

## THE GREEK CIVIL WAR IN FICTION AND TESTIMONY: THE *MISSION BOX* AND *THE DOUBLE BOOK*

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### Özet

#### **Roman ve Kanıtsal Anlatımda Yunan İç Savaşı: The Mission Box ve The Double Book**

Yunan İç Savaşını (1946-1949) temporal düzlemin merkezine oturtan, Aris Alexandrou'nun roman kategorisine giren *The Mission Box* adlı eseri ile Stamatia Barbatsi ve Tassoula Dervenioutou'nun tarihsel anlatım çerçevesinde kanıtsal bir açıklama niteliğindeki *The Double Book* adlı kitabı, eleştirel bağlamda İç Savaş söyleminin ayrışık parçaları olarak ele alınmıştır. Her iki metnin biçimsel ve içerik çözümlenmeleri, ideoloji ve tarihe ilişkin geniş kapsamlı konular bağlamında yapılmıştır. Çalışmada söz konusu iki metnin tartışmalı bir ulusal geçmişe odaklanan bellek politikaları içindeki konumu değerlendirilmiştir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** İdeoloji, Bellek, Yunan İç Savaşı, Savaş Sonrası Yunan Edebiyatı.

### Abstract

Placing in the epicenter of the temporal horizon the Greek Civil War (1946 – 1949), the *Mission Box* by Aris Alexandrou and *The Double Book* by Stamatia Barbatsi & Tassoula Dervenioutou are critically evaluated as differential components of the Civil War discourse, the former falling within the category of fiction and the latter constituting a testimonial account framed by historical exposition. The formal and content analysis of the two texts is informed by wider considerations, pertaining to issues of ideology and history, judging their positionality in the politics of memory focusing on a disputed national past.

**Keywords:** Ideology, Memory, Greek Civil War, Post- War Greek Literature.

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Intrastate uprisings constitute thorny landmarks in national history, leaving their indelible trace in the social imaginary, a trace that subsequently forms a site of contest and indefinability. In so far as the historical discourse defines, constructs and circumvents as its object of analysis specific instants of lived experience in a continuous process of signification, it invites utterances from the implicated parts. In this context, the ensemble of historical occurrences under the rubric Greek Civil War with a specific chronology (1946-1949) have been the focus of fiery interest in a process of national past reflexivity. For the purposes of this paper two illustrious cases of Civil War-centric enunciations are critically examined with regard to their positionality in the national historical discourse. The *Mission Box* (*To Κιβώτιο*, 1974) by Aris Alexandrou and *The Double Book: the narration of Stamatia Barbatsi/A historical approach* by Tassoula Derveniotou & Stamatia Barbatsi (*Το διπλό βιβλίο: Η αφήγηση της Σταματίας Μπαρμπάτση/Η ιστορική ανάγνωση*, 2003)<sup>1</sup> will constitute the axis of our discussion, raising issues of ideological, historical and representational concern. This article will trace the formation of the ideological currents that underlie the production of the texts and evaluate their function in the general discourse concerning the thorny issue of the Greek Civil War.

The *Mission Box* belongs broadly to the category of fiction, as although Alexandrou belonged to the Left, he never entered the insurgents' ranks and the mission he describes has not met with verification from historical sources. It consists of first – person narrative epistles, written at the final stages of the Civil War (27<sup>th</sup> September 1949 to 15<sup>th</sup> November 1949) by an unnamed partisan. The book itself was written in Athens and Paris from 1966 to 1972, but was first published integral in 1974. *The Double Book* consists of two sections: a first-person autobiographical account of memoirs recollected by Stamatia Barbatsi. Barbatsi was strongly affiliated to the Communist Ranks, she participated in the body of Democratic Army against the Right-Wing troops during the Civil War and retained through her whole life her communist beliefs. Her combined oral and written memoir is occasionally interspersed with fragments of interviewing and is complemented by a historical reading by Tasoula Derveniotou, along with a reflective account of the difficulties and the methodological issues dealt with during this research.

