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MAURICIO D. AGUILERA LINDE

Chapter 7. Martha Gellhorn (1908–1998) Objectivity Revealed: Propaganda and the Fifth Dimension in Martha Gellhorn's Spanish Civil War Reportage

Brief biography

- 1908 November 8. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, the daughter of Edna, an active suffragist, and George, a German-born gynaecologist.
- 1926 Enrolls in Bryn Mawr College (Philadelphia) but soon drops out to start working as a journalist at *The New Republic*.
- 1930 Travels to France and stays in Paris for two years. Meets Bertrand de Jouvenel, the editor of *La Voix* and political economist. Joins the Pacifist Movement. Begins a relationship with Bertrand, a married man whose wife refuses to give him a divorce.
- 1934 Publishes *What Mad Pursuit*, her first novel. Hired by Harry Hopkins, director of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) as a field investigator to report on health, nutrition and housing of people on relief. Travels around the textile mill towns of North Carolina and New England.
- 1935 Fired after being accused by the FBI of promoting protest and rebellion among workers against the FERA office. Meets H.G. Wells, a married man and a practitioner of free love, becomes his guest in London from early June of the following year.
- 1936 Publishes *The Trouble I've Seen* with a laudatory preface by H.G. Wells. The four stories that make up the book recount her experiences as a FERA reporter. In December she goes on vacation with her family in Key West, Florida, and meets Hemingway, who had already signed a contract with NANA (North

- American Newspaper Alliance) to cover the Spanish Civil War. Bertrand de Jouvenel is sent to Nationalist Spain as the correspondent for *Paris-Soir*, interviewing Queipo de Llano and reporting the Rebels' offensive in Badajoz.
- 1937 March 30. Arrives in Madrid with a letter from *Collier's* identifying her as its correspondent. In May 1937 she returns to the US to support 'La Causa' by helping in the distribution of *The Spanish Earth*. On August 19 she leaves for Spain again.
- 1938 January. Embarks on a 22-lecture tour on the urgent necessity to defend the Spanish Republic. By the end of March she is back in Spain. On April 15 she leaves Barcelona and travels to Paris.
- 1939 Travels to Finland to cover the Nazi air-raid on Helsinki, and later to Czechoslovakia.
- 1940 Publishes *A Stricken Field*, a novel that narrates, through the voice of Mary Douglas, a war correspondent, the plight of the minorities (Jews, Socialists) after Hitler's invasion of Sudentenland. On November 12 she marries Hemingway. They will divorce five years later.
- 1940–1941 Travels to China with Hemingway as a correspondent for *Collier's* to cover the conflict with Japan. *The Heart of Another*, her second volume of short stories, is published.
- 1944 Hemingway becomes the leading correspondent for *Collier's*, relegating Gellhorn to a secondary position. By impersonating a stretcher-bearer, she sneaks onto the ship as a stowaway and becomes the only woman to witness the Normandy landings on D-day (June 6).
- 1945 May. Visits Dachau, the 'model' SS camp, set up in 1933, and sees the Dantesque piles of dead bodies of Jewish prisoners. Writes one of her most famous reports, 'Dachau: Experimental Murder', for *Collier's* (June 23).
- 1948 *Point of No Return*, renamed as *The Wine of Astonishment*, is published. The novel deals with two American soldiers at the Battle of the Bulge.
- 1949 Adopts an Italian-born boy, Sandy.
- 1954 Marries T.S. Matthews, the managing editor of *Time*, divorcing him in 1963.

- 1958 Receives the O. Henry Award.
- 1959 *The Face of War*, a collection of her war correspondence, is published.
- 1961 Discovers Africa, a continent she will visit on countless occasions. Seven years later she builds a house near Lake Navaisha, Kenya.
- 1966 Goes to Vietnam as correspondent for *The Guardian*.
- 1967 Adopts a pro-Israel stance in the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- 1978 *Travels with Myself and Another*, a collection of memoirs on her travels with U.C. (Unwanted Companion, her nickname for Hemingway), is published.
- 1980s Covers the Civil War in El Salvador.
- 1988 Is attacked and raped by a man near Mombasa. Publication of *The View from the Ground*, her second collection of war correspondence.
- 1989 Covers the US invasion of Panama.
- 1990s Loses most of her sight following cataract surgery.
- 1998 February 16. Commits suicide in London by taking cyanide.
- 1999 'Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism' is established.

'That is what we are supposed to do when we are at our best —make it all up— but make it up so truly that later it will happen that way.' (Hemingway, Letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald, May 28, 1934, *Selected Letters* 407)

In addition to 'Zoo in Madrid' and 'A Sense of Direction', two short stories which appeared in *The Heart of Another* (1941), Martha Gellhorn contributed to changing American public opinion about the Spanish Civil War by publishing five articles between July 17, 1937 and April 2, 1938. 'The Third Winter', written sometime in November 1938, 'spiked' by *Colliers* but eventually included in *The Face of War* (1959), must also be included here. Although not directly related to the Spanish conflict, I will also refer to her first published journalistic article, 'Justice at Night' (August 1936). The essays, constructed, as Rollyson states, as short stories rather than classic reports, are the following:

1. 'Justice at Night'. *The Spectator* (Great Britain) and *Reader's Digest* (US) in August 1936.
2. 'Only the Shells Whine' (appeared as 'High Explosive for Everyone', Gellhorn's original title, in the *Face of War*). *Collier's*, July 17 1937.
3. 'Madrid to Morata'. *The New Yorker*, July 24 1937.
4. 'Exile'. *Scribner's Magazine*, September 1937.
5. 'Visit to the Wounded'. *Story*, October 1937.
6. 'Men without Medals'. *Collier's*, January 15 1938.
7. 'City at War' (appeared as 'The Besieged City' in *The Face of War*), April 2 1938.¹
8. 'The Third Winter', left unpublished in November 1938 and collected two decades later in *The Face of War*.

Gellhorn visited Spain during the Civil War on three different occasions:

1. On March 30 1937 she arrives in Madrid for the first time with 'a knapsack and approximately fifty dollars' (*The Face of War* 21) and a letter from Kyle Crichton of *Collier's Weekly* identifying her as its correspondent. Hemingway had sailed for France sometime in February with a contract signed with the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA).
2. In May 1937 she leaves for the United States, arriving in New York in June. She begins to support 'La Causa' actively and collaborates in the distribution of the documentary *The Spanish Earth*, directed by Joris Ivens and with music composed by Marc Blitzstein. Hemingway records the narration of the movie. She takes an active role by corresponding with Eleanor Roosevelt in the case of the 500 evacuated children waiting in St. Jean de Luz to come to America.

¹ It is interesting to note that, despite Gellhorn's acknowledgement that Charles Colebaugh, the editor of *Collier's*, never changed an iota in her articles, the titles of two of her dispatches were radically modified with an obvious ideological purpose. The almost poetic aura of the title 'Only the Shells Whine' significantly blurs the horror of the attack on civilians during the Nazi-sponsored air raids that was suggested in the original title. Similarly, the siege of Madrid indicated in Gellhorn's first title was changed by the editors into a city that was at war, even more palpable evidence that any sign of Franco's brutality was to be ignored.

