JORGE SEMPRÚN AND THE LANGUAGES OF DEMOCRACY

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An exile of the Spanish civil war, erstwhile Communist, and survivor of the Nazi camp of Buchenwald, Jorge Semprún lived most of his adult life in France and wrote the majority of his autofictional and autobiographical work in French. He was one of many Republican Spaniards to escape war-torn Spain over the Pyrenees, though he is one of only a handful of writers to have remained in France and adopted its language as his own. In later life he reflected that this gave him 'un statut d'écrivain très bizarre en Espagne. Tout le monde me considère comme un écrivain espagnol, mais je ne fais pas partie de la littérature espagnole puisque j'écris en français.'[i] Well known for his work in France but, according to Ferrán and Hermann,[ii] refused entry to the Académie Française de la Langue on account of both his nationality and his Communist past, his 'statut d'écrivain' was arguably no less 'bizarre' in his adopted country. Semprún's was an intensely historical life shaped by political conviction and his experiences of war and exile, experiences that he reworked in overlapping narratives of memory concerned with exploring personal trauma in the context of historical conflict. A member of the Communist Resistance in France and clandestine agitator in Franco's Spain, Semprún became disillusioned by Stalinism and was expelled from the Spanish Communist Party in 1964, later serving as Minister for Culture in Spain's first democratic government after the death of Franco. These events significantly shaped his political and aesthetic worldview, as he strove to reflect the anti-totalitarian tendencies of democratic reason in language and literary form. Though this pluralist concern may be undermined by his sexism, and by the sometimes domineering and self-aggrandising tendencies of his narrative voice,[iii] Semprún's concern to make writing an ethical point of encounter is manifested not only in his extensive use of intertextual allusion to generate a network of literary kinship with other writers, but in his open and consistent appeal to a sympathetic and judicious reader, *mon semblable, mon frère*, who will engage with him as an equal.

Semprún's bilingualism and recurrent interest in translation are central to his political vision, staking out the difference between totalitarian and democratic modes of thought and expression in relation to the discourse of reality. As such, translation becomes a formal articulation of a democratic and cosmopolitan ideal, rooted in a view of the historical present as the fluid, plural, mobile, temporal site of ethical

action, its fluidity and temporality guaranteed only by an always internally conflictive democracy. This stands in contrast to the stagnating rhetoric and frozen historiography of totalitarian regimes, and the organic, idealist view of history of reactionary thought and nationalist politics. As Bella Brodzki writes, 'Semprún's multiple crossings exhibit an ongoing relation to translation as the dominant, transcendent, cosmopolitan modality in his life, one that he has, repeatedly, chosen to renew in every context'.[iv] The translated text is the image *par excellence* of layered contexts, displaced origins, transferable but not wholly assimilable truths, that Semprún takes from the experience of exile and makes the stuff of his political and aesthetic vision. Throughout Semprún's work, the formulation of the reader as 'mon semblable, mon frère' makes the act of translation one of 'courtoisie' and inclusion,[v] especially resonant in relation to fraternity as a core ethical and human value. For though, as Daniela Omlor observes, Semprún's ideal reader may be one that is 'capable of following all his linguistic and mental turns without further translation',[vi] it is typical of Semprún's *engagé* approach to language that in the absence of that possibility he should precisely underline its constructive necessity. Indeed it is notable how consistently Semprún associates reading in translation with intellectual curiosity, how extensively he quotes authors in other languages, and how assiduously he translates these for his reader. Both translation and citation are eminently cultured manifestations of multilingualism, the 'courtoisie' associated with the former almost chivalric in connotation.

This article will consider his articulation of that translational vision in the essay *Mal et Modernité* (1990), before going on to explore how his earlier, bilingually titled novel *L'Algarabie* (1981) both questions and affirms that vision in the context of ideological breakdown. In particular, it will consider how Semprún extends the layering and displacement of the bilingual or translated text to the possession and haunting of time, place and consciousness, as he explores what a polyphonic and postmodern democracy might look like at the end of history.