Any attempt to approach the two books' commonalities and divergences should move beyond commonly held assumptions and conventions which stem from the counterpoising of the factuality of testimonies to the essential

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<sup>1</sup> Translation of the author.

fictitiousness of literature and the privileging of the former. As Natia Charalambidou notes, testimonies have been utilised consistently by official history as evidential means of its narrative in advantageous comparison to the literary speech (Charalambidou, 1997:258). However, the transition from the macro- to the micro-perspective in historical research has altered the norms in categorisation and revealed concealed affinities between fiction and life-telling personal narratives. If both the micro-historian and the novelist from the standpoint of the present embark on an exploration of a long-gone past, then they both rely on conjectural means in their re-construction of a cultural context. Both micro-history as a form of historical investigation and literature abandon the traditional narrative technique, the “history of events”, whose time “is made up of a series of discontinuities described in the mode of the continuous” note Furet and Le Goff (1973:231) Their motifs centre on incidents that capture the past in its more obscure apparition, while history is deprived of its reductionist formal sequence of events in order to incorporate a functionalist logic of symbiotic, interrelated collective intentionality. As Walter Benjamin notes, “it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it...the psychological connection of the event is not forced on the reader” (Benjamin, 1968:16) It is undoubtedly an amelioration to the strict, positivist spirit of official history that seeks to unravel an uninterrupted order of events with a macro-scopic methodology disregarding the polymorphous spectrum of individual experience and the multi-causal form of progression that permeates it.

We can assert that *The Double Book* is based on the method of micro-history that reconstructs the cultural ‘milieu’ of a given era by focusing on the lives of individual citizens rather than employing broad generic categories, as historical analysis does<sup>2</sup>. Micro-histories constitute subjects’ chance to “speak out”, to express themselves and provide an alternative, less-overtly ideological reading of history. Furthermore, another added advantage of micro-history compared to official historiography consists in its linguistic means of expression. In micro-history, the language by means of which the speech is articulated acquires the form of a natural everyday idiom that flows and functions as an almost direct transfer of memories, rather than as a technical, deformed linguistic representation of incidents, which is the case of history. An added advantage that testimonies as a form of micro-historical recollection possess in contrast to formal History is the investment of events with the emotional response they provoked. Thus, the recording of

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<sup>2</sup> “I would like to write briefly about our own generation that has been so horrible what with the wars and...I will write, of course, according to my own life”(Derveniotou and Barbatsi, 2003:10 )

past is enriched with the addition of the emotive level and as such a restoration of a life-world is made possible.

One half of *The Double Book* consists in Stamatia Barbatsi's recounting of her revolutionary past, her remembering filtered through the veil of her present Subjectivity (she remains left-wing). Her memory remains ideologically fashioned to fit the version of the brutally beaten Left, a partisan view of history which gained legitimacy due to the belated revindication sought from the Left after many years of anti-communist governance in Greece (Marantzidis and Antoniou 2004). If we accept the notion of ideology in its potential plural form (different ideologies) as a system of beliefs distinct in the various social groups - actors (Williams, 1977:55) of a certain socio-historical context, it is precisely this definition of ideology that *The Double Book* adopts. What it attempts to accomplish with its historical reading is to trace the ideological positioning of an individual consciousness and then, from a seemingly vantage point of objectivity provide a hermeneutics of action. As such Derveniotou embraces the notion of ideology as "a system of illusory beliefs-false ideas or false consciousness –which can be contrasted to scientific truth" (Williams, 1977:55). In contrast to Barbatsi's ideologically impregnated discourse, then, Derveniotou purports to provide her value-free empathic *Verstehen*. A broader definition of ideology would incur substantial objections to the historical task of the author, for what she uses as an experiential account of the Civil War period is not a reflection of a unique ideological position. As Althusser notes, "in ideology the real relation is inevitably invested in the imaginary relation, a relation that expresses a will, a hope or nostalgia" (Althusser, 1994:89). This suggestion sets the first layer of ideological working located in the individual's relation to his experience. As Wittgenstein argues, however, "the concept of the 'inner picture' is misleading, for this concept uses the outer picture as a model, and yet their uses are no more closely related than the uses of 'numeral' and 'number' (cited in Schulte, 1993:104). The recounting of the experience then, presupposes added levels of ideological positionings, which Derveniotou conflates to the level of left-wing ideology. She attempts to merely contextualise the events, intentions and actions of her heroine, in an attempt to insert the transcendental Subject in the exact historical conditions of her time as sketched by the latter. This elaborate process produces what Barthes has termed "effet de reel", whereby the importance granted to "concrete detail" establishes the "referential illusion" so much dotted by historians (Barthes, 1982:16). Therefore, she disregards the fact that the phenomena narrated constitute a mental construction

mediated by the negotiation of the various discourses at play and are not the direct product of a single ideology that can be unveiled or dispersed.