3. On August 19, 1937 she sails for Spain on the *Normandie* and arrives in the country in early September. Hemingway had sailed on *The Champlain* only two days before. In January 1938 she sets off on a tour of lectures on Spain across the US. By February she had delivered 22 lectures in one month, angered by the US isolationist foreign policy.²
4. By the end of March 1938 she arrives in Paris and straightaway travels to Spain. On 15 April 1938 she leaves Barcelona with Hemingway. The Rebels have reached the Mediterranean, splitting Barcelona from Madrid and Valencia, and Cantabria has also been taken. In a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt dated April 25 1938, she describes the thousands of refugees, with 'a small bundle wrapped in a handkerchief' (*Selected Letters*, 59), who travel on foot to Barcelona in a desperate attempt to flee from Franco's artillery and retaliation. On November 5 Hemingway and Capa, the *Life* photographer, make a last visit to Spain. Martha remains, however, in Paris from the end of April to December 1938.

It is impossible to avoid associating Gellhorn's war correspondence with the emergent documentary movement (New Reportage) that became consolidated in America during the 1930s. In fact she worked in 1934 as a field reporter for the Federal Emergency Relief administration (FERA), traveling in the mill areas of Gaston County, North Carolina, and sending full reports of the harsh living conditions of the unemployed (malnutrition, pellagra, syphilis, prostitution and 'panhandling'...). Two years later, in 1936, she collected her experiences in *The Trouble I've Seen* (1936), a volume containing four short stories about these underprivileged Americans. Gellhorn adopts a rather similar working method when writing her war dispatches from the Spanish front: 'There is a curious similarity [she notes in a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt dated April

² The isolationist policy of the Roosevelt administration in the Spanish conflict was largely a myth. Herbert Feis, economic adviser to the US Embassy in Madrid during the 1940s, wrote that 'Franco was supplied with 1,866,000 metric tons of oil [from Standard Oil and Texaco] and 12,800 trucks from the US in the years 1936 to 1939 — on credit.' No oil was, however, sold to the Republicans, on the theory that the Loyalist cities were not safe enough (qtd. in Matthews 1973, 1979). Not surprisingly, Franco saw President Roosevelt's neutrality legislation as the act of 'a true gentleman'.

1938] between the endurance I saw in the unemployed (a kind of heroism in peacetime disaster) and this country [Spain], and I want to write it' (*Selected Letters*, 61). As McLoughlin argues (2007, 28), the transition to becoming a war correspondent is largely conditioned by her role as a 'worcorr' (work correspondent).

William Stott (1973) defines some of the ideological and/or stylistic features of the New Reportage:

1. The goal of the documentary is to recover and bring to light a neglected, forgotten human document that is to be found in the marginalized areas of society. Those who are truly the salt of the earth (the poor, the jobless, the African-Americans and the outlaw, among others) become the focus of the case-study approach undertaken by the reporter.

2. In addition to providing factual information based on empirical evidence (first-hand information, concrete details and objective facts that can only be gathered by a milieu study), a true documentary must implicate us emotionally. Only a subject that is properly felt and rationally understood can result in 'decent seeing' (Stott 1973, 12).

3. Sensory data must prevail over thoughts and ideas (statistics, official accounts, public statements). The confessional style of a first-hand witness ('I was there, I saw and I suffered'), i.e. a participant observer's narration which constantly addresses the reader, becomes the dominant technique of the reportage. In Gellhorn's words, '[t]he point of these articles is that they are true: they tell what *I saw*' (emphasis added). After the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, on her way to cover Stalin's aerial attack on Helsinki, she realizes that a reporter must become 'a walking tape-recorder with eyes' (*The Face of War* 56).

4. The ultimate goal is not to entertain, to pander to the audience, but to promote action. In other words, the reportage seeks to right wrongs, to challenge a social malady. Since Art has to be a weapon, propaganda is the inevitable aim of the true documentary.

In the 1959 Preface to *The Face of War*, Gellhorn, albeit disillusioned by the effectiveness of journalism as a moral weapon in the wake of two world wars, confesses to having believed in the role of the journalist, in Howard Good's words, as 'a crusader with a broken lance' 'routing the evildoers' (1986, 49), a tradition about which the American correspondent knew much thanks to the so-called muckraking journalism of her country: 'When I was young I believed in the perfectibility

of man, and in progress, and thought of journalism as a guiding light. If people were told the truth, if dishonor and injustice were clearly shown to them, they would at once demand the saving action, the punishment of wrong-doers, and care for the innocent' (*The Face of War* vii).

Kate McLoughlin (2007) has analyzed in detail the strategies Martha Gellhorn employs to construct the correspondent-persona of her war reports: the truth is a code based upon the first-person account, the verbatim transcription of the protagonists' lines and dialogues, the overloaded sensory information (aural, visual and olfactory perceptions), and the so-called normality trope: war is made comprehensible through constant, familiar comparisons with the prosaic actions that people cannot help performing in the midst of an air raid, for example, or with references to America by likening the landscape of Aragon to Idaho, or by comparing the distance from Madrid's Gran Via to the frontline as a 10-minute walk from the Empire State Building to the Met. Proximity becomes now a synonym of truth and, as Baker points out, the reporter's allegedly objective task simply consists of embracing 'the kinetographic fallacy' (Baker 1972, 64), i.e. the belief that one's writing is at its most authentic when one gives 'an absolute true description of what takes place in observed action' (Underwood 2003, 126). What Gellhorn calls her 'true writing' is nothing but a stylistic code and any pretension of objectivity and neutrality is ruled out as soon as she positions herself on the side of the Republic.

Stuart Hall (1981) argues in relation to news photographs that objectivity is a myth for the sole reason that the representations they produce (even more so in the case of war) are highly coded representations. Since photographs, unlike paintings and drawings that remain merely iconic, have an indexical nature, i.e. they have the quality of 'having-been-there', the myth of their truth is taken for granted. News photographs (but also war correspondence) disguise, however, the process of selection that defines them, imposing their meaning in an imperative manner that is barely debated or put to the test: 'Of course the choice of this moment or event against that, of this person rather than that, of this angle rather than any other, indeed the selection of this photographed incident to represent a whole complex chain of events and meanings is a highly ideological procedure' (Hall 1981, 241).

My contention is that Martha Gellhorn's Spanish Civil War correspondence is defined by a diehard allegiance to this objectivity code ('see for yourself, I was there') of the documentary movement but is also inevitably shaped by, firstly, a sifting method that leaves out or ignores a number of facts and meanings in order to highlight certain others, and secondly, an interest in discovering a series of connotative signs (mythical or biblical images), a 'fifth dimension', to use Hemingway's formula, in the undecipherable maelstrom of war, an aim which, obviously enough, also short-circuits any aspiration towards the ideal of objectivity.³ Gellhorn's articles, at least those published in *Collier's*, are also accompanied by photographs, most of them left unidentified,⁴ although it is not difficult to gather that some of them purchased by the news agencies (such as Star or Black) were taken by Robert Capa or David Seymour, 'Chim'. These photo-essays aim to provide visibility for the Spanish conflict, an element that operates as a weapon, for, as Paul Virilio (2004) claims, visibility is an instrument of combat, even more so in what has been defined 'as the most photogenic war anyone has even seen', the first war to be 'extensively and freely photographed for a mass audience' (Brothers 1993, 2). Gellhorn's texts – 'objectively' rendered and overcharged with a plethora of visual and aural images – provide the perfect commentary on the images of destruction: Madrid in flames after an air raid, a block of apartments with its front blown away, showing its interiors, families waiting in the subway for the Junker attack to be over, children playing in the city rubble, 'madrileños' looking up at the planes hovering over the city, the familiar faces of the American soldiers of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, among others.

