

Autobiography and Fiction in Semprún's Texts

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Laia Quílez Esteve and Rosa-Àuria Munté Ramos,
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Abstract: In their article "Autobiography and Fiction in Semprún's Texts" Laia Quílez Esteve and Rosa-Àuria Munté Ramos explore aspects of narration in Jorge Semprún's literary work with regard to his experience in the concentration camp. Quílez Esteve and Munté Ramos analyze auto-novelistic mechanisms Semprún employs and reflect on the various meanings of that use by Semprún. Semprún's biographical journey is characterized by a series of experiences which would determine the form and content of his writing. The perception and experience of exile permeates Semprún's pages, the fluctuation of identities which are masked or unmasked within them, or the dissolution of the "I," the scar left by the horror of the concentration camp, all of which stem from his "life history." The relation between writing and life/lives tends to lead to Semprún's literary project to become an act of testimony embedded in what is referred to in scholarship as autobiographical literature.

Laia QUÍLEZ ESTEVE and Rosa-Àuria MUNTÉ RAMOS

Autobiography and Fiction in Semprún's Texts

Jorge Semprún was imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp for eighteen months, from the time he was arrested at the age of nineteen until he was freed at the age of twenty-one (November 1943 to April 1945) and the concentration camp remains the defining experience of his life. In the majority of his novels, essays, articles, and film scripts, the memory of the horrors and deprivations in the camp appears either explicitly or implicitly in an obsessive, repetitive, and recurring form (see, e.g., *Peguy*). For other survivors the camp signified the place where absolute evil prevailed and any sign of human dignity was absent. For example, Primo Levi expounds on how a logic directed towards evil developed in the Nazi camps in order to explain the dehumanization of the inmates (see *I sommersi e i salvati*). However, for Semprún, Buchenwald resulted in a different perspective and amounts to a somewhat different experience. He was arrested because of his anti-totalitarian conviction which he continued to cultivate and develop in the camp. Despite his young age, the fact that he alone, amongst all the Spanish deportees, could speak German made it possible for him to work in the camp's administrative office where they processed the data of the inmates for forced labor (see *Le Mort qu'il faut* 28).

In his eighteen months of imprisonment, Semprún felt death in spite of his privileged position. In fact, the shadow of death "ripened in us, spreading through us like a luminous poison, like an intense light that would obliterate us" (*Life or Literature* 24). Even the essence of that community of "comrades" to which he belonged evoked annihilation and this became more and more present as the days passed and he witnessed the deaths of his friends. At the time of these deaths Semprún turned to literature, this time not to describe them as he would do with Rimbaud previously (see *Le Mort qu'il faut* 39), but to give comfort to the dying and in some way to comfort himself as in the case of his friend Diego when Semprún recited to him "España, aparta de mí este cáliz," a poem by César Vallejo about the Spanish Civil War (*Literature or Life* 192) and during his friend Maurice's final agony, with Baudelaire (*Literature or Life* 23). For many inmates in the camps literature represented an escape and this was the case for Ruth Klüger, for example, who wrote that in the camp poetry was a "magic formula" (Klüger, *Seguir viviendo* 126), which made it possible for her to get through the hours of hunger, cold, and pain. And Levi explains that for a moment he was able to forget who and where he was, when he recited verses from the *Divine Comedy* to Pikolo, a fellow prisoner at Auschwitz (see *If This is a Man*). Along with comradeship, literature became one of the few lifelines for the young Semprún which allowed him to stay afloat in the horror and despair of the camp.

Paradoxically, upon his release, literature became the dark trap which lay in wait for him again and again with the dark shadow of suicide. Semprún recounts this dangerous affair with death in his *Literature or Life*, albeit somewhat ambiguously: "Actually, I'd fallen off a train. A rather wheezy train on a suburban line, even: nothing very adventurous, nothing exciting. But had I fallen from this ordinary, crowded commuter train, or had I deliberately thrown myself onto the tracks? Opinions differed; I myself had no conclusive view of the matter. A young woman claimed, after the accident, that I had jumped" (209). In fact, for Semprún to make public his experience of horror in *Le Grand voyage* sixteen years would have to pass. It was a decade-and-a-half fed by tenacity and perseverance and with a purposeful forgetful and absent-minded Semprún at its center. The decision of "writing or life" was consciously taken one December day in 1945: "I had to choose between literature or Life. ... Like a luminous cancer, the account I was wresting from my memory, bit by bit, sentence by sentence, was devouring my life" (*Literature or Life* 211). Sheltering in "the blissful fog of this amnesia," Semprún fled from writing, something that had molded his life since his early adolescence, because for him this appeared inextricably linked to the traumatic experience of the concentration camp (*Literature or Life* 226). However, the forgetfulness cultivated by Semprún would be a transitional episode in his life, the