Semprún's essay *Mal et modernité* is useful to an understanding of what is at stake in his distinction between totalitarian and democratic modes of thought and expression. Written in 1990, shortly after both the bicentenary of the French Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall – events that circumscribe the modernity he goes on to describe – *Mal et modernité* gives philosophical ballast to social ideals and political convictions expressed elsewhere in his writing.[vii] Sharing with his memoir

L'Écriture ou la vie (1994) an interest in Kant's notion of radical evil, and positing it as 'the force that shaped the twentieth century',[viii] the essay supplements the author's autofictional writing by questioning how a secular and historical present can take account of transcendent and once theological notions of good and evil, working out a secular political vision of the future that rationally acknowledges their pervasive transcendence. This question is formulated in response to the many totalitarian visions since the French Revolution that have produced radical evil in the name of an ultimate good, and though it certainly does not constitute a critique of enlightenment thought *à la* Adorno and Horkheimer, it might nevertheless be considered an attempt not to leave 'consideration of the destructive aspect of progress […] to its enemies'.[ix] Semprún argues that the successive utopian attempts to find transcendent good or heaven on earth have turned in on themselves as the quest has become rhetorically stagnant and evil has set in, precisely because the monolithic discourse of totalitarian ideology is self-confirming and not expansive enough to accommodate evil conceptually. For this reason Semprún argues that future political projects must not only take account of the transcendence of evil, but must avoid the totalitarian monopoly on the idea and language of what is good. Careful precisely to avoid any claim to innately 'good' political formulations, Semprún considers democratic reason to be strong when it is conceptually flexible enough to accommodate evil as a constituent part of human freedom. If 'mal' is the radical evil at the root of human liberty, good is what can be produced through historical choice, action and political will 'selon les circonstances'.[x] This is not the monolithic but illusory good of totalitarian ideology, but a democratic vision modelled on multilingualism, translation, and internal contradiction. This democratic vision surely marks the end of the modern search for a godless utopia, and it is still godless and perhaps even still a utopia, but it is also conceptually rich and formally flexible, seeking ways to deflect evil by refusing totalising visions in which the meaning of words becomes ossified.

As Ulrich Winter points out, Husserl's idea of a 'geistige Gestalt Europas', or 'spiritual form of Europe', conceived not geographically but 'borne by […] democratic reason',[xi] is a central idea in Semprún's ideological framework. In an apparent aside to *Mal et modernité,* Semprún mentions that on the day he was arrested by the Gestapo he was carrying a knapsack containing four books: a German edition of *Don Quixote*, the first modern novel; a French translation of Kant's *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason,* which introduces the idea of radical evil as a human

rather than theological problem; Camus' *Mythe de Sysiphe*, with its existentialist reflections on freedom; and Malraux's *Les Noyers de l'Alternburg,* with its search for 'la région cruciale de l'âme où le Mal absolu s'oppose à la fraternité' (words that form the epigraph to *L'Écriture ou la vie*). These books map the intellectual coordinates of this moment in his life, as well as its personal, historical, and philosophical significance. They are also representative of the literary and intellectual traditions of Spain, France and Germany, co-existing in translated editions that emphasise their shared European context. This transcendence of national heritage in the symbolic form of the translated text seems to endorse Marx's idea, after Goethe, that in modernity 'the intellectual creations of individual nations become common property'.[xii] Semprún mentions as if in passing that he first read *Don Quixote* in German translation, translating it back into Spanish in an evocation of Borges's Pierre Menard: 'si je n'ai pas récrit le *Don Quichotte*, mot à mot, comme lui, j'en ai du moins retraduit le début dans sa langue originale'.[xiii] Pierre Menard's re-writing of the *Quixote* is a historical re-contextualisation which Semprún seems to employ as a metaphor of active reading and writing, as well as a kind of homecoming ('retraduit […] dans sa langue originale'), as if translation were not merely a means of access to other cultures but also, perhaps principally, to one's own. The digression leads nowhere in an otherwise carefully structured discursive piece on Kant's notion of radical evil within historical modernity. But readers of Semprún will identify the digression as a link in the chain of his wider œuvre, a connecting node to his autofictional writing in which translation looms large as both functional reality and idealised metaphor in a fractured and multilingual twentieth-century Europe, embodying the fraternal 'courtoisie' of communicative meaning, while avoiding the monopolies on truth imposed by totalitarian ideology.