Furthermore, Derveniotou accepts that “the historian arranges the events into a hierarchy of significance by assigning events different functions as story elements [...] with a discernible beginning, middle, and end” (White, 1973:7). To her benefit, Derveniotou acknowledges that the documents she possesses (Barbatsi’s narration) are story-elements that through a process of editing, repetition, establishing of causal relations and narrativisation she has to arrange into a formal structure. She renders visible this process in the double organisation of her book with the presentation of the written and oral elements and her own subsequent account. In this sense, the book resembles Dimitris Chatzis’s *To diplo vivlio* (το διπλό βιβλίο, 1976) with Sigrafeas’ (the main protagonist) musings enveloping the accounts of the multiple narrators of the text. Derveniotou acknowledges this affinity by stating that “after all this is all about a double book with multiple speeches” (Derveniotou and Barbatsi, 2003:110). However, the alteration of the narrative voices undermines the authority of the Sigrafeas over Kostas (the other main narrator), with Kostas moving from silence to speaking and Sigrafeas following the reverse trajectory over the course of the narration (Filokyrou, 1992). As such, it can be asserted that while Sigrafeas’ status as a coherent Subject is contested revealing a person “at variance with his own identity” (Saunders, 1990:224), Derveniotou retains a uniformity of style and speech and a stability of discursive techniques. She expresses herself exclusively as a micro-historian and is never robbed of her authority. Compared to Barbatsi’s polymorphous narration as a Storyteller and the inevitable gaps and inaccuracies of her speech, the totalising form of Derveniotou’s discourse supersedes the validity of the former and is re-invested with the privilege it sought to abandon. Even though the reverse structure of the book invites a dialectical reading of interrelated facets of historical discourse and points to a lifting of the researcher-interviewee hierarchy and the power embedded in this relationship, ultimately, it is the historical discourse which is charged with the explanatory role of the events and their re-arrangement within a clear-cut narrative order of chronological and causal order.

Secondly, the broader categories Derveniotou attempts to sketch are a cultural construct and do not exist as such; they constitute transcendental, ideological categories of purely analytical value. What Saunders notes in the case of Sigrafeas of *The Double Book* fits accordingly the case of Derveniotou: they both sketch ‘titles without a story’ which they attempt to fill in by means of individual experiences (Saunders, 1990:218). Even if

what emerges of the testimony is not treated as a generalised condition of experience during the Civil War it creates, combined with the syncretic filing of other women's testimonies, normalising categories. Broad groupings such as "Women from the city and women from the village" (Derveniotou and Barbatsi, 2003:147), "The ideological identity of a communist woman belonging to National Liberation Front" (Derveniotou and Barbatsi, 2003:187), "The member of the national resistance" (Derveniotou and Barbatsi, 2003:187)<sup>3</sup> constitute an attempt to stabilise and categorise individual experiences in allocated threads of identity. Therefore, Derveniotou operates within a systematising logic that 'transform(s) the document into a monument' (Foucault, 1972:7). In other words, in so far as it proposes a certain naturalised categorisation of experience in schematic unities, in so far as it proposes a regulated way of speaking about the world, it falls within the concept of ideology, rather than unmask it. In sum, it would be fair to say that although Derveniotou attempts to shed light on obscure parts of the past, although she presents the latter as lived experience of ordinary people rather than within the bounds of any overarching historical scheme of continuity, her venture is marred by the epistemological flaw of disregarding the various planes on which ideology works. Methodologically, on the other side, the book suffers from the reductionist tropes entailed in the inevitable mediation between remembering (Barbatsi) and re-collecting (Derveniotou) the past.