3 Hemingway mentions for the first time the fourth and fifth dimension of writing in *Green Hills of Africa* (2015, 20). Frederic I. Carpenter (1954) is the first scholar to attempt to explain what the writer meant by this cryptic expression. Carpenter traces the term back to the mystic thinker P.D. Ouspensky's definition of the phrase in 1931 as 'a line of perpetual now', 'movement in the circle, repetition, recurrence' (281), an extrasensorial level that links the individual fragmented experiences with collective, mystical memories of other people, places and times so that man feels 'a sense of participation in the moral order of the world' (287).

4 Crediting an author in the 1930s was far from being commonplace. Capa had to wait until 1942 to see his name in print for the first time below his photographs in *Illustrated*, the British weekly. See *Slightly out of Focus*, 28–29.

Fredric Jameson (2009) has defined war as a collective phenomenon which cannot be represented and yet constantly generates narratives which oscillate between rational abstraction (an attempt to comprehend the wartime trauma) and sensorial stimulation (the spate of feelings associated with the horrors of the immediate moment). Gellhorn's attempts to encapsulate the specific nature of the Spanish conflict is mostly centred on the life of civilians who stuck to their daily routines despite knowing that they might die at any moment and on the role of the International Brigades, not as fighters but as idealists who believed they could prevent the emergence of 'a world whose bible [was] *Mein Kampf*' (*Selected Letters* 60). Like Hemingway, Gellhorn aims to make war (seen as a 'melee', not a romanticized business any more) part of the readers' experience by building up a narrative that persuades American opinion that the policy of non-intervention is wrong and that the conflict goes beyond a fight between Left and Right, because the future of Europe (and of Western civilization) is 'bound up in the outcome of the war' (*Selected Letters* 54). Much like her friend Robert Capa, Martha avoided, save for a couple of exceptions, the gory aspects and focused her chronicles on the solidarity of ordinary people living through extreme situations. 'War happens to people, one by one' (*The Face of War*, xiii): their everyday life in the turmoil of war, bound to be forgotten, needs to be saved from oblivion.

In 'Towards a Poetics of the Documentary' (1993), Michel Renou distinguishes four principles that intervene in the construction of a documentary:

1. The mimetic drive aiming to 'record, reveal and preserve' 'the imponderable movement of the real' (22). This is the so-called referential illusion. In the case of Gellhorn's articles, the objective narration generates the impression, strengthened by the accompanying photographs, that 'this happened', clouding the fact there is someone (ideologically positioned) making the assertion. Unlike Hemingway's correspondence, authorial defacement is less obvious in Gellhorn's dispatches.

2. The propagandist principle which seeks to persuade or promote a particular cause. Gellhorn's adherence to 'La Causa', the defence of the Second Republic against the insurgents, is made clear in the lecture she delivered at the II American Writers' Congress celebrated on 4–6 June 1936: 'A writer must also be a man of action. [...] If you survive such

action, what you have to say about it afterwards is the truth, is necessary and real, and it will last' (qtd. in McLoughlin, 38). Gellhorn's words not only disclose her conversion to the American doctrine of experience, as expressed by Philip Rahv years later⁵ (the depiction of life at its physical level must be the goal of a true artist) but her belief in the political nature of writing which must sound the tocsin against social injustices. As Leslie Fiedler contends (1971), the American documentary movement was characterized by the emergence of two opposing methods: one, which ultimately aspired to change (left-leaning radicals), and the other, which sought to reform (the adherents of the New Deal).

3. The analytical principle which investigates and queries the causes of the social reality presented. I will return to this principle when I discuss Lukács' ideas on the style of the New Reportage. In short, a reporter must not only observe but dissect the causes and consequences of the facts under observation.

4. The aesthetic function. Rhetorical devices are inevitably used in the representation of reality.

Needless to say, these principles cannot work separately. Truth becomes the result of a series of mimetic mechanisms of significance which entail a politically mobilized rhetoric and a rationale. Thus, the so-called objectivity of the documentary does not preclude the use of a series of 'imaginative' elements that harden into a well-defined political objective. Although it may sound paradoxical, the regime of truth expected in reportage combines a photographic rendition of reality and an attention to insignificant details along with a need to express it 'artistically'. This inclusion of a purely invented 'logical imagination' brings us to one of the earliest theorists (and practitioners) of the genre: Egon Erwin Kisch.

5 Philip Rahv (1940) sees Lambert Strether, the elderly New England gentleman of Henry James' *The Ambassadors*, as one of the earliest spokesmen for the new credo of experience that defines American writing. Far from the exploration of philosophical and/or intellectual ideas, Americans indulge in experience alone (live and write what is under your nose). Both the 'redskins and the palefaces', the two types of American writers, pursue the same principle, although through different methods.

Kisch's Commingling of Objectivity and Propaganda: The 'Logische Phantasie'

In a seminal essay published in 1918, 'Wesen des Reporters' ('The Nature of the Reporter'), Kisch introduces, as Keith Williams notes (1990, 92), the word 'Reportage' into German literature for the first time. The term, in vogue in the 1920s Soviet Union, will be amply used by the new writers whose aim was to collect material 'to supply Sergei Tretyakov's encyclopedic fact factory' (92), a work which was to become a source of objective reference whereby one could rediscover the 'life' and 'poetry' of objects (i.e. the biography of things revealing the relationships between individuals and social classes) in opposition to the 'narcotic fiction' and dreams of bourgeois literature.

Keith Williams provides an accurate summary of Kisch's reportorial method which can be broken down into the following tenets:

1. 'Objectivity' ('Sachlichkeit'): A reporter is 'an impersonal screen, a neutral observer letting the facts speak for themselves' (Williams 1990, 93). First-hand observance of factual materials is an obligatory condition.

2. Propaganda: A reporter 'must never eschew political tendency' (1990, 94). On the contrary, (s)he must favor agitation. Largely unlike the classic journalist who was asked to show no bias or point of view, (s)he must now write, according to Kisch, 'against the grain' of official, legitimate history 'by filling in the silences of the authorized version of events' (94) with the aim of destabilizing the hegemonic monolith of truth.

3. Attention to insignificant details: 'the prosaic and the mundane are newsworthy' (94). No topic is irrelevant. The world of the poor, or the working conditions of the city wage-earners, continue to be 'as unexplored as the sea bottom' (95). Places, events, things of apparently no important social dimension may disclose clues to larger historical processes.

4. 'Logische Phantasie' ('logical imagination'): The reporter does not only need to compile facts. She/he must also arrange them into meaningful 'patterns of interpretation' (95) which reveal their true meaning, their past and future directions. A use of imagination, logically controlled through a series of rhetorical strategies, is instrumental to fulfilling this aim. A literature of fact must be, in Kisch's words, a

'Phantasie-Produkt': 'Nothing is more baffling than the simple truth. Nothing is more exotic than our environment. Nothing is more imaginative than objectivity, and there is nothing more sensational in the world than the time when we live' (Qtd. in Bevan, 72).