necessary stage through which the memory would resurge, fortified and indestructible, to accompany him. This resurgence occurred with the crisis in his intense political activity. Once expelled from the Spanish Communist Party in 1964 and once his revolutionary dream was broken, Semprún decided to anchor himself in writing not only to continue living but also to finally become himself. He states this in his *Federico Sánchez se despide de ustedes*: "So, in 1964 I was forced to become myself again, or rather to eventually become myself because I still had not truly been me ... Because what is certain is that I could only be myself as a writer and writing had been impossible to me. It had been impossible for me to become myself" "Así, en 1964 me había visto obligado a volver a ser yo mismo. Mejor dicho, a serlo por fin, porque todavía no había sido verdaderamente yo mismo ... Porque lo cierto es que sólo podía ser yo mismo como escritor, y la escritura me había sido imposible. Me había sido imposible convertirme en mí mismo" (*Federico Sánchez* 29; unless indicated otherwise, all translations are ours).

In addition to wishing to recuperate his lost identity and to finally become a thinking subject, Semprún immersed himself in autobiographical recreation with the intention of avoiding disproportionate and banal memory, or, in his own words, trying to avoid "Shakespearian delirium" (Munté Ramos and Semprún 130). Semprún discovered the inadequacy of "faithful" narration in the immediate aftermath of Buchenwald, when he heard an account by a survivor of Mauthausen, Manolo Azaustre, who narrated the experience in the concentration camp in Semprún's opinion badly because of the concentration on "facts" (see Munté Ramos and Semprún, "Una entrevista"). For Semprún, the narration of the Holocaust is not to recount it "faithfully"; rather, for him, the "essential truth" of the concentration camp experience -- against Theodor W. Adorno's dictum that "after Auschwitz the writing of poetry is barbaric" (30) -- can only be transmitted via artistic imagination (this view is also confirmed by such as Holocaust survivor Nobel in Literature 2002 Imre Kertész also affirms that the concentration camp is only imaginable as literature and not as life [see Kertész, *Diario*]). The life writing of the Nazi horrors have emphasized the unreal nature of the camps and the traumatic aspects of remembrance. Holocaust testimonies, as noted by Semprún in the prologue of Ruth Klüger's *Seguir viviendo* suggest that "the texts of this crucial experience of the twentieth century will figure in two completely different categories as separated by future critics. On the one hand, the testimonies ... propose to relate and accumulate the details of real experience ... On the other hand, there is a small category of more elaborate works. One of the main authors of this second category is, without doubt, Primo Levi ... [who] sets out to go beyond the mere testimony which collects informative details of existence, to write a more pure work: he insists that writing must filter reality" ("los textos de esta experiencia crucial del siglo XX se inscriben en dos categorías complementarias que la crítica del porvenir distinguirá. Por una parte, los testimonios ... [que] se proponen relatar y atesorar datos de una experiencia real. ... Contamos por otra parte con una reducida categoría de obras más elaboradas. Uno de los autores capitales de esta segunda categoría es sin duda Primo Levi ... [que] se ha propuesto rebasar el mero testimonio que acumule datos informativos y existenciales, para escribir una obra más depurada: él insiste en la necesidad de que la escritura filtre la realidad" [5]). The faith which the authors in this second category of works bring to the capacity of art to bring justice to the indescribable and to that which is impossible to represent, results precisely from this distinction. Thus, from this perspective, not only is there a reaffirmation of the disaccord which, from Plato to Saussure, is surmised between the linguistic sign and the referent which it invokes, but, moreover, it is developed to become the producer of an aesthetic and ethical "truth" at the same time. It is aesthetic because as an artistic device he extracts the ineffable from mere experience and ethical because, to whatever extent the account and the genre adopted for it (from the diary to the novel) is fictionalized, the author is placed as a direct witness of it and consequently makes a testimonial pact with the reader where there is an underlying commitment to collective memory.