Having assessed the combined effort of Derveniotou and Barbatsi in the restoration of the historical past, it is imperative to counterpoise it to the *Mission Box* and by means of its formal examination to assess its implication with ideological issues. The *Mission Box*, originally published in 1974, is characterised as "mimicry of realism" (Raftopoulos, 1996:285) and as "anti-fiction" (Tsimokou, 1997) retaining the form of epistolary novel. It is constituted by the confession of a member of the Greek Communist Party imprisoned right after the Civil War and the accomplishment of a secret mission: the transfer of a box with unconcealed content from one site (town K) to another (town N). During the course of the trip, undertaken by a task force of party members, after continuous displacements and deviations ordered by the Party Headquarters, each one of them is eliminated apart from the Narrator, who finds himself incarcerated when the box reaches its destination and is found to be empty. First of all, it is important to note that the Narrator of the letters-memoirs retains throughout the novel his

<sup>3</sup> «Πρωτευουσιάνες και επαρχιώτισσες»  
 «Η ιδεολογική ταυτότητα μας εαμογενοῦς κομμουνίστριας»  
 «Ο αντιστασιακός άνθρωπος» (Translation of the author)

anonymity. There have been some suggestions that the Narrator wishes not to disclose his real identity; he leaves only hints at his being Telemachus, who is being sketched as the Narrator's mirror-image (Kantzia, 2003:121-123). Along this line of analysis, the instant at which he insinuates his real identity constitutes the crucial point of revelation, after which the first part of the book is revealed as a pseudo-confession in an attempt to secure his innocence. However, such an approach would entail the formation of a dipole with the Narrator oscillating between two ideological positions: he would either be dogmatic or renounce his previous party identity and become anti-dogmatic, always along the space circumscribed by his Communist beliefs. In so far as the Subject according to Lacan becomes alienated by the moment of his naming, which signifies his subjugation to the linguistic system (Lacan, 1977), the concealment of the Narrator's name or his deprivation of one, signifies his attempt to flee from the arbitrariness immanent in the linguistic representation and stand outside of the symbolic order in the quest for objectivity.

If the first half of the book constitutes a deliberate attempt of the narrator to align himself with the interrogating authorities, then it lays bare the mechanism by which each testimony is ordered: its abidance by the codes of naturalism, the historical propensity towards elaboration and the technologies of interrogating (both direct interviews and the implicit existence of a researcher). The anonymity of the Narrator can be perceived as a critique to the "privileged witness" (Burgos-Debray, 1984) of the micro-historical method and the equation of his/her experience with a collective way of living. It is in the first half that the Narrator assumes the rationale of official History by establishing coherent sequences of actions and intentions and narrating events in full precision. It is also in this first half that his formal tone echoes the ratiocinations of the official Party<sup>4</sup>. The tone of the narration is explanatory rather than apologetic; as Crist notes, the narrator, the mission box was never meant to be delivered, a plan that the narrator was oblivious of and therefore cannot establish his guilt, having acted as an "executive instrument" (Christ, 1983:39). As Althusser puts it: "all ideology has the function of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects" (Althusser, 1994:107). On the semiotic level, the transfer of the mission box

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<sup>4</sup> The enunciations of the Mayor, "So that we do not play with words keep in mind that we are a suicide mission" (Alexandrou, 1996:51), "we belonged to the Popular Forces, or rather, not to play with words, we were a small unit of the world-wide Red Army" (Alexandrou, 1996:54) manifest a propensity for literalism, echoing the Narrator's intention in his apology to "record the details of the operation" (Alexandrou, 1996:10) and "call a spade a spade" (Alexandrou, 1996:16)

constitutes an attempt from the part of the fully Enlightened Subject to reach meaning, to arrive to safe conclusions and to justify the myth around which his actions are based. The Narrator attempts to provide an elaborate description of the course of the signifier to find its final destination, to be fulfilled so that his lived experience may be stabilised in a historical narrative. As Thalassis shows, the transfer is not uni-directional: the mission box (as a concrete object and as a fully fledged signifier) is being carried from the city K to the city N at the same time as it is being carried from the Other to the Narrator and from the Narrator to the Other (Thalassis, 1992:102). The mission box constitutes the displaced object of desire, its transfer being a quest of truth and meaning and the attainment of an incessant will to achieve gratification. During the first half of the confession, the Narrator shifts constantly positions, he is both the actor (in the execution scenes) and the receiving end (when he stands against the wall of execution), signifying the signifiers of others, while on the other part, trying to correspond his signifiers to the signified provided by others (Thalassis, 1992:100). He is therefore, portraying the mechanisms through which his subjectification and his subjection to ideology had been accomplished.

A crucial schism occurs in the middle of the narration (fourteenth report, 22 September 1949), one that marks the passage to a self-revelatory poetic form and incurs anti-ideological effects. This schism is accompanied by lack of certainty that an apology entails and instead of a testimony addressed to an interrogator, the Narrator recounts the facts to himself:

Comrade or Mr. Interrogator, whoever you are ... I am directing this to whoever happens to be in charge, for now the issue of whether you happen to be Leninist or dogmatist or even a government interrogator is of secondary importance to me, since I have begun to have doubts about something even more crucial: I suspect that you aren't even reading my deposition (Alexandrou, 1996:177).