'Automatized perception of reality sponsored by the official media' (Williams 1990, 100) must be replaced by a defamiliarizing mechanism which transforms the ordinarily familiar into the artfully strange. This effect of detachment is similar to Victor Sklovsky's concept of 'ostranenie', or to Brecht's alienation effect ('Verfremdung'). The goal is to uncover the ignorance of what we already know. In his lecture 'Reportage as Art and Combat' delivered in 1935 ('Reportage als Kunstform und Kampfform') Kisch insists, again, on the need to refashion the pragmatics of events through the telescope of 'fantasy' ('imagination'). Facts are nothing but the raw material that the reporter uses to construct a vision of reality, one which unveils associations between facts that are not visible to the naked eye. How can one write about Ceylon from a politically combative perspective that proves, nevertheless, artistic? Kisch mentions two possible dangers or pitfalls the reporter must eschew at all costs: one is the temptation to focus her/his attention on the description of the landscape so that the result, closer to a travel guide, becomes a piece of writing that highlights the exotic beauty of the Pearl Island. The second mistake is to adopt the tone of a demagogue delivering a soapbox speech full of inflammatory language and denouncing the injustices suffered by the islanders, by providing statistical information: percentage of children suffering malnutrition and malaria (80%); number of deaths from October to January (30,000 children), etc. Kisch cautions that only through the reporter's artistic mediation of the factual information can the journalist come up with a genuine reportage: people's life and work must be made visible. In order to reach this end, one must combine a narration, rather than a dead description, than comes alive through the portrayal of a specific individual who stands for the social group but whose life one must fantasize.

An example of this reportorial method can be seen in 'The Three Cows' ('Die Drei Kühe'),⁶ one of the war dispatches he wrote while

6 I am greatly indebted to my friend and polyglot L. E. Bizin who translated Kisch's 'The Three Cows' from German into English at my request. The first translation into English was that of S. Farrar in 1939 which to date is out of print. The original essay was contained in Egon Erwin Kisch's *Unter Spaniens Himmel* (1961, 65–83).

covering the Spanish Civil War. The story recounts the life of Max Bair, the twenty-year-old Austrian farmer who decides to enlist in the International Brigades at a point in his life where he feels he must join the war in Spain if he is to put an end to the injustices affecting the farmers of Wipptal, in the Austrian Tyrol. Wipptal, with inaccessible, flood-devastated valleys, is a jagged mountain region through which men and women clamber carrying manure on their backs, work from the crack of dawn till late evening and eventually are forced to mortgage their land at impossibly high rates to put food on their tables. Kisch introduces the protagonist by providing a summary of his past: from his lack of education (he started doing chores at the age of three and by twelve he was a consummate farmer) to the death of both parents at an early age. This serves as a biographical backdrop against which we obtain a full understanding of the motives that drive him to sell his three cows and buy a ticket to Spain. By joining the Twelfth February Battalion, Max learns that Communism is the only salvation for the problems affecting his fellow villagers, overburdened with farmstead debts and mortgages they will never be able to pay off, no matter how hard they work. Max's life is obviously presented as a case study: he answers the reporter's questions at the training camp in Albacete, moving back and forth through the story of his life. The narrator delivers the character's answers in his Tyrolean dialect, gives a detailed account of the region's living conditions by providing figures (salaries, number of farmers with bank debts, mortgage rates...); recreates the epiphanic moment in 1928 when Max understands that the tirades of the Hitler Youth are meaningless speeches that can be of no help in his case. Likewise he dwells on his final encounter with some workers who introduce him to banned literature dealing with workers' rights and the International Brigades.

Yet, in order to recreate this Austrian farmer's life, Kisch needs to telescope some aspects that must be 'imaginatively' created: the flood of 1928 that demolished the containing walls of the river which should have been urgently rebuilt but were never finished because politicians withdrew the funds; the priests' snide attitude towards Socialism; the detailed description of the three cows, the daily number of litres they gave and the number of schillings to be had by selling them. In fact, the sale of the cows becomes the focal point of the story. The cows not only provide the means of sustenance for farmers when crops are lost: they also symbolically nourish the political awakening of the young farmer,

as a new man who has understood that communal struggle is the key to solving individual problems. In short, Kisch writes a report that combines an objectively rendered account of the life of the Austrian farmer along with a propagandist message (Communism is the answer) in a text that inserts episodes that have been 'invented'. As long as 'the curve of probability drawn by the reporter coincides with the true line of communication of all phases of the event' (qtd. in *A Bio-Anthology*, 74), i.e. as long as the new imagined element does not prove to be incongruous or hinder the propagandist aim of the reportage, 'fantasy' proves to be as necessary as the empirical observation of facts.

Max Bauer is depicted as a 'shy' comrade with gentle features: his mouth is described as 'a girl's mouth'. His smile looks more like the smile of a healthy country girl than that of a soldier.⁷ Not surprisingly, the International Brigades became one of the nodal points of the propaganda fight during the Spanish Civil War. Seen as idealists, daydreamers even, who sacrificed their lives and whose memory, as La Pasionaria's farewell speech in October 1939 made clear, will always be worshipped in Spain,⁸ they were also presented by Francoists as the dregs of the European revolutions, a band of stateless men who terrorized whatever country they entered. Gellhorn's articles devote much attention to these soldiers in a tone which is persistently laudatory of their generosity and solidarity with Spain. 'The men who came all this distance, neither for glory nor money and perhaps to die, knew why they came', Gellhorn notes in 'Men without Medals' (49). 'These men died that democracy might live', she asserts. In the following section I will deal with Gellhorn's objective reportorial method, one which, as Kisch advised, combines objectivity and propaganda, empirical observation and fantasy elements in a narrative which defends the International Brigades as the cornerstone of a war that was regarded as 'the vaccination which could save the rest of mankind from the same fearful suffering' of coming wars (*Selected Letters*, 125).

7 'Sein Mund glich in seiner Schwingung einem Mädchenmund, wie er denn überhaupt einem jungen gesunden Mädchen ähnlicher sah als einem Bürgerkriegsollaten' Kisch (1961, 65).

8 Ibarruri's famous lines are: 'You are history. You are legend. You are the heroic example of democracy's solidarity and universality. We shall not forget you, and, when the olive tree of peace puts forth its leaves again, mingled with the laurels of the Spanish Republic's victory— come back!' Qtd. in Cecil Eby (1969, 303).

The International Brigades: Liberating Angels or Satan's Envoys?

The International Brigades,⁹ or the 'Volunteers for Liberty' as they preferred to be called, drew unprecedented attention from both sides in the conflict. Instrumental in halting the rapid advance of the Rebels towards Madrid in the famous Battle of Jarama and decisive in the victories of Belchite, the IBs set the benchmark for the defence of the Republic on an international scale. A medley of different nationalities (Americans, Canadians, British, French, Belgians, Austrians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Germans, Italians, Poles and a long etcetera), the Brigades added a propaganda value which could not be glossed over in any war reportage. Five of Gellhorn's dispatches are either entirely devoted to these soldiers ('Madrid to Morata', 'Men without Medals' and 'Visit to the Wounded') or contain long passages describing these men's virtues and actions ('Only the Shells Whine' and 'The Third Winter').