If, as we suggest above, Semprún intends to represent truth in his literary project or, said otherwise, to make out of verisimilitude the only possible truth, then what kind of pact will he establish with

the reader? Is this autobiographical, novelistic, or is it situated, without losing its testimonial nature because of it, in no man's land, or the ambiguous territory of autofiction? If by autofiction we understand a set of texts presented as fiction and at the same time hiding beneath the mask of autobiography (on this, see, e.g., Alberca 60), then it is understandable that the "autonovels" of Semprún use it to establish a literary contract with the reader which is complex and contradicts its own nature. In effect, by presenting it as fictional and self-referential at the same time, this elevates the literary text to the status of indecision and allows the novel and the autobiography to merge in an inextricable manner. The pact that Semprún establishes in works such as *Le Grand voyage*, *L'Evanouissement*, *Quel Beau Dimanche!*, *L'Algarabie*, *La Montagne blanche*, or *La Mort qu'il faut* coincides with that ambiguous contract characteristic of autofiction by playing not only with the subject of the testimony but also by distorting that "literary pact" which Philippe Lejeune defended for the autobiographical genre (see *Le Pacte autobiographique*). In fact, the dialogue which Semprún maintains with the historical, political, social, and cultural context which he happened to live through is a memoir in itself and because of that strictly inter-subjective. Consequently, and in spite of his fidelity in the face of testimonial commitment, his complete works allow the reader to reconstruct a universe between the real and the invented, or, in other words, between the documentary and a personal reading of those.

Thus, by playing with novelistic techniques, the works of Semprún border on the limits of autobiography but they are not autobiography per se. But how to sketch the face of the subject who holds discourse? What is the color of their voice? Going back to the concept of autofiction focusing on the implication of the veiled presence of the proper name within, we find that its function refers directly to the fictional and indefinite nature of the subject giving the testimony of their presence in the world, as well as of that world where he/she aims to leave his/her personal and non-transferable outline. In this sense, Manuel Alberca claims that "The proper name in autofiction dramatizes in a theatrical manner the postmodern detachment from the self and without abstract theorizing raises identity to fiction or fiction of identity ... Therefore, the person called 'I' in autofiction is and is not the author himself/herself, insofar as they are incorporated as a himself or herself as a character in a novel, is identified and distanced alternately and simultaneously" ("El nombre propio en la autoficción teatraliza de manera escenográfica el desapego postmoderno del yo, levanta, sin teorizaciones abstractas, la identidad como una ficción o la ficción de la identidad. ... Así quien dice yo en una autoficción es y no es el mismo autor, pues, en la medida en que se incorpora a sí mismo como un personaje de novela, se identifica y se distancia de manera simultánea y alterna" [67]). The "I" puts the status of the subject of autofiction in a dilemma, that is, the importance of the proper name which signs the text and that, according to Lejeune, confers legitimacy and authority to each autobiography. However, is it the same type of distortion which exists in the testimonies of the concentration camp and more specifically in Semprún's autofiction? In our opinion, the answer is an emphatic no, for one sole reason: the disturbing literality which is, in these cases, given in the authorial dissolution. In fact, in the "signed" accounts of Holocaust survivors the author-testimony must not only confront the disappearance of the "I" in the intertextual mosaic of writing but it must also reconstruct the "I" through the account of its own annihilation.

The dissolution of the autobiographical "I" are achieved in the case of Semprún by the multiplicity of identities, of Semprún's "false names" as a writer and also as a character: Gérard Sorel, Federico Sánchez, Rafael Artigas, Rafael Bustamonte, Camille Salagnac, or Juan Larrea are some of the names which constitute the interminable list of Semprún's alter egos which he regularly changed whenever he changed "room or neighborhood" (*What a Beautiful Sunday!* 132). If all of these are children of the Spanish author's years of hiding, the majority of those have likewise been used as the names of characters in the novels and although they are shrouded to some extent in fiction, they refer to an autobiographical person marked by the anguish of continuing to live. Thus, from Gérard Sorel to Federico Sánchez, from the streets of Madrid to the Buchenwald winter, Semprún's excess of identities remains by contrast the indelible mark of his final condition: the stateless "walking cadaver" ("cadavre ambu-