During the first half of the text the dominant ordering is the chronological and the hierarchical, whereas in the second half the associative-psychological takes the lead and incites a number of crucial alterations (Raftopoulos, 1996:296). In the first half of the book the structure is cyclic: the apologiser constantly revises his account and proves to be unreliable, albeit not carelessly. His is not the confusion of mind tormented by Fury, but “games” thinly disguised as acts of resistance against his – supposed- interrogator and the ineffable obligation to write that the blank papers piled up in his cell imply (Katsan, 2003:73–74). The confession is interrupted for nine days, a period of time that heralds the abandonment of the Narrator’s certainties and the activation of involuntary memory. The



inquisitor to whom the confessions were addressed gives place to the reader, whereas the apologist becomes Narrator producing an explosive narrative that strives to speak out the truth while acknowledging in self-defeat the unavoidable failure of such a mission (Katsan, 2003:303). The rest of the letters, the incessant meaning-loopholes that are created, are not the product of a purposive subjectivity determined to baffle the inquisitor as retribution to the latter's silence: they are the dream-like effect of involuntary memory. The fundamental difference is well articulated by Wittgenstein: "memory [is] involuntary, but calling something to mind is voluntary" (Wittgenstein, 1980:848, cited in Schulte, 1993:109). Whereas Barbatsi's written and oral account constitutes a staged narrative, an act of wilful recollection succumbing to the laws of representation that never seem to free themselves of their ideological bonds, the second half of the *Mission Box* abandons the certainties it had garishly overburdened itself with, and runs on metaphorical writing. Barbatsi's narration is the product of the articulation of the various discursive subject-positions she has assumed (prisoner, woman, fighter, etc). In contrast, the Narrator in an act of personal resistance refuses to be hailed into the subjectivity that corresponds to the category of "political prisoner". Against a law, that as Voglis notes, produces illegality by randomly considering some deeds as crimes (Voglis, 2004:145), the Narrator presents a continually revised version of his actions; the truthfulness of his account is contested, as is the supposed naturalness of legal (or for that matter any) discourse.

The above mentioned process signifies the gradual corrosion of myth, be that party ideology, or the Enlightenment, project of coherent explanatory narratives. From another stance, this inability to reach closure of meaning can be expressed in terms of "desire-production". A contiguous loss, gratification/meaning, is suspended in the continuous displacement of the desire/signification. The female bodies in the text are mutilated: both the nymph Avarvarei and Rena, the narrator's wife, have lost their left hand. Following Domhoff's argumentation Thalassis holds that the right side is considered primarily masculine and rational being the side of the signifieds. Feminine, diffuse characteristics, or else, the signifiers are attributed to the left side (Thalassis, 1992:111). The Narrator holds his documentation on his left hand side but he is unable to decode it, and he never will, since his wife has lost forever her left side and subsequently the ability to accomplish the demands of the symbolic order. She has become phallogocentric herself, displacing once again the stabilisation of the meaning. Unable to be gratified forever, deprived of any stable meaning, the instinct of life is sentenced to death and emptiness. In this sense, the Narrator's testimony is unable to

contribute to any historical discourse, unlike Barbatsi's account that is ultimately accountable to historical interrogating. Thus, it resembles the function of storytelling as posited by Benjamin (1968), whereby death becomes the axis of narration and natural history the continuous point of reference. The interplay between voluntary and involuntary memory, life and death, the futility of speaking and the necessity to testify, is further portrayed in Alexandrou poem entitled *Memoire* written in French, where the return of a traumatic memory rooted to reality (the death of comrades) can only occur through poetic language (Sawas, 2008):

Amidst the thymes, amidst the rocks  
 (Don't speak, you had better shut up)  
 Beneath the blue sky, spring sky,  
 (You have to forget, that was thirty years ago)  
 On the branches, the thymes full of flowers  
 (They were young my three friends)  
 One April day, day of sun  
 All three of them were lying amongst the deads.<sup>5</sup>

