Melancholy Cosmopolitan Novels

Late European Fiction at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century

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Abstract

Drawing on a wide range of literary figures, movements, and traditions, from the Spanish Golden Age, to German Romanticism, to French literary theory and philosophy, to Jewish modernist fiction, this dissertation argues for the emergence of a distinct mode of writing in European novels written and published at the turn of the millennium. Exploring the ways in which certain works of fiction engage with a sense of cultural and historical lateness in their narratives, this study shows that a melancholy perspective on the past emerges in various novels from discrete national traditions within a broader Western European context. Within this framework, the self-consciously late and melancholy narrators of these novels are understood to exemplify a form of literary cosmopolitanism. Combining close readings of three culturally significant works of European fiction – *Dora Bruder* by Patrick Modiano (1997), *Austerlitz* by W. G. Sebald (2001), and *Sefarad* by Antonio Muñoz Molina (2001) – with historical and theoretical comparisons within specific national contexts, this study explores the literary influences on and intertexts of the three novels it examines in order to suggest that a latent possibility of futurity and resistance to the obsolescence of the European may be perceived through these novels' late and melancholy aesthetics.

As well as new insights into the individual novels it examines, and the identification and analysis of a particular constellation of European novels published around the turn of the millennium, this study proposes a way of reading that suggests commonalities across linguistic, territorial, and literary boundaries in Europe, while among them unique distinctions maintain these demarcations, even as the act of reading these novels alongside one another might suggest that such boundaries are overcome. Drawing on comparative consideration of the legacies of national literary traditions and their manifestations in these novels, while emphasizing the constitutive tensions within their aesthetics, this study's delineation and analysis of melancholy cosmopolitanism constitutes a new model for engaging with and understanding European fiction published around the end of the twentieth century and turn of the twenty-first.

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.'

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'Ulysses' (1842)

'The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of a tradition. This tradition itself is thoroughly alive and extremely changeable.'

Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936)

'The true genesis is not at the beginning, but at the end.'

Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* (1959)

'It's too late to be grateful
It's too late to be late again
It's too late to be hateful
The European canon is here.'

David Bowie, 'Station to Station' (1976)

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The Melancholy Cosmopolitan Novel

What makes a European novel European? How is this notion to be reconciled with the distinctly European concept of national literatures? How do the tensions between the two manifest themselves in literary works? In what ways does the period in time at which certain of these works are written affect the aesthetic attitude of their narrators and their narrative? What kind of aesthetic practice is immanent to modern European literature at the close of the twentieth century and the dawn of the twenty-first? This dissertation offers a comparative way of reading certain works of European fiction in an attempt to suggest some answers to these questions. In doing so, this study coins the term 'melancholy cosmopolitanism' in order to best identify, characterise, and analyse a mode of writing that emerges around the turn of the second millennium in works of European fiction from different national and linguistic contexts. The aesthetics of these melancholy cosmopolitan novels will be the central concern of this study, which has three principal arguments to put forward. First, that melancholy cosmopolitan novels are characterized by narrators who respond in various ways to a perceived sense of European cultural and historical lateness. Secondly, that these novels display a distinctly melancholy outlook, such that their narrators' engagement with history is inflected by an understanding of the past's fundamental and irrecoverable separation from the present. Thirdly, however, in the face of such overwhelming negativity, this study proposes that by reading these novels alongside one another a cosmopolitan attitude may be seen to emerge out of their lateness- and melancholy-inflected aesthetics. The study as a whole, meanwhile, attempts to offer new insights into European literature as a concept. It seeks to position the novels it examines within a larger narrative regarding the tensions between constructed national literary traditions and a broader imagined European cultural community.

Distinct strains of melancholy cosmopolitan aesthetics are to be found in European fiction written and published around the turn of the millennium. These vary not only from writer to writer, but also from language to language. As such, this dissertation proposes to examine differing incarnations of this historically and geographically contingent mode of

writing by specifically comparing a French novel (*Dora Bruder* by Patrick Modiano, 1997), a German novel (*Austerlitz* by W. G. Sebald, 2001), and a Spanish novel (*Sefarad* by Antonio Muñoz Molina, 2001).[1] Thematically, these novels frequently engage with the catastrophic events of twentieth-century European modernity, including among others the terror of the Occupation of France and the deportation of French Jews in *Dora Bruder*, the traumas of the *Kindertransport* and the concentration camp at Theresienstadt in *Austerlitz*, and the paranoia and suffering of victims of twentieth-century conflicts and the persecution of Jewish refugees in Spain in *Sefarad*. Moving beyond an examination of their thematic concerns, however, this study's close readings of the aesthetics, language, and style of these three novels suggest that their backward-facing, tradition-oriented articulations of lateness and their resultant melancholy aesthetics may be collectively imagined as a form of literary cosmopolitanism in European novels that implies a more optimistic sense of futurity.

Emerging at a significant cultural moment, and in a particular geographical and cultural milieu, melancholy cosmopolitan novels respond to a discourse of lateness in European literature, whereby modern literature understands itself not as young, new and fresh, but as old, late, and exhausted. This sense of arriving after greater literary works and movements is compounded by a sense of coming at the end of an era as the close of the twentieth century looms. The aesthetics of these novels thus appear under an aspect of lateness, and their narrators style themselves as inheritors of a long tradition of canonical European culture at the end of the twentieth century, under the shadow of which they appear as epigonal latecomers. From their belated historical perspective, the past is always and unavoidably separated from the present in which they find themselves. The melancholy of these novels is expressed in the acknowledged impossibility of reconciling the two, such that history itself is understood as melancholy. The variously mediated narratives of these novels indicate a self-consciousness of their lateness and melancholy, and this study argues that it is precisely the narrators' self-consciousness that contains the potential to overcome their lateness and melancholy, since it implies a sense of possible futurity and renewal. While Paul

[1] All quotations from these novels in this study are taken from the following editions: Patrick Modiano, *Dora Bruder* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); W. G. Sebald, *Austerlitz* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001); and Antonio Muñoz Molina, *Sefarad*, ed. by Pablo Valdivia (Cátedra: Madrid, 2013). Page references to these novels will be cited hereafter in the main body of the text as *DB* for *Dora Bruder*, *A* for *Austerlitz*, and *S* for *Sefarad*. Page numbers for the original French, German, and Spanish novels are given in brackets in the main body of the text; page numbers for the published English translations are given in brackets in the footnotes. These translations are taken from *The Search Warrant*, trans. by Joanna Kilmartin (London: Harvill Secker, 2000), previously published as *Dora Bruder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); *Austerlitz*, trans. by Anthea Bell (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2001); and *Sepharad*, trans. by Margaret