lant" [*Adieu, vive clarté* 86]) who only wants to and is only able to exist in language. It is this precise fluctuation of names and identities which corresponds in Semprún's case to the linguistic oscillation which, from his first years of Parisian exile, became a permanent mark of his condition as an exile. At that moment the Spanish writer decided to become bilingual, making language his home and not the language of any one country. He acknowledges this in his book *Adieu, vive clarté*: "I have made the decision to eliminate all vestige of accent from my French ... To preserve my identity in a foreign country, to convert it to an interior, founding, distinguishing and secret virtue I will blend into the anonymity of correct pronunciation" ("J'ai pris la décision d'effacer au plus vite toute trace d'accent de ma prononciation française ... Pour préserver mon identité d'étranger, pour faire de celle-ci une vertu intérieure, secrète, fondatrice et confondante, je vais me fondre dans l'anonymat d'une prononciation correcte" [87]). By making his home of language French, Semprún manages not only to have a "home" tongue, but also to convert exile into his home and his condition to a writer out of his linguistic schizophrenia as he wrote in 1944: "After all, my homeland is not a particular tongue, neither English nor Spanish; my homeland is the language" ("En fin de compte, ma patrie n'est pas la langue, ni la français ni l'espagnole, ma patrie c'est le langage" [*Mal et modernité* 77]).

Once the theory upon which Semprún's literary project has been laid out, it is logical to focus on how this is developed in his most significant works. Amongst these, perhaps *Le Mort qu'il faut* is the work which best exemplifies what has been outlined here and that is the representation of a multiplied and diffuse "I" and the impossibility of establishing a whole, un-fractured discourse. In *Le Mort qu'il faut* Semprún relates an episode from his imprisonment at Buchenwald, continuously tinged by a confusing set of flashbacks and flashforwards which lead the reader to dissimilar chapters in his "life story" and which span his childhood and youth in occupied Paris to the present in which the text is being written. The event upon which the narrative is structured takes place in the camp at Buchenwald, in the winter of 1944, when the young narrator of the story sees his life endangered with the arrival of a letter to the Gestapo office, from the central address of the concentration camps, demanding information about his condition and whereabouts. Because of an erroneous interpretation of this requirement by his communist companions, who turn the question into a death sentence, they think up a plan which consists of hiding him beneath the identity of a dying prisoner in order to save his life. A set of mirrors is established in which Semprún speaks through the narrator of the story, whose name only appears on two occasions and not by coincidence under the false name of Gérard Sorel. The latter is reflected, and disfigured, in François L., that faceless "other" without his own voice whose name and whose death allow him to survive: "I would live with his name, he would die with mine. In a nutshell, he would give me his death so that I could continue to live. We would exchange our names, which is no little thing. With my name he would turn to smoke; with his I would survive, if that was possible" ("Je vivrai sous son nom, il mourra sous le mien. Il me donnera sa mort, en somme, pour que je puisse continuer à vivre. Nous échangerons nos noms, ce n'est pas rien. C'est sous mon nom qu'il partira en fumée; c'est sous le sien que je survivrai, si ça se trouve" [*La Mort qu'il faut* 138]). However, this transmutation of names goes beyond pure legal identity. If the Gérard Sorel, who tells the story, "could be" Semprún himself since he bears witness to irrefutable biographical experiences lived by the author (such as writing and publishing other novels of his), Gérard Sorel "could also have been" François L. Both were deported to Buchenwald in the same convoy and with practically consecutive registration numbers which makes it if not obvious at least possible that both could have suffered the "initial disinfection tests" in a practically identical time and space. The fate held for them from that moment onwards was different nevertheless. One would end up as a *Muselmann* (a term used in the concentration camp to refer to inmates who lost all will to live) and eventually in the crematorium and the other's life would be saved and he would make a novel out of it so that this horror would not be repeated. It would be François L. himself, represented as the character of the autobiographical mask, who, in his last days of agony, transmits to Gérard his dream of fictionalizing the past torment of his imprisonment and, in doing it, of including the Spanish prisoner as his novelistic companion: "If I get