Parmi les thym, parmi les pierres  
 (ne parle pas, mieux vaut se taire)  
 Sous le ciel bleu, ciel de printemps  
 (il faut oublier, ça fait trente ans)  
 Sur les épines, les thym fleuris  
 (Ils étaient jeunes mes trois amis)  
 Un jour d'avril, un jour ensoleillé  
 tous trois gisaient parmi les fusillés  
 (cited in Sawas, 2008)

The 1, 3, 5, 7 verses refer to the natural environment, whereas the 2, 4, 6, 8 are imbued with death (or the traumatic memory of it). The poem along with other eight comprising the unprinted collection *Exercices de redactions* was written during Alexandrou exile in France. The writing of the exile, given the mediation of languages, histories and imaginaries, constitutes "a writing between the two" - "écriture de l' entre deux" (Huston, 1999), which permits the writing subject to "inhibit" an imaginary world, more intimate and personal, despite, or even because, of the symbolic confinements. In analogy, the apology of the Narrator oscillates between the official Party ideology and discourse and its equally teleological negation.

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<sup>5</sup> Translation of the author

However, following Vardoulakis (2009) the Narrator manages to transcend, rather than simply negate, “autarchic utopia” (asphyctic teleology of victory, necessity to speak) by establishing an “anarchic utopia” (deconstruction of the teleology, endless suspension of meaning).

The fact that meaning and a definite subject-position in the historical discourse appear as an irretrievable loss in the Mission Box should not be a source for lamentation. For if we follow Derrida in his arguing that “the determination of absolute presence is constituted as self-presence, as subjectivity” (Derrida, 1974:16), then speaking about the past inevitably presupposes an absence, or a dissolution of subjectivity. The Narrator’s only fate in his attempt to make sense of the past is death since the symbolic order he has been engaged in serving presupposes his transfer to the past, to the non-existent. So long as he searches for the past, he prolongs his life. The continuous deferral of signification, the revision of his confession opens up possibilities of a performative reading of the text (Kantzia, 2003:120). Memory is activated by loss, by empty signifiers that are receptive of various significations and the dissolution of any absolute ideology. Any attempt to freeze the meaning and deny the absence of the past will lead either to forgetting or to the effacement of subjectivity. Likewise, Barbatsi has been assigned forever to the archives of the past by means of her stabilised version of the events; her existence will remain there locked and petrified, a still image devoid of content. In an opposite manner, by refusing to procure a unique version of the events, the Narrator remains outside of the discursive realm and appears as empty as the mission box. He is not a subject anymore and thus his only fate can be death: “but if you believe that the box will be filled with my corpse, what you are waiting for, why don’t you place me at six paces against the wall, or, rather, against the steel double-door?” (Alexandrou, 1996: 333). What can be inferred then by the critical comparison of the two books is that History, as a formative discourse, as a mission with a destination to accomplish, cannot remain a blank narrative, an empty box, but has to travel along possibilities and different versions in order to retain the past alive. After all, as Bataille suggests, “Life is never situated at a particular point: it passes from one point to another (or from multiple points to other points), like a current [...]. Thus, there where you would like to grasp your timeless substance, you encounter only a slipping” (cited in Burnett, 1995).

In overall, this essay purported to approach the thorny issue of the representation of lived experience as a testimony in its dual form: fictional and factual accounts and discuss the fundamental underlying issues of

ideology and accuracy that run through the texts. *The Double Book* and the *Mission Box* constituted the starting points and our field of our investigation, being primary representatives of more general tendencies. On a first level it has been demonstrated that while they coincide in their giving voice to the marginalised, hidden Subjects of History, it is in their intrinsic construction that fundamental differences occur touching upon issues of writing, ideology and memory. Furthermore, what ensued was a critical evaluation of *The Double Book*, a critique based on its oppositional ideological strategy that complements –and occasionally contests– the grand historical narrative of official Civil War historiography. Finally, the *Mission Box* was analysed as an alternative method of historical remembering that despite its deceptive realism overturns its internal order and continuously undermines itself. Both texts constitute invaluable complements to national history, enriching it with the perspective of autobiography (*The Double Book*) and fiction (*Mission Box*) that focus on personal aspects, rather than on historical facts per se. However, it is important to note that to the concretisation of a personal past proposed by *The Double Book*, the *Mission Box* counterpoises the undecidability of truth and as such remains profoundly anti-ideological (but not outside ideology). On the other side, the *Mission Box* lacks the communicability of experience offered by *The Double Book*.

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