Ursula Tidd, following Tijana Miletić,[xiv] writes that 'as a bilingual writer used to switching between languages, […] Semprún experiments frequently with the separability of signifier and signified'; 'the linguistic heterogeneity of the Semprunian discourse must also be viewed as part of a wider and profound metadiegetic and metaphysical questioning on the possibilities of representation *tout court* in the aftermath of the Holocaust.'[xv] But the ethical dimension Semprún attaches to translation seems to reflect his confidence in the communicative power of language and narrative. He is, after all, writing of and through a period which, artistically and philosophically, distances and deconstructs the relationship between language and its

object, while bringing closer the constructed truths of historiography and fictional narrative. Semprún's concerns lie not with communicative failure as an inevitable property of language exacerbated by historical outrage, but with the capacity of language to give form to experience and to interpellate a sympathetic reader. Bilingualism generates formal complexity because, even before writing begins, experience can be voiced two ways and readers made to understand or not understand; but this manifests less a concern with the abstract problems of signification or representation than with narrative as the active point of connection between writer and reader, in which some ethical will must be brought to bear on both sides as the past is remembered in the name of the future. For all that he reworks and reimagines his own experience in literary form, for all the importance he attaches to the traumatic bilingualism of exile, and for all that he stages the struggle to speak or write about the concentration camp, Semprún remains wedded both to a notion of historical truth and to the communicative possibilities of language. These are the ethical pillars of a richly historical testimony.

The motifs of translation and fraternal reading are therefore at the heart of a democratic vision founded on active, practical, negotiated forms of human engagement, translation and reading being forms of interpretation in which meanings are never absolute. Nonetheless, there are problems with translation as an ethical proposition and a political metaphor, problems that surface to a greater or lesser degree in Semprún's work. The first of these is that, like all uses of language, translation can be made to serve the interests of power, reinforcing rather than overcoming linguistic hierarchies and the social or cultural hierarchies they embody. The second is that the dual and therefore relatively stable relationship between source text and translation, translator and reader, may not adequately convey the complex nature of democracy's multiple and collective enterprise. Semprún acknowledges the first problem with rare moments of refusal, when he balks at translation and challenges the reader to reach out to him in an act of linguistic and cultural enterprise. For example, quoting in *L'Écriture ou la vie* an untranslated excerpt of a poem by Peruvian poet César Vallejo, he tells the reader it will remain 'comme un secret, un signe de connivence avec un possible lecteur *hispanisant',*[xvi] a choice of word that does not exclude the Francophone reader, but rather puts the onus on that reader to engage with the Spanish language. Semprún was often frustrated by France's confidence in its own natural right to be the centre of universal culture – the 'de-

nationalized locus of the Universal, home to the Classic, guardian of Taste, resolver of Quarrels, arbiter of the New, host to the Avant-Garde', to quote Christopher Prendergast[xvii] – and with French prejudice where Spain and the Hispanic world were concerned.[xviii] This is forcefully expressed in *L'Algarabie*, where the narrator accuses the French of forgetting their own bloody history of internal strife and regarding Spain's more recent civil conflict with prim horror.[xix] So while Semprún consistently implies that translation is a conscious manifestation of an ethical impulse, a concrete but also symbolic exercise of will against a defeatist and divisive alternative, he also recognises the hierarchical differences that can make translation serve the interests of power. This acknowledgement of the role of power in translation highlights the fact that, as a utopian ideal, it may not truly reflect the internally conflictive nature of democracy in the modern or postmodern era. This idea is again encapsulated in *L'Algarabie*, in which a linguistic metaphor of the incomprehensible is brought to bear on a novel about the end of history and the failure of ideology, in which all narratives collapse and blend into a somewhat paradoxical, and not always tenable, collaborative life-writing. The failure of translation as a social metaphor in this context is reflected in the novel's final words: '*Que nos quiten lo bailado* […]. Mais il ne va pas traduire, foutre non! Le roman est fini, nous sommes revenus dans la triste réalité: comprenne qui pourra.'[xx]