In fact, the stakes in this propaganda-infused tug of war centered upon the role of the Brigades from the very beginning.¹⁰ Pro-Loyalists regarded them as sensitive youths who proved their heroic devotion to Spain by voluntarily joining a war away from home on behalf of the fight against Fascism. Francoists, however, saw them as "the Comintern Army", another collective instrument of Stalinist terror' (Stradling 2010, 746). Thus, the image conveyed by war correspondents supporting the Cause (men of moral compassion and integrity, sensitive young artists, poets, romantic heroes fighting the dark forces of Hitler and Mussolini) has little to do with 'the gang of adventurers made up from all the scum of humanity', 'an army of criminals' taken from 'gaols, lunatic asylums, doss-houses and brothels' (746); 'men used to a life of depravity whose hands had often been stained with blood', in short, the

9 Henceforth I will refer to them as IBs.

10 Arturo Barea's words are very revealing on this point: 'After a week or so it appeared that only the International Brigades figured in the press dispatches, as though they were the only saviours of Madrid. [...] I was angry, because I found it unjust that the people of Madrid, the improvised soldiers of Carabanchel and the Parque de Oeste and the Guadarrama, were forgotten because there was no propaganda machine to show them up' (*The Clash*, 195).

international riffraff popularized by pro-Franco writers and historians. Not surprisingly, Ricardo de la Cierva y Hoces, a hardline apologist for Franco's dictatorship, chooses to illustrate his 1997 monograph *Brigadas Internacionales 1936–1996: La verdadera historia*, with a contemporary cartoon depicting 'President Azaña praying to the Devil for help to the Republic; in response Lucifer gleefully sends him the IBs' (747).

Rob Stradling (2010) has shown that the idealized, almost pastoral image of the comrades who fought for liberty, used as a source of inspiration for the Left for many decades, is one with more than a tinge of historical inaccuracy. André Marty, the Moscow-appointed Commissar of the IBs, known as the butcher of Albacete, imposed a regime of terror on the volunteers, executing, without trial, 500 dissidents or deserters among its files (749). The unfailing faith in the Cause was soon eroded among these men who saw their numbers depleted in the defeats in Brunete (July 1937) and Teruel (December 1937–February 1938). The number of dead in Brunete (653) was not that many more than the number of those who deserted (534). In addition to the lack of military discipline of these inexperienced soldiers, who had learned to fire a rifle barely some weeks before, a number of fatal mistakes were made in the strategy adopted to lead the offensives. Most striking is the case of Commander Bob Merriman, the tall, good-looking student instructor in Economics at the University of California, Berkeley, used as a model by Hemingway for his hero Robert Jordan, and responsible for the debacle at the Battle of Jarama on the Pingarron Hill, 'an incapable officer' who could not see that the orders he was given by his superiors were completely wrong (Jackson 1994, 103). Merriman was declared missing in action but there are those who believe that he was also executed at Marty's orders.¹¹

Gellhorn's first reference to the volunteers appears in 'Only the Shells Whine' (17 July 1937) where she describes the Palace Hotel converted into a makeshift military hospital, with the old reading room now used as an operating room. The reporter describes four men: a stoic Hungarian in a red blouse with a knee smashed by a piece of shell, his

11 See Philip Jaffe's *Rise and Fall of American Communism* (1975) for a brief discussion of Merriman's death.

leg propped up on a chair, who refuses to talk about his wound; Jaime, a young boy with a beret conveniently disguising his badly injured head; a sleepless aviator who, after an aircraft accident, has lost everything but his eyes ('his face and hands were a hard brown thick scab', 29), and who spends his time drawing his portrait in pastels (maybe in an attempt to remember, before all his memory is gone, what his face was like); and a Pole, who suggests that the reporter come and see the branch of mimosa that a French soldier has taken into another room. Although there is nothing apparently unrealistic about these portraits, the allusion to the mimosa, a powerful religious symbol, introduces what Kisch calls an element of 'Logische Phantasie'. The mimosa, a kind of acacia with its thorny branches, does not only represent Christ's Passion, His suffering on the Cross. The gaudy yellow flowers, a symbol of the sun, also stand for the Resurrection. In other words, the soldiers' excruciating pain, like Christ's agony, will be transformed into spiritual liberation – or in this case, political salvation.

A similarly oblique symbolic method is introduced in 'Visit to the Wounded' (October 1937), an article dealing with the men of the IBs who, wounded in an attack on Casa de Campo in Madrid, were convalescing in hospital. In addition to the little Polish Jew who drags his bandaged foot while he shows the journalist around ('Hitler says we're cowards', he complains), there is a poet, a terminally-ill Hungarian, who had been making his living in Paris by wiping tables and occasionally translating poetry from his mother tongue into French. 'You have come a long way to do your dying', remarks the reporter. 'I don't regret it [...] This part is very slow; but I would do it again the same way' (61). The reportage is brought to a close with the journalist's reflection: 'It is surely a magnificent thing that a man is willing to die for his faith, but it is more useful if he can live for it' (61). The corollary is provided by an image that is apparently unconnected to any message of propaganda. In a coda that is reminiscent of Hemingway's 'zero ending' (a final line that apparently adds no resolution to the story), Gellhorn introduces the key to understanding her political message: 'It was a fine night; the Big Dipper hung low over the Telefonica building, and the sky went up forever' (61). The Big Dipper or Plough is the pointer to the North Star, an image that may be interpreted as:

1. One of the symbols of the coded 'quilting language' used by the Underground Railroad, the clandestine society that helped slaves make their way to freedom by leading them to Canada. The North Star was shown on quilts stretched over verandahs and windowsills pointing the way to the North, the land where they would find liberty, far from the oppressive system of the south. By coupling this symbol of political liberation with the Telefónica, the communications centre of the Foreign Press (and also an observatory point from which to watch the movements of the Rebels' air forces), Gellhorn is equating the IBs' fight against Fascism with Lincoln's war of liberation.

2. The Big Dipper also represents in Hungarian folklore Göncöl's Wagon: Göncöl is a legendary shaman (*táltos*) in Hungarian mythology (Levinton 2011, 144), whose wagon carries medicines and magic remedies for healing every kind of wound and illness, a harbinger of hope even for those like the dying Hungarian poet-soldier.

Gellhorn's depiction of the aftermath of the Battle of Jarama in the article published in *The New Yorker* on July 24, 1937, 'Madrid to Morata' is a good case in point of her reportorial language, one which does not rule out mythological references from her objective working method. Amanda Vaill (2014, 122) holds that Gellhorn, accompanied by Norman Bethune, the Canadian doctor, and biologist J.B.S. Haldane visited Morata de Tajuña, a shattered village, on April 5. Morata was chosen as the base for the IBs holding the Jarama lines, and soon became in the words of Herbert Matthews 'the hub of the world struggle against Fascism' (Matthews 1938, 22). No journalist was allowed close to the front during the Battle which lasted from February 6 to February 27, and which was dubbed the first modern war, for it showed the superiority of a mechanized infantry with aerial support. In other words, the Battle illustrated the new German notion of Blitzkrieg (or 'guerra celere' as the Italians called it) replacing the stalemate of trench warfare.

On this occasion, Gellhorn's reportage is mainly constructed out of a series of oxymora. The death drive present in the stoic images of the casualties (the Marseilles boy with a bullet through his leg, crying very hard but silently; the bloody stretchers; the seventeen-year-old soldier on the operating table, and the befuddled nurse with a ribbon of bandage on her head like *Alice in Wonderland*; and the image of the trenches that could not protect the soldiers who look like children playing in

an empty lot)¹² contrast with the ubiquitous signs of spring life: green branches on the willow trees by the Jarama river, the 'nice and comfortable' sound of bees and the peaceful sight of convoys of carts carrying wine and oil (31). Even the Ford station they drive past has been illogically camouflaged like a rainbow moving in the countryside. The storm is over. The sun shines and soldiers are even getting sunburnt. Rather than a war, the whole experience looks like a 'camping trip, only more exciting': 'It was a lovely day [...] It was the first day of spring' (37). Not surprisingly, the tanks that move in the fields below resemble boats 'riding a gentle sea' (39) back to a peaceful harbour.

