

When speaking is healing: naming evil to fight silence in
the works of Santiago H. Amigorena and Miguel
Bonneyoy

Lidia COTEA

Abstract. How can we redefine the limits of the human and speak the unspeakable in the face of the many traumas that have “defined the concept of the human in an intolerable way” (Amigorena, 2019) in the 20th century? How can we give voice back to the subject and prevent forgetting? These are some of the questions that have been tirelessly revisited in recent years in the landscape of French and Francophone literature, which is becoming increasingly transitive (Dosse, 2023). It attempts to put forward the voice of the subject, a subject which is resisting by dint of the strength of their own testimony. The subject thus has the opportunity to reclaim possession of the self in the production of speech, which is equivalent to a production of truth, because “if bearing witness aims to convey an experience, it also means enshrouding in words traumas that will endlessly escape language” (Noudelmann, 2021). To answer these questions, we will analyze some devices in contemporary French fiction, as revealed by the novels *Le Ghetto intérieur* by Santiago H. Amigorena (2019) and *Héritage* by Miguel Bonneyoy (2020). For the protagonists of these novels, striving to distinguish the invisible, to understand and name evil, to reconstruct the history from which they themselves come – ultimately, this is about understanding themselves in order to be able to live.

Keywords: Santiago H Amigorena, Miguel Bonneyoy, evil, traumas, silence, to speak the unspeakable.