Published in 1981 but begun as early as 1974, *L'Algarabie* is a long and fiendishly complex novel that self-consciously incorporates and parodies the novel genre at various stages of its development, from the Spanish picaresque (a satirical and grotesque proto-realist genre of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), via the nineteenth-century serialised novel, especially Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (1843), to the modernist works of Proust and Gide. *L'Algarabie* is ostensibly conceived and partially written in Spanish by Semprún's alter ego, the 'écrivain apatride' Rafael Artigas,[xxi] a political exile whose only desire is to go home and whose memories 'migrate' to the mind of another character, Carlos Bustamante, in anticipation of his death. Carlos, born on the day that Artigas went into exile, is partly responsible for transcribing and writing up in French the novel – *L'Algarabie* – that Artigas's death prevents him from completing. The novel's plot is summed up by Artigas in a few lines that strongly echo Gide's *Paludes*:

> C'est l'histoire d'un vieil homme dont personne ne sait plus le vrai nom, qui a écrit des livres autrefois. Ça se passe au cours d'une seule journée en octobre 75. Le général Franco est en train de mourir. L'homme […] veut aller à la Préfecture de Police pour obtenir un passeport. Il veut rentrer chez lui.[xxii]

Though misleadingly simple, this short résumé indicates the interwoven significance of identity, writing, the end of ideology, and the idea of homecoming to the novel.

L'Algarabie imagines that General de Gaulle was killed in a helicopter accident during the riots in 1968, leading to outright civil war and the eventual splitting in two of Paris by a high wall between the Rive droite and the Rive gauche. The Rive gauche is now a left-wing commune (the ZUP) in the hands of revolutionary factions, who variously interpret the acronym as the 'Zone d'utopie populaire', the 'Zone où s'unifiera le peuple', or the 'Zone urbaine prolétarienne'.[xxiii] When the novel begins, the ZUP is beset with infighting and faces reabsorption into the otherwise capitalist and bourgeois city – which rebuilds and reuses its traditional spaces in line with its commercial ethos – while socialist ideology has shrunk into a tiny enclave shut off from the lives of ordinary people. In this way the novel critiques the anachronistic fervour of small bands that cannot adapt to, let alone shape, the political and social realities of the present. Unusually witty and acerbic in tone, the novel predates and shares with Derrida's *Spectres de Marx* (1993)[xxiv] the notion that Marx is a ghost that haunts the present; but in Semprún's account Marx is a character in a bourgeois novel or, more specifically, a cameo in the film version of Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris*, a critically ironic but nonetheless incorporated presence in the bourgeois text.[xxv] The ZUP constitutes an imaginative historical layering of the Paris Commune, the Spanish Republic, and the student protests of 1968, and though the novel focuses on the fortunes of the Left it also considers the broader failure of twentieth century's many utopias to successfully construct an alternative social order: by the end of the novel we witness, immediately or remotely, the deaths of Franco (fascist), Artigas (socialist) and Eleuterio Ruiz (anarchist). The end of ideology and triumph of liberal capitalism in a present full of ghosts and palimpsests make this novel a testament to the postmodern – or at least to the conditions of heterogeneity, 'random difference', and the 'coexistence of a host of distinct forces' which, for Fredric Jameson, make it necessary to theorise postmodernity[xxvi] – though the novel continues to stake a claim for historicity that is resolutely modern. The *algarabie* of

the present is therefore an expression of the confusion of the post-ideological present, though perhaps also a statement of its pluralist possibilities.