out of here and write, you will be in my story,' he said. 'But you don't know anything about me!' I answered him. 'What use will I be in your story?' He knew enough, he claimed, to make a fictional character out of me. 'Because you will become a fictional character, my friend, although I won't invent anything'" ("Si j'en reviens et que j'écris, je te mettrai dans mon récit, me disait-il. Tu veux bien? 'Mais tu ne sais rien de moi! lui disais-je. À quoi je vais servir, dans ton histoire?' Il en savait assez, affirmait-il, pour faire de moi un personnage de fiction. 'Car tu deviendras un personnage de fiction, mon vieux, même si je n'invente rien!'") (*La Mort qu'il faut* 148). François L. died in Buchenwald; starting from him it can indeed be concluded that years later "Gérard Sorel," now Semprún, alleviated his existential emptiness through the invention of a fictional character in *Le Grand voyage*: "Fifteen years later in Madrid, in a secret flat, I followed his advice ... I invented the boy from Semur to keep me company in the wagon. In fiction we made that journey together to erase my loneliness in real life" ("Quinze ans plus tard, à Madrid, dans un appartement clandestin, je suivrais son conseil ... J'inventerais le gars de Semur pour me tenir compagnie dans le wagon. Nous avons fait ce voyage ensemble, dans la fiction, j'ai ainsi effacé ma solitude dans la réalité" (*La Mort qu'il faut* 148). The reflections in the aforementioned mirror are now multiplied: on the one hand, François L. while being a *Muselmann*, is also that whole and impossible testimony to which we refer when we discuss the crisis of the concentration camp testimony; on the other hand, his "proper name" becomes the safe-conduct of that other name which is in turn hidden under the pseudonym of Gérard Sorel; and, finally, becomes the alter ego of the writer understood, as always, as the character who writes, as the first writer of that fictionalized but real "long journey," created fifteen years later.

Likewise, we find this insane transmutation of subjects who knit the discourse together and are introduced as novelistic characters in *Le Grand voyage* surely the most emblematic text of Semprún's (auto)biography, which explicitly refers to his experience in the concentration camp. It is the account of the humiliating and claustrophobic journey in a narrow, sealed wagon and the work is characterized by the inclusion of a decentered and dangerously split subject whose voice is multiplied almost infinitely through a constant, breakable, enunciative polyphony. Thus, the first part of the book is narrated in first person and in the present -- a discontinuous and fragmentary present, and under the name of Gérard Sorel -- whose reflections are interrupted (enriched) by the boy from Semur, the character invented by Semprún. In contrast, the second and much shorter chapter begins with a brusque change to the grammatical third person. With this leap it seems as if with his travel companion dead and in the midst of the "icy night air" ("l'air glacé de la nuit" [*Le Grand Voyage* 261]), the subject, the "I," the "he" and Semprún himself, who until now had fought through memories not to let himself be contaminated by the degradation of the wagon, had been annihilated, inexorably crushed by a reality which is now "beyond the possibilities of his imagination" ("au-delà des possibilités de leur imagination" [*Le Grand Voyage* 278]). Injured, hungry, and suddenly mute, the masked ghost under the name of Gérard and under the dozens of pseudonyms related to him is seized like a beaten dog to "abandon the world of the living, abandon the world of the living" ("quitter le monde des vivants, quitter le monde des vivants" [*Le Grand Voyage* 279]).

In *What a Beautiful Sunday!* we also find a set of identities which are represented by the alternate and unpredictable use of the first and third person to refer to the protagonist of the story. Again Gerárd Sorel is explicitly denominated in many ways: Federico Sánchez, Camille Salagnac, Rafael Bustamonte, Rafael Artigas (all of these "war names" from his years of hiding in occupied Paris and in Franco-ruled Spain), and the narrator. This last name, in its original form, is a common name, but used as a proper name in the novel refers to the "function" of the protagonist in the very account being related. Therefore, when he recounts waking up on a snowy Sunday in Buchenwald, Semprún recurs to the perspective of Fernand Barizon, one of his comrades in Block 40, to refer to himself in the third person and to change in the same paragraph to the first person: "The Spaniard has come from the Burgundy resistance group, it seems. In any case, he's in the Party. He's called Gérard ... When he saw Gérard again, years later, fifteen years later, fifteen years after Buchenwald, I was no longer

called Gérard, I was called Sánchez, but it was obvious that Barizon didn't recognize me" (*What a Beautiful Sunday!* 50). One notes that in this fragment, in which there is a leap in time of fifteen years with respect to the events narrated initially, the writer appears as a character in the novel, as well as the narrator responsible for the story. By merging one person with another Semprún succeeds in cracking the illusory effect of the first person, which consists of conveying the indirect with the direct thus showing clearly and explicitly the fugitive nature of each speaking subject and their impossibility to express themselves totally in a satisfactory way.

