events commemorated. At one moment the narrator says indifferently: "I came to a cross of stone which commemorated the massacre (…) I stayed for a while; I didn't feel a thing. Then I went away (Cercas, 2001: 70-71. My translation).[10] And the same thing happens with the buildings:

> Sixty years ago they would no doubt have been three very different houses [houses in the Catalan village of Cornellà de Terri which were homes to three of the republican civilians who helped Sánchez Masas survive: HLH], but time had made them the same, and their general look of abandonment, of stone skeletons between whose naked ribs the wind howls in the autumn afternoons, did not hold any suggestion of who had once lived in them (Cercas, 71. My translation).[11]

From the perspective of the narrator, time has wiped out all individuality of the buildings, all signs of human life. In contrast, when he interviews the witnesses who are still alive, the narrator gets the opposite impression, and focusses on the individual personalities: "The three of them were so different that the only thing that united them was that they survived" (ibid., 72. My translation)[12]. Without their voices, the memory sites do not speak and we are unable to listen to their stories. It is only through the voices, the actual voices of the witnesses as well as the revival of the dead voices of the historical documents, that the space regains its place in time, its chronotopical plenitude, which allows it to emerge as a living discourse in the present.

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[10] The original Spanish text reads: "Llegué hasta una cruz de piedra que conmemoraba la masacra… me quedé un rato; no sentí nada. Luego me fui".

[11] The original Spanish text reads: Sesenta años atrás habrían sido sin duda tres casas muy distintas, pero el tiempo las había igualado, y su aire común de desamparo, de esqueletos en piedra entre cuyos costillares descarnados gime el viento en las tardes de otoño, no contenía una sola sugestión de que alguien, alguna vez, hubiera vivido en ellas.

[12] The original Spanish text reads: "Los tres eran tan diversos que lo único que a mis ojos los unía era su condición de supervivientes".

d. Metafiction as Mimesis of Cultural Remembrance

The last characteristic of the postmemory novel of the present past that I will examine is the way in which the novels engage in an auto-referential reflection of the social processes of cultural memory construction. I here follow a hypothesis according to which the contemporary Spanish memory novel has undergone a development between the 1980s and early 1990s and the millennium. In the 1980s and early 1990s the memory novel on the civil war was characterized by making mimesis of the individual memory processes; an emblematic representative is for instance *El jinete- polaco* (The Polish Rider) by Antonio Muñoz Molina (Muñoz Molina, 1991). Since the change of the millennium, it has been characterized by making mimesis of the social processes of cultural memory construction (Santana, 2011; Santamaría Colmenero, 2012).

Alaida Assmann has proposed a fruitful distinction between two complementary modes of cultural memory: on the one hand we have the storage memory, where information about the past is safeguarded in a passive way like an archive; on the other hand we have what she calls functional memory, i.e. cultural memory that is being actively produced, circulated and appropriated in social processes (Assmann, A, 2008:119ff). The storage memory is immense, and the question of which parts of the archive are activated in the functional memory is under normal conditions determined by tradition, in the form of a canon. Understood in this way, cultural memory is a conservative force that contributes to the reproduction of the canon: a kind of filter that assures the relation between remembrance and forgetting among the infinite possible memories contained in the archive. In certain circumstances, however, new information can be a source of renewal for the functional memory and thus an inspiration for revision of the canon, and this new information might even delegitimize the hegemonic functional memory. For the archive to play that role, an agent is required with a case, who knows how to find and interpret the remains of the past, like a detective reading the scene of a crime.

In most of the novels belonging to the chronotope of the present past, the protagonists are characterized by some kind of existential doubt and ideological disillusion. In this sense, one might say that they correspond to the description of the present as a period of post-politics, of decline of the grand narratives, where the ideological utopias of high modernity (the present futures) have been substituted by an indiscriminate and nostalgic interest in the past, described by Andreas Huyssen as the present past (Huyssen, 2003). In

these novels the characters do not feel the breakdown of the utopian narratives as an individual, creative liberation, but rather as a loss of ideological orientation, of hope for the future in a country where politics has become a question of the bureaucratic administration of the interests of multinational companies. The protagonists suffer from a personal crisis, in many cases ideological, existential and creative at the same time, and they are not aware of the importance of the negative consequences of the past in their own lives in the present. As the narrator in *Los soldados de Salamina* puts it several times, the civil war is for him at a distance comparable in time to the battle of Salamis between the Greek city-states and the Persian empire in 480 BCE. The characters therefore engage in a search for solutions to the problems they are experiencing in the present (identity problems, creative problems, professional problems etc.), which in many cases lead them to another kind of problem, buried in the past. And in this way the history that seemed in the beginning to be remote and insignificant turns out to be a past full of consequences for their own lives in the present.