L'Algarabie is a Gallicised version of the Spanish word *algarabía,* which, as the novel goes to some pains to explain, connotes a confusion of voices and linguistic incomprehensibility. The neologism in French no doubt reflects Semprún's hesitation in deciding in what language the novel should be written – '*L'Algarabie* changea plusieurs fois de langue, comme un serpent change de peau, ayant hésité longtemps entre l'espagnol et le français'[xxvii] – but, more importantly, it reflects his thematic exploitation of this oscillation between two languages. The word *algarabía* in Spanish originally denoted Arabic, the language of the Muslims driven out of Spain in a 'Reconquest' lasting eight centuries, culminating in the unification of Spain under the Catholic Kings in 1492. By Gallicising the word in Spanish rather than using its broad equivalent in French (*charabia*), itself probably drawn from the Occitan *algaravia*, Semprún draws attention both to Spain's Moorish past and to the linguistic cross-pollination of cultures and languages, major and minor, Eastern and Western, voiced in this word for the unintelligible. Though we are told that the novel could just as well have been called *La Tour de Babel* or *Le Charabia*,[xxviii] Semprún's neologism therefore has the advantage of explicitly revealing the cultural layers of which the word is constituted, playing with incomprehensibility while at the same time drawing on its etymological familiarity to make itself intelligible.

The evolution in the meaning of the word *algarabía,* which from denoting a language in particular comes to denote the unintelligible (the absence of language), is a reminder of the extent to which the Moor came to be seen as radical other in the Spanish imagination: '"le Maure", *el Moro*, a été, est encore souvent, dans l'imaginaire collectif espagnol, le stéréotype de l'Autre, par definition et antonomase: l'étranger fourbe et inquiétant.'[xxix] Semprún brings the word to life in the context of a medieval ballad, a form that constitutes the popular, oral history of the Reconquest and which often conveys a Moorish perspective on events. This is true of the ballad in question, 'Yo me era mora Moraima', which concerns the tricking of a young Moorish girl by a Christian who speaks her language (*algarabía*, precisely) in order to pretend to be of her kind and so gain access to her house and also, by implication, to her body. The man overcomes the girl's caution by telling her he is being pursued by the Christian enemy; against the backdrop of this conflict he speaks her language in order to gain her trust, but this simply facilitates his lie and allows him to force

himself upon her. This use of language provokes the breakdown in communication connoted by the more contemporary sense of the word *algarabía*, though more importantly the use of another's language to trick and deceive them reveals an awareness of the possible duplicity and desire for mastery inherent in the assumption of another linguistic identity, an identity that allows the speaker access to a house and a body that wouldn't ordinarily be welcoming. On the level of cultural history, then, this ballad evokes the conflict at the root of Spanish modernity, seemingly in vindication of the radical other against which the modern nation has traditionally defined itself. But given the prominence of the verb 'maîtriser' in Semprún's vocabulary, noted by Ferrán and Hermann,[xxx] the evocation of mastery and forced entry through language also forms a strong counterpoint to any ethics of translation. This is exacerbated by Artigas's 'sodomisation imaginaire' of his 'mère patrie' or 'père matrie',[xxxi] the latent homosexuality and incestuous nature of his exilic desire perhaps expressive of a desire for sameness precluded by the *hetero* nature of his foreignness. The psychoanalytically framed rape fantasies of the exile extend therefore to both mother country and other country, in a desire for both return and mastery which, in the broader context of *L'Algarabie*'s ideological breakdown and social 'déracinement', take on somewhat apocalyptic dimensions, mitigated only by the novel's irony.