The breaking down of identity in an indeterminate set of subjects of an almost ghostly whole also takes place in Semprún's novelistic creations. Thus, in *L'Algarabie* -- "an allegoric text of the battle for hegemony between the political sectors derived from Marxism" ("texto alegórico de la lucha por la hegemonía entre los sectores políticos derivados del marxismo" [Molero de la Iglesia 683]) -- Carlos Bustamante, one of its main characters, suffers a sudden invasion of the unknown. As the mnemonic abyss opened for Proust as he tasted the *madeleine*, it is not his own past that it revives but the life of Another, which as a last resort constitutes him: "This Other he happened to be had with no doubt written poems. ... It was like a palimpsest that had to be deciphered ... He himself, this being, this other, this I, this self lived or even this living being ... or, even better, this experience that was him, this dependence on life encouraged, none of these show, however, the imperious evidence of an identity. In summary, he was an anonymous 'I'" ("Cet Autre qu'il lui arrivait d'être avait écrit des poèmes, sans doute. ... C'était comme un palimpseste à déchiffrer ... Lui-même, cet être, cet autre, ce je, ce moi, ce soi-même, ce vécu, ou plutôt ce vivant ... ou encore mieux, cette vivance qu'il était, cette mouvance de la Vie qui l'animait, rien de tout cela n'était pourtant ressenti avec l'évidence impérieuse d'une identité. En somme, il était un Je anonyme" [Semprún, *L'Algarabie* 117-18]). Rafael Artigas, the protagonist of the novel whose name reminds the reader of one of the pseudonyms taken by Jorge pages later offers the key to reading such a palimpsest of memory. Artigas writes poems and more than any other character in the story is the victim of a ghostly existence, marked by belonging to a nation whose borders are delimited only by the smoke from the crematorium of Buchenwald: "I was already dead in that autumn ... My life was but a dream after the grey smokiness of the concentration camp. That grey cloud in which my comrades, both unknown and known, disappeared. Halbwachs and Maspero Piotr and Pedro" ("J'étais déjà mort cet automne-là ... Ma vie qu'un rêve depuis la fumée grise du camp. Ce nuage où s'en allaient en fumée mes camarades inconnus ou connus Halbwachs et Maspero Piotr et Pedro" [Semprún, *L'Algarabie* 141]).

This feeling of alienation from oneself is found in a similar way and in identical circumstances in *La Montagne blanche*, with an ex-déporté as a protagonist whose passage through horror and humiliation converts him into a fractured subject. This time it is fatal: let us recall that he commits suicide in the end, because, in that October 1979, in the Merano hotel, where he waits for his lover, the restoration of the lost unity, the fusion of his two halves could never occur but in his mnemonic journey to his memories of the concentration camp and in his solitary and cutting evocation of the snow in Buchenwald and of the smell of burned flesh: "But undoubtedly he would be willing ... to accept the recuperation of his unity in a dreadful past which for a long time he has tried to forget. To be himself, even at the cost of returning on a Sunday afternoon to Buchenwald, with the loudspeakers playing Zarah Leander songs" ("Mais sans doute serait-il prêt ... à accepter de retrouver son unité dans un passé néfaste qu'il s'est longtemps efforcé d'oublier: être lui-même, soi-même, fût-ce au prix d'un retour dans un après-midi de dimanche à Buchenwald, avec les haut-parleurs diffusant des chansons de Zarah Leander" [*La Montagne blanche* 91-92]).

In conclusion, survivors, suicides, exiles, or clandestine revolutionaries, the characters who abound in Semprún's work identify themselves without exception with and by the testimony of the concentration camp. As it happens with him, the trauma of that nameless experience leads them to refer to the Holocaust not so much as a "lived" experience but as an incident in which death pervaded all: "For the witnesses, the Holocaust is at once a lived event and a 'died' event: the paradox of how

one survives a died event is one of the most urgent ... topics of their testimonies," affirms Langer in *Holocaust Testimonies* (69). In Semprún and his texts we have the paradox of the manner of narrating this death and, as we have seen, the manner of narrating it through the voice of a ghost who has traversed the darkness and resuscitates solely and exclusively to relate to and report it.

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