The spaces through which the protagonists move in the present are institutions and places typical for the active search of information: the library, various kinds of archives, the attic with an old trunk full of stuff, the coffee-table interview etc. The characters in search of forgotten (his)stories have to consult these archives, to dig into the private correspondence of the dead, to examine diaries and private notebooks, to interview the last living witnesses, and they have to make contact with other investigators and key persons in order to compose their story of the past. And least but not last, they produce and circulate texts about the past as fast as they find the information. In other words, although they take to the quest reluctantly in the beginning, slowly they take on the role of agents taking up the challenge to revise the functional memory, and in the process they make a thorough description of how this is being done.

The parallel mentioned above between the investigator of the archive and the detective might in part explain why the detective genre has had so much influence in the memory novel in recent years (Martínez Rubio, 2012). The parallel is obvious as long as we also keep in mind the differences: while the crime in the memory novel is to forget, and the objective for the protagonist is to 'dig up' the story of a forgotten individual or group of individuals in order to integrate the memory of this or these persons in present society, the criminal detective's job is to trace a given person in order to exclude him or her from society (Neuschäfer, 2006). These differences apart, the protagonists of contemporary memory novels resemble a composite of two archetypal

detective characters one belonging to the classical detective story—Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie—and the other to the hard-boiled genre—Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett(J. F. Colmeiro, 1994; Todorov, 1988). The protagonist of the contemporary memory novel resembles the classical hero in that his or hers job consists in the search for information about the past, (s)he is (re)constructing the past in the present and rarely himself engages in direct action. At the same time, however,(s)he resembles the hard-boiled hero inasmuch as (s)he is a dynamic and vulnerable subject, in the sense that the knowledge (s)he acquires about the past affects him or her in a personal and profound manner, because it allows him or her to reinterpret the present, and through this process of reinterpretation and re-evaluation, the character develops him- or herself as an ethical subject. And once the character has recognized and accepted this change, (s)he has acquired the necessary commitment for taking up the quest of the revision or delegitimation of the functional memory. In this sense the character of the detective genre becomes dialogized by the character in search of his own identity, as in the genre of the *bildungsroman* (Schouten, 2010).

Given that the commitment of the protagonist to find the 'truth' about the past is an integrated part of what constitutes the composite chronotope of the present past, it is noteworthy that the majority of these novels seem to handle the past with some kind of epistemological doubt. What is treated in these novels is not the memory of individuals, but the collective, social process of remembering of a multitude of individuals (Santana, 2011:101), and the information at the disposal of the protagonist about the past stems from a variety of sources of varying reliability and with differing opinions about what really happened. And this dialogical relation between subject and community, which imposes an epistemological condition of insecurity, is expressed in the novels by means of an auto-referential use of the imagination: the narrator explicitly speaks of the creative process of imagination as being, so to speak, *behind* the representation of the past. An example could be the way in which Carme Riera begins *La mitad del alma*:

> The woman who is about to get off the train (…) wears a crossed coat with broad laps (…)
>
> I don't know if the platform is full of people or if, on the contrary, there is not a soul, and although the circumstances are important – I wish there were a lot of people – I ask myself whether or not to take this detail into consideration (…)

> In this way, travelling towards Port Bou (…) I began the writing of this story (Riera, 2004:9-11. My translation).[13]

The narrator-protagonist knows that it will be impossible to reveal the ultimate truth about the past, because the past only exists in the present through her own fictitious telling; and it is this epistemological condition that inspires her in her search for authenticity and truthfulness in the representations of the past, in her own discourse as well as in that of the historical witnesses. But if it is not possible to certify any kind of final truth in the representation of the past, it is at least possible to communicate some kind of authentic, lived impression of how it is felt in the present to work the past. This, I think, is why so many of the novelists choose the autofictional format of telling. In the partial chronotope of the present, the autofictional play upon two different pragmatic pacts between author and reader (is this autobiography or is it fiction?) and the explicit metafictional reflections on the becoming of the text we are reading are corresponding to the aesthetic function of the voice in the partial chronotope of the past, mediating between documentary representation and fictitious dramatization.