What place does translation have in such a spectacle? Artigas's words rely on the more or less accurate transcription, translation, interpretation and ventriloquism of characters that know him intimately, yet cannot always unlock the secrets of his most sedimented cultural memories. And this in spite of the fact that the character responsible for the translation has been possessed by the older man's memories, involuntarily reliving moments of his pre-exilic childhood in a kind of transmigration of Artigas's identity. Artigas's possession of Carlos is complemented by Carlos's possession of Artigas through translation and re-writing, evoking another manifestation of homoerotic and perhaps incestuous desire (where Carlos, Artigas and Semprún are all versions of the same being). In this way Semprún evokes personal identity as a palimpsest, an analogy Carlos himself employs to describe the man whose identity he shares without at first knowing to whom it belongs.[xxxii] Individual consciousness is thus formed in the intuition of other lives as well as the experience of one's own, in what is perhaps a more human interpretation of the poststructuralist understanding of intertextual identity. The writing up, re-writing, translation,

completion and organisation of Artigas's autobiographical novel by other characters who, through intuition and research, have come to know him almost as well as he knows himself, marks the mode of collaborative life-writing that is also the democratic, end-of-history experience of *L'Algarabie*: a crazed, over-sexed, phantasmagorical product, ironically indebted to the popular French nineteenth-century novel, overwritten on the Spanish picaresque, and haunted by both Marx and Freud.

If palimpsests and ghosts are key tropes in the constitution of the individual personality, they are no less so in the constitution of the historical present: the layering of events, the architectural destruction and regeneration of Paris, and the ideas of possession and haunting all suggest a lack of causality and separateness, a repetitive re-writing of the past in which, to quote Marx's celebrated phrase, 'the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.'[xxxiii] This would seem to reinforce Carlos's mournful reflection that 'nous, qui aurions dû être l'avenir, sa préfiguration du moins, même maladroit, nous ne sommes plus que les vestiges archaïques d'une Commune singeant les espérances du XIX^{e} siècle, répétitives comme une farce macabre.'[xxxiv] Yet this pessimistic view of history sits uncomfortably with Semprún's own political activism, and with his assertion of the historical validity of experience and life writing. For all that the author was influenced by Proust and Faulkner and their stylistic de-centring of chronology – he associated chronology with totalitarian and theological modes of thought[xxxv] – Semprún does not, to quote Sartre, 'decapitate' time by depriving it 'of its future, that is, its dimension of deeds and freedom'.[xxxvi] Rather, as Ursula Tidd points out, the temporality of Semprún's writing endorses Sartre's view that consciousness is not merely concerned with reinventing the past for the purposes of the present – a Bergsonian idea developed in a literary context by Eliot in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' and Borges in 'Kafka and his Precursors' – but is projected towards the future and has a shaping influence upon it.[xxxvii] As such the novel seems less to deny the possibility of real historical change than to identify the need for a pragmatic understanding of what and how change can be achieved in a specific time and place: 'La seule perspective vraiment révolutionnaire, aujourd'hui, est celle qui ne propose pas de changer la société mais de socialiser le changement.'[xxxviii]

To return to the ballad, Artigas hears it sung by some little girls as they play and the sound takes him back to his childhood, to a time lost forever that is also

'l'algarabie des temps heureux d'autrefois'.[xxxix] As Guy Mercadier has observed, the personal significance of this memory extends to a form of cultural memory: 'surgie de la lointaine jeunesse de la littérature espagnole',[xl] the medieval ballad evokes a 'temps perdu'[xli] at the level of both an individual and a nation. As an individual account of conflict the ballad encodes a failure to cope with cultural difference, a failure figured in terms of linguistic and sexual forcing; though as a representative embodiment of the ballad form, it also evokes a history of cultural and linguistic co-existence, which in turn manifests itself as a future possibility. The pleasure and amusement the little girls take in the ballad is intensified by their rhythmic and collective chanting of the words '¡Algarabía, chisgarabís!',[xlii] words which provoke 'un fou rire collectif et inextinguible'[xliii] and connote the noisy rejoicing that is a further semantic dimension of the Spanish word *algarabía*. The rhythmic orality of the ballad's original composition lives on in the sound rather than the sense of strange but suggestive words, in the pleasure of the wordless 'fou rire' rather than the duplicitous forced entry of linguistic mastery. The confusion of *algarabía* implies the joyful intermingling of many voices which, in the context of the novel's concern with the end of history and ideology, is perhaps a cautiously optimistic formulation of the democratic future, as the conflicts of the past are at once remembered and forgotten in the ballad's form. The invented word *algarabie*, itself a palimpsest, comes to stand paradoxically for (un)intelligible likeness rather than radical difference, as all poles of the ideological spectrum are drawn irresistibly to the magnet of liberal capitalism, and the Western world is increasingly defined by both sameness and plurality.