Rather than provide an objective account of the number of casualties (information that could not be revealed for obvious reasons) Gellhorn chooses to overlook the grim aspects of warfare, and although an allusion to the deadly battles still to be fought on Pingarron Hill¹³ is inevitably made, she deliberately focuses her attention, once more, on the hope that life can prevail over death. Despite the fact that the Garibaldi Battalion and the Franco-Belge have just attacked that morning, it is still possible to discover anew the life-giving principle of Eros in invincible Mother Nature, and to believe in the promise of creation so as to dispel any thought of war: 'The business of making death' is 'by far the most unreal thing' (34). Thwarting attempts to seize the road to Valencia and to cut off supplies to Madrid, the advance of Franco's troops has been impeded by these soldier-prophets, men who miraculously are able to withstand for 'forty-two days' (34) in the trenches below Pingarron Hill.

Similarly, biblical echoes reappear in 'Men without Medals' published in *Collier's* almost six months later (January 15 1938). The same commonplaces are employed again: the IBs (Andy, Sailor, Martin Hourihan, Evan Shipman, Raven...) are ordinary men, next-door neighbours: 'red haired, freckled young' boys with Brooklyn accents; Mississippi, Ohio and California faces with voices like the ones you can hear 'in a baseball game or a hamburger joint' (10). The hero can be no other than

12 In 'A Sense of Direction' included in *The Heart of Another*, Loyalist soldiers are compared with 'gnomes in a fairy story' (152).

13 Pingarron Hill was nicknamed the Suicide Hill. When Bob Merriman decided to initiate the synchronized artillery and air bombardment offensive on February 27th, the promised aerial support failed to materialize. Out of 400, 298 fell. The number of dead rose to 127.

the chief of the Lincoln Battalion, Robert Merriman, three days after the assault on Belchite, i.e. on 9 September 1937. Wounded six times in this battle but still reluctant to rest from the fight, Merriman is presented as an invincible, heroic figure, 'a big man' (10), the superior leader, able to see, with the coldness of rational detachment, the military tactics deployed in the Quinto-Belchite campaign. In short, he becomes the man to worship. Little wonder then, that while the reeds of the lean-to sway back and forth, tossed by the wind, Merriman remains 'stiff' (10), impervious to the changing forces, a steadfast pillar of fortitude that the American soldiers cannot but gladly follow. The image of the hollow reed which bends and bows as soon as the wind blows, taken from Matthew 11.7, stands as a contrast to an unflagging faith, unwavering in adversity, like St. John the Baptist, a solid tree of righteousness.¹⁴ The biblical allusion is also reinforced by the number of those close to Merriman beside the river where they bathe: 'There were twelve of us' (9).

'In this war there are no rewards you could name. There are no Congressional medals, no Distinguished Service Crosses, no bonuses for soldiers' families, no newspaper glory' (49). And yet these men 'knew why they came'. Lolly Ockerstrom (1997, 136) argues that the article revalidates the iconic clues provided by the soldiers' faces shown in the oversize picture of the opening page: some of them are revealed, some others remain concealed. These men are ordinary people. Like the true men of faith they pursue neither gold nor glory. Yet the reasons behind their complete dedication of their lives to the defence of the Republic – like the face of the first soldier closest to the viewer – remains undecipherable, unknown: 'it is nothing [the reporter admits] you can ask about or talk about. It belongs to them' (49). Many of them will never return home. And yet in the plains of Brunete, devastated by the fire of incendiary bombs, 'fields of small purple flowers like crocuses [have grown] afterward' (10). The choice of the flower motif underscores the theme of the essay: the crocus is a symbol of awakening nature, of resurrection.

14 'What went ye out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?' (KJV), is the first question that the Apostle raises in relation to the prophet John the Baptist. The image of the reed as the symbol of the unfaithful, hollow-hearted Christian who is easily moved by every temptation, is also largely discussed in early Puritan pamphlets such as the influential *Errand into the Wilderness* (1671) by Samuel Danforth.

Small, delicate and short-lived, these flowers spring up as an epitome of individual pain transformed into a permanent testament.¹⁵

Gellhorn's Milieu Studies: Empirical Observation, or Imagination?

'Since I am not Jane Austen or the Bronte sisters and I have to see before I can imagine, and this is the only way I have of seeing' (*Selected Letters*, 158).

'To tell the truth, so that it shall not disappear and be forgotten, is our fighting' (*A Stricken Field*, 286).

Gellhorn's adamant insistence that reportage must stem from the careful observation of whatever takes place before one's eyes seems to be utterly contradicted by the first piece of writing that was published as a non-fictional essay: 'Justice at Night' (August 20 1936). The article deals with the lynching of a young black sharecropper accused of having raped his landowner, a forty-year-old widow, somewhere in Natchez, Mississippi. The technique followed evinces Gellhorn's mastery of the principles of the documentary movement:

1. A first-hand account, full of sensory data, is provided by an unidentified narrator who, accompanied by a friend called Joe,¹⁶ travels from Trenton, New Jersey, to the Deep South in an old Dodge which breaks down somewhere close to the Mississippi and forces to them to ask for a lift from the first vehicle they see. In addition to a careful description of the landscape and people they see through the car windows (the 'broken

15 The Christian symbolism is also evident in the colour of the flower, purple, which is the colour of Christ's Passion. See D.H. Lawrence's poem 'Resurrection':

'Now, like a crocus in the autumn time,
My soul comes lambent from the endless night
Of death—a cyclamen, a crocus flower
Of windy autumn when the winds all sweep
The hosts away to death, where heap on heap
The dead are burning in the funeral wind.'

16 The story is based upon the trip around the Deep South that Gellhorn made with Bertrand de Jouvenel in September 1931. See Moorehead (2003, 59).

shacks where they live', their 'tattered clothes', 'soiled look', 'unhinged bodies', and the ubiquitous flies), the text conveys a myriad of aural and tactile sensations. Most of the action takes place on a moonless night when all one can sense in the encompassing darkness is the whining of mosquitoes, the banging of cars moving on the country roads and the dust and heat that stick to one's face.

2. The method is obviously 'kinetographic': most of the action is about the journey in a car and except for the climax (the lynching scene), the story rewrites the commonplaces of frontier literature. The protagonists travel from the civilized industrial centres of the East to the undeveloped (almost primitive) farming areas of the south. The narrator remembers the old stage-coach days when one could travel without the untimely failure of the machine.

3. As expected in an objective reportage, much attention is paid to the verbatim transcription of the characters' language. Thus, the Southern dialect is reproduced with all its phonological and morphosyntactic features: 'you-all' (255), irregular past particles ('knowed'), lack of copula ('they been', 256), use of 'do' for all personal pronouns ('she don't', 256), use of deictically reinforced demonstratives ('this here', 257) and of short forms such as 'ain't', 'gonna', 'gotta' (256), etc.