CONCLUSION

Although the Spanish civil war ended in 1939, the dictatorial regime survived until General Franco's death in 1975, and the sufferings of the victims of the repression were kept in silence for several decades more. Since the turn of the millennium, the generation of the grandchildren has been engaged in a process of intense intergenerational postmemory transfer, driven by a commitment with the recuperation of the memory of the suffering of the ancestors. The very acts of writing, buying and reading novels dedicated to this topic can be considered acts of affiliative, intergenerational engagement, and I have therefore argued that the contemporary Spanish memory novel could be considered the generic literary representation of this affiliative postmemory transfer. Distinguishing between three different modes in these

[13] The original Spanish text reads:La mujer que está a punto de bajar del tren,… lleva un abrigo cruzado de solapas anchas (…). Ignoro si el andén está lleno o si, por el contrario, no hay un alma y, aunque la circunstancia sí tiene interés -¡ojalá hubiera mucha gente! – me pregunto si vale la pena tomar el detalle en consideración (…). Así, camino de Port Bou (…) empecé a escribir esta historia.

novels—the mimetic, the reconstructive and the challenging—I have also argued that the latter two are structured according to what I term the 'chronotope of the present past'. Through a dialogue between the two temporal parts of this composite chronotope, the novels perform a deconstruction of what I have called the narrative template of the two Spains. This narrative template is peculiar in that, contrary to expectation, it gives priority to the description of what divides the country: the religious, ideological, political or regional differences of the Spanish state. As James Wertsch considers the schematic narrative template a kind of cultural DNA of a given nation, it might be a problem for the process of reconciliation and social cohesion in Spain, if this template is allowed to continue to dominate the cultural self-reflection of the country. It is therefore noteworthy that a considerable proportion of contemporary Spanish novels in a moment of intense political polarization and crisis are questioning the reproduction of the dichotomous gaze upon the past which has dominated for so many years.

Through their specific poetics the novels try on the one hand to authorize the historical description as authentic or 'true', and on the other hand to make the reader imagine how it felt to live these experiences, and thereby to identify with the depicted persons and understand the conflict from 'within'. It is in many cases the recovery of specific voices of the past that allows the narrators to rescue this past, if not as something alive in the present, then at least as a present postmemory of the past. It is only through the voices, the actual voices of the witnesses as well as the revival of the dead voices of the historical documents, that space regains its place in time, its chronotopical plenitude, which allows it to emerge as a living discourse in the present. In this sense, the inscription on Walter Benjamin's tombstone in Port Bou, quoted by Carme Riera, could be understood as the epigraph of the whole genre: "The construction of History should dedicate itself to the memory of those without voice".

The authenticity is like a stamp, an indexical mark of the past appearing in the present, which makes us aware of the fact that the story of the past is no invention, but belongs to the same ontological world as we, the readers, inhabit. Historical persons, events and memory sites are frequently used as plot components in order to create this effect, together with other docufictional means like the inclusion of original photos, facsimiles of historical documents etc. But even as the narrator-protagonist knows that it will not be possible to reveal the ultimate truth about the past, because the past only exists in the present through her own fictitious telling, it is at least possible to communicate some kind of an authentic, lived impression of how the present can be

experienced within the present; and this is why so many contemporary novelists choose the autofictional format of telling.

The deconstruction of the template of the two Spains in the novels basically consists of a diversification or complication of the simplistic division of the characters into heroes and villains, victims and executioners; and the means often applied to achieve this is the use of a multi-perspectival narrative focus and the ethical development of the protagonist. At the beginning of the stories, most of the protagonists are suffering from a loss of ideological orientation, and they have no hope for the future. These protagonists are experiencing a personal crisis, in many cases ideological, existential and creative at the same time, and they are not aware of the importance of the negative consequences exercised by the past over the present. But as they become entangled in the investigation of the past, they slowly become aware of the importance of this past for their present lives and for their visions of the future. Through the search for the forgotten (his)stories, the protagonists play out the whole register of practices that characterize the social construction of cultural memory, and they themselves incarnate the role of agents capable of revising the functional memory. And during this process they reflect autoreferentially upon how this is being done. This is the sense in which the contemporary Spanish memory novel developed between the 1980s and early 1990s and the turn of the millennium. Whereas the civil war novel of the 1980s and early 1990s was characterized by making mimesis of individual memory processes, since the turn of the millennium the contemporary novel has been characterized by this mimesis of the social processes of cultural memory construction. In this sense, the contemporary memory novel offers itself as a space for society's reflection and self-reflection upon the processes of cultural memory and identity construction.

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