Translation was and remained in Semprún's writing an ideal of communication and 'courtoisie' for the democratic future. But *L'Algarabie* is a rare example of where he recognises the limits of this linguistic metaphor in a (post)modernity characterised by the eradication of ideological boundaries on the one hand, and the proliferation of consumer choice on the other. The encapsulation in a single word of the unintelligible and the familiar, the foreign and the same, embodies the novel's ambivalent treatment of its concern with the 'end of history', in a ludic and metafictional context of free fall and free-for-all that seems to embody a Freudian release of uncivilized drives. The historical mash-up and ideological and communicative failure conveyed in the novel suggest perhaps an endorsement of Rosa Luxemburg's famous choice between socialism and barbarism, though there is also a cautious optimism about the plural possibilities of a democratic future that

'attenuates' the 'formless brutality' of the present.[xliv] In spite of its mordant, defeated irony and its surrender to liberal capitalism, in its telling of Artigas's story the novel represents the recovery of a personal and historical narrative that vindicates individual bodies and acts within the palimpsest of history, identity and language, encapsulating in the bilingual neologism *algarabie* the historical depth of cultural meanings, as well as a salutary release from those very meanings.

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[i] 'Rencontre avec Jorge Semprun, à l'occasion de la parution de *Vingt ans et un jour'* (2004), <http://www.gallimard.fr/catalog/entretiens/01049083.htm> [accessed 25 Aug 2015].

[ii] Ofelia Ferrán and Gina Herrmann (eds), *A Critical Companion to Jorge Semprún: Buchenwald, Before and After* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 11.

[iii] See especially Noël Valis, 'Reader Exile and the Text: Jorge Semprún's *Auobiografía de Federico Sánchez*', *Monographic Review/Revista monográfica*, 2 (1986), 174–188; Ursula Tidd, 'Exile, Language, and Trauma in Recent Autobiographical Writing by Jorge Semprún', in *Modern Language Review*, 103 (2008), 697–714; and Daniela Omlor, *Jorge Semprún: Memory's Long Voyage* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014).

[iv] Bella Brodzki, *Can These Bones Live? Translation, Survival, and Cultural Memory* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2007), p. 170.

[v] Jorge Semprún, *L'Écriture ou la vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), p. 108.

[vi] Omlor, *Jorge Semprún*, p. 60.

[vii] Ulrich Winter, 'Semprún's Germany–Germany's Semprún', in *A Critical Companion to Jorge Semprún: Buchenwald, Before and After*, ed. by Ofelia Ferrán and Gina Herrmann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 203–18 (p. 208).

[viii] Lila Azam Zanganeh, 'Jorge Semprún, The Art of Fiction no. 192', *The Paris Review*, 180 (Spring 2007), <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/5740/the-art-of-fiction-no-192-jorge-semprun> [accessed 26 Aug 2015].

[ix] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 2010), p. xiii.

[x] Jorge Semprún, *Mal et modernité* (Paris: Éditions Climats, 1995), p. 62.

[xi] Winter, 'Semprún's Germany–Germany's Semprún', p. 208.

[xii] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*, intro. by Eric Hobsbawm (London: Verso, 2012), p. 39.

[xiii] Semprún, *Mal et modernité*, p. 27.

[xiv] Tijana Miletić, *European Literary Immigration into the French Language: Readings of Gary, Kristof, Kundera and Semprún* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008).

[xv] Ursula Tidd, *Jorge Semprún: Writing the European Other* (Oxford: Legenda, 2014), p. 21.

[xvi] *L'Écriture ou la vie*, p. 220 (my emphasis).

[xvii] Christopher Prendergast, 'The World Republic of Letters', in *Debating World Literature*, ed. by Christopher Prendergast (London: Verso, 2004), pp. 1–25 (pp. 8–9).

[xviii] In a spirit of fairness he also notes that prejudice between the French and Spanish is not one-sided, quoting a ditty discovered in a school history book in which God, faced with the dilemma of making the King of France a saint, is obliged to forgive him for being French: 'San Luis rey de Francia es/ el que con Dios pudo tanto/ que para que fuese santo/ le perdonó el ser francés…' (*Adieu*, p. 64; *L'Algarabie*, p. 363).

[xix] Jorge Semprún, *L'Algarabie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), p. 401.

[xx] *L'Algarabie*, p. 597. This is a colloquial expression in Spanish that literally means, 'Let them take what we've danced' or, more loosely, 'they can't take away the good times we've had'. It is, pertinently, hard to translate except through paraphrase.

[xxi] Artigas was one of the 'noms de guerre' Semprún employed during his clandestine service with the Communist Party in Madrid during the 1950s. In spite of clear autobiographical links between Semprún and his protagonist, and despite the novel's concern with both identity and writing, the novel is in fact one of Semprún's more imaginative fictional works.

[xxii] *L'Algarabie*, p. 543.

[xxiii] *L'Algarabie*, p. 84.

[xxiv] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993).

[xxv] *L'Algarabie*, p. 475. Marx and Engels wrote an extended critique of Sue's novel in *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism* [1845], translated from the German by Richard Dixon and Clemens Dutt (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975).

[xxvi] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 6.

[xxvii] Jorge Semprún, *Adieu, vive clarté…* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), p. 56.

[xxviii] *L'Algarabie*, p. 543.

[xxix] *Adieu*, p. 64.

[xxx] Ferrán and Hermann, *A Critical Companion to Jorge Semprún*, p. 33.

[xxxi] *L'Algarabie*, p. 45.

[xxxii] *L'Algarabie*, p. 157.

[xxxiii] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire Of Louis Bonaparte* [1852], trans. by Saul K. Padover from the German edition of 1869. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm> [accessed 17 Feb 2017].

[xxxiv] *L'Algarabie*, p. 107–8.

[xxxv] This is a view he expresses in a number of places, summed up in his essay 'Estalinismo y fascismo': 'Sólo Dios conoce, o pretende conocer, el orden cronológico. Pero yo no conozco a Dios' [Only God knows, or claims to know, the chronological order of things. But I don't know God]. Jorge Semprún, 'Estalinismo y fascismo', in *Pensar en Europa*, 2nd edn (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2011), p. 24 (my translation).

[xxxvi] Jean-Paul Sartre, 'On *The Sound and the Fury*: Time in the Work of Faulkner', in *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, trans. by Annette Michelson (London: Rider, 1955), pp. 79–87 (p. 84).

[xxxvii] Tidd, *Jorge Semprún*, 17.

[xxxviii] *L'Algarabie*, p. 538.

[xxxix] *L'Algarabie*, p. 212.

[xl] Guy Mercadier, '*L'Algarabie* de Jorge Semprún: bilinguisme et identité', in *Autobiografía y literatura árabe*, ed. by Miguel Hernando de Larramendi, Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla, and Bárbara Azaola Piazza (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla La Mancha, 2002), pp. 105–116 (p. 113).

[xli] *L'Algarabie*, p. 211.

[xlii] *L'Algarabie*, p. 210. A *chisgarabís* is a colloquial term for a small-time deceiver and cheat, someone who causes trouble and confusion.

[xliii] *L'Algarabie*, p. 210.

[xliv] Sartre, 'On *The Sound and the Fury*', p. 86.