4. The text converges on the final lynching scene which is described with the photographic precision of a reliable eyewitness: the cars getting together at the Big Elms crossroads, the appearance of the black youth, his hands tied and a rope around his waist, being placed on the sedan roof below the tree and the immediate smell of gasoline, the crowd's nonchalant attitude. There is no trick ending: the boy is hanged and burned to death just as we expected right from the very beginning. In fact the lynching is mentioned very early in the text, in the second paragraph, so it hardly comes as a surprise at all to the reader. Moreover, cataphoric elements dominate the unfolding of the narrative in a way that is not very obvious on a cursory reading. The lynched young man's name is Hyacinth, a name charged with mythical connotations. Hyacinth was the beautiful youth who, after being struck by a discus while playing with Apollo, fell to the ground and died, his head drooping like a broken flower. The classical story is primarily a vegetation myth connected with the cycle of life and death, destruction and renewal, i.e. it rewrites the paligenetic myth linked to the changing seasons. It is no wonder, therefore, that the

sharecropper's head also looks 'loose and heavy on his neck' (257). That the story has a potential meaning connected to the coming of autumn is foreshadowed by the dead leaves that the protagonists find on the back seat of the car they have purchased, hinting that the journey they are about to make will lead them to a confrontation with death.

The article 'wrote itself [Gellhorn confesses] as if by Ouija board on a sunny morning in London in the summer of 1936', i.e. four years after the trip, while she was staying at H.G. Wells' house (Dorman 2012, 37). Moorehead reveals that the essay was taken as a piece of irrefutable, factual information to the extent that it was used in a leaflet for the fight against the Klu Klux Klan, and that Martha was called to testify before a Senate committee drafting an anti-lynching bill (2003, 113). The story itself was, however, slightly based upon two separate biographical experiences: after their car broke down, both Bertrand de Jouvenel and she were given a lift by an inebriated truck driver who said he was returning home from a lynching; some time later, while she was a FERA reporter in North Carolina in 1934, she talked to a black man whose son had been killed in a 'necktie party'. But, as she had to admit, the events she narrates so realistically in the story with all the conviction of an eyewitness, were never actually seen: 'I am a very realistic writer (or liar) because everybody assumed I'd been an eyewitness to a lynching whereas I just made it up', Martha writes to Eleanor Roosevelt (*Selected Letters*, 42). Did Martha learn that true reportage had to include a purely invented element, a logical fantasy that blurred the distinction between fact and fiction and which illuminated a greater truth than the one provided by a merely factual statement? And equally, is her seventeen year-old hero viewed as the victim of the 20th-century American tragedy whose sacrifice evokes the classical myth of Hyacinth's death?

'The Third Winter': Lukács' Theory in Practice

In a series of essays written in the 1930s, aimed at shaping the pillars of the genuine reportage method (the one that reproduces the dynamics of historical materialism), Georg Lukács sets out a series of principles for the young reporter to follow in order to reach a dialectical understanding of capitalism:

1. A reportage must be based upon the narration of an individual's life in order to show how the general, objective data (headlines, statistics, official reports) work when dealing with the ups and downs of a particular man's biography. The individual becomes a case in point to illustrate a social panorama. In 'Reportage or Portrayal?' (1932) Lukács admonishes the reader against using the portrayal of individual lives as a psychological instrument to delve into that individual's life alone, disregarding the influences of social processes. Whereas in psychological reportage the essence continues to be the life of the soul threatened by the accidental, meaningless forces of the world, which in the end remain an unfathomable mystery, true reportorial language must start from the individual case to reveal the causes of social malady and to propose remedies. The general converges into the particular in order to combat the political status quo.

2. In 'Narrate or Describe' (1936), epic (and not drama) is suggested as the most suitable model to allow documentaries to realize this political struggle. Everything becomes incidental, not ornamental, in narration: there is a focus on the relationship between the character's life and her/his place in a social group which enables us to comprehend the forces at stake at a particular point in time. Description, however, can only result into a collection of fetishized objects inflated into symbols with little or no bearing upon social changes. Only by infusing actions with political meaning can the reporter convert her/his subject's case into a root action which is to be decoded as the turning point of man's participation in history.

The piece of war correspondence written by Gellhorn which best illustrates Lukács' lessons is 'The Third Winter', written in November 1938. Gellhorn affirmed that the story 'about the little man and his family' is 'the real story about war' (*Selected Letters*, 70). Composed of five juxtaposed vignettes framed by dialogues with the Hernández family, and showing the influence of the Soviet montage method so in vogue in the 1930s, the article was rejected by *Collier's* for obvious reasons: by the time the article was published, the Spanish Civil War would be a thing of the past, without the slightest interest for its readership. Gellhorn chooses a family called Hernández, that is elevated to the status of a prototype for the Republican people. The breadwinner is an old carpenter, and the beginning of the action shows the reporter visiting him about a picture frame she is getting him to make for a friend. 'Everything you do in a war is odd, I thought: why should I be plowing

around after dark, looking for a carpenter in order to call for a picture frame for a friend?' (41) Symbolically, however, it is the visit to the Hernández family's house that serves as the framework against which to place the flashback, bracketed episodes which are inserted throughout the narrative. These episodes are the following:

1. Food lines and ration coupons. Miguel, the grandson, spends his days standing in the food line. This triggers a digression about the meagre daily diet of the civilians in Barcelona, the suffering of ordinary people who are by now 'very thin' (42). In a letter to Charles Colebaugh dated December 1938, Gellhorn argues that it will be food and nothing else that will decide the outcome of the war (*Selected Letters*, 70)

2. The International Brigades and the Republican army. Federico, the younger son, is fighting on the front line somewhere in Lérida. This leads to a reflection on the role of the different groups of soldiers fighting for the Republic. The volunteers, who have just left Spain, are often men who have no country to go back to. 'There was a parade for them, down the Diagonal, and women threw flowers and wept, and all the Spanish people thanked them' (44). Unlike the foreigners, Spanish soldiers know what they are doing and why and, despite the bleak, wintery conditions, they are still able to keep their spirits up.

3. The Children's Pavilion in the hospital. The family's elder brother, Tomás, married to Lola and away at the front, has a son, an under-nourished baby: 'The face seemed shrunken and faded and bluish eyelids rested lightly shut on the eyes. The child was too weak to cry' (46). The flashback recounts the reporter's visit to the children in hospital. In addition to statistics ('200,000 suffered from under-nourishment' in Barcelona alone), there is a moving description of some of the infants affected by TB, rickets and all kinds of war wounds and disabilities. Faced with such misery, the reporter can say only: 'They were unbelievably thin' (47).

4. Leisure time during wartime. The reporter asks Lola if she has ever been to the opera. This gives way to a narration of how civilians try to escape from the atrocities of war by going to movies or to the opera. 'We loved the music and loved not thinking about the war' (50), despite the fact that the falling of bombs interrupts the projection of the movie and that everyone has fleas.

5. The Hernández's only daughter works in a munitions factory. The reporter provides a full account of the working conditions and the 'perks' (two rolls of bread a day) of the women employed in these

dangerous factories. 'Walk, do not run' is the motto when they hear the planes attacking the city and are forced to leave the factory.

The denouement of this narration reveals the moral fortitude of the mother of the family, despite the tribulations caused by three long years of non-stop war. When the reporter tries to cheer them up, the mother does not brood: 'We are all all right, Señora. We are Spaniards and we have faith in our Republic' (53). The last line serves as the propagandist theme of the article. These people embody the genuine spirit of the almost fallen Republic: wrecked as their lives seem to be, they have their dignity and refuse to be pitied. There is still hope in the end for the Loyalists. That this sentiment is genuine can be seen in the letter Martha Gellhorn sent to *Collier's* editor: the war is not lost yet, 'the army is okay' and 'the moral is fine' (70).

To summarize, following Lukács' principles, Gellhorn chooses one family (the individual case) to showcase the problems affecting pro-Republic civilians (starvation, soldiers fighting, children, entertainment, factory workers); and favours a method which narrates, rather than describes, their plight. The political aim is strengthened, however, by some biblical overtones: Mr. Hernández is a carpenter, and his family might be seen as the Holy Family on the verge of having to flee, after Franco's imminent victory.

However, Gellhorn partly flouts the rule of thumb of reportage. She briefly describes the farewell parade for the troops of the IBs on 14 de Abril Avenue in Barcelona, a celebration, presided over by Juan Negrín and other relevant political figures, that took place on October 28th 1938, with an estimated number of 200,000 participants. Amanda Vaill (2014) correctly points out that at the time Gellhorn was not in Barcelona but already in France.¹⁷ She had left the city on April 15, 1938 after spending, in her own words, 'two grim weeks' observing the grief suffered by the city dwellers in all kind of trials (*Selected Letters*, 70–71). In short, the litmus test of objective reportage (proximity and eyewitness report) is not applicable on this occasion.

17 Hemingway made his last visit to Civil War Spain some months later. He got back to Barcelona on November 4, 1938 (Baker, 335). The only close friend who could see the IBs' Farewell Parade was Robert Capa. His photographs of 'La Despedida' are sufficient proof that he was there.

Coda

In the previous pages I have endeavoured to show that 1930s reportage was understood as a tool that enabled the writer to provide an account of reality that was partly based upon the careful observation of facts and partly on the crafted account of her/his experience. For Kisch, imagination was essential: the reporter needed to invent, and 'logical fantasy' was one of the obligatory ingredients of a true reportage. For Lukács, the code of objectivity entailed not only a rational understanding of empirical data but also an emotional response: there was no reportage without a political commitment, i.e. without propaganda. In other words, the call to action was not only its goal but its inevitable starting point. Similarly, as we have seen, Hemingway held that truth and fact were not interchangeable terms. Ichiro Takayoshi (2011) argues that the writer believed that the observed (and recalled) transcription of empirical facts could be misleading and that the pursuit of truth could only be attained through invention. Factual accuracy was therefore secondary for the genuine writer who must transform his experience into 'absolute truth' by means of creation.

Gellhorn followed these principles of writing in her war correspondence. To take sides with the Republican cause and seeing Fascism as a threat to civilization was therefore inevitable, for one cannot write about war and yet sit on a fence. Spain was another 'Balkans of 1912': the outcome of the war, Gellhorn believed, was to condition the political map of Europe in the following decades (*Selected Letters* 46, 54). If Spain had not been sold out, she observed some years later, 'this long and hideous killing [WWII, the Holocaust...] could have been avoided' (*Selected Letters*, 126). Her war reportage combines a stylized realism which is made of an observation of sensory data (the so-called kinetographic fallacy) and a subtle employment of biblical and/or mythological images at the service of a propagandist message. Her goal was 'to bring news, to be eyes for [people's] conscience' (Introduction to *The Face of War*, vii). The techniques vary from choosing mythological and/or historical references (Hyacinth in 'Justice at Night', the Big Dipper of the Hungarian myth, or the Northern Star in the American Civil War, in 'Visit to the Wounded'; crocuses in the battlefield in 'Men without Medals', a mimosa branch in 'Only the Shells Whine'), to conveying an abundance of biblical overtones

(Bob Merriman as the Messiah in 'Men without Medals', the Hernández family as the Holy Family in 'The Third Winter'). If Capa's photograph of 'The Falling Soldier', realistic and objective as it may appear, was mainly based upon a staged process whereby reality was 'rearranged', as if it were a scene presented to an audience, Gellhorn's writings about the Spanish Civil War go through a very similar craft process: the selection of data, the careful inclusion of symbolic images charged with literary echoes, the emphasis on how children and women suffer the consequences of war and the attention paid to the IBs, build up an image of Spain that is both real and imaginary at the same time.

In a visit to Spain over two decades later, W. Eugene Smith immortalized the post-war country's rural life in a celebrated photo-essay¹⁸ that conveyed a series of hyper-real images that were, however, largely theatrical. Forcing the camera to tell the truth was the formula embraced by the Kansas photographer. 'The Wake' shows a number of female figures in kneeling position mourning over the dead body of their patriarch in a chiaroscuro-dominated photograph. The camera's viewfinder has allegedly surprised them precisely at this intimate moment when one can give vent to grief before the deceased loved one. However, the story of how that snapshot was crafted reveals how Smith carefully blocked the scene, manipulated the light, and even changed the direction of one of the women's eye pupils in the negatives by using a chemical substance. 'The Wake' is thus presented as an objective document that, paradoxically, must be modified so as to evoke Rembrandt's masterpiece, 'The Anatomy Lesson'. Realism is metamorphosed into a myth.

'Memory and imagination, not nuclear weapons, are the great deterrents' of war, Gellhorn holds (*Face of War*, xii). 'I wrote very fast [...] I was always afraid that I would forget the exact sound, smell, words, gestures which were special to this moment and this place' (1986, xii). In other words, being there is essential but imagination is badly needed as well when arranging the recalled events. A replication of the externalities of war is not enough. Description must give

18 The photo-essay 'Spanish Village', published in *Life* on April 9, 1951, documented the backward living conditions of 'people in Deleitosa (Cáceres). Photographs such as 'The Spinner', or more clearly 'The Wake', not only show Smith's constant intrusions upon the natural but also his manipulation of the negatives. The artist's goal was to reveal the mythical dimension of his otherwise realistic photos.

way to invention. Gellhorn's reportage in Spain demonstrates that there is nothing incongruous in uniting these presumably discordant poles. Truth is a construction, and a weapon one chooses to make some sense of, and to halt, the absurdities of war.

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JOSÉ RUIZ MAS

Chapter 8. Peter Kemp (1915?-1993) A Francoist British Soldier and Writer in the Spanish Civil War

Brief biography

- 1915? (1913?) Born Bombay, Peter Mant MacIntyre Kemp.
- c.1936 Graduated in Classics and Law at Cambridge.
- 1936 Carlist *requeté* in the Spanish Civil War.
- 1937 Left the *requetés* and joined the Spanish Foreign Legion.
- 1938 *Alférez* or 2nd lieutenant in the 14th *Bandera* of the Spanish Foreign Legion. Seriously wounded and invalided back to England.
- 1939 Awarded the 'Sufrimientos por la Patria' medal for his heroic participation in the Spanish Civil War. Interview with General Franco.
- 1940 Volunteered for service with the Atholl Highlanders to assist the Finns against the USSR and later against the Axis.
- 1941 Joins the SOE as an agent for military missions.
- 1942 Participates in night-raids against German signal stations in the Channel Islands and Brittany.
- 1943 Military missions in Albania and Kosovo.
- 1944 In Montenegro and Poland.
- 1945 Captured by the Red Army and imprisoned in Moscow. In Siam: runs guns to the French across the border in Laos.
- 1946 Retirement from the army.
- 1947 Works in Rome for Miles Aircraft. Tuberculosis.
- 1949 Convalescence in the south of Spain.
- 1951 Begins work in Imperial Life Assurance Company of Canada.
- 1956 In Hungary as a correspondent for *The Tablet* to report the Hungarian Revolution.
- 1957 Autobiography *Mine Were of Trouble*.
- 1958 Autobiography *No Colours or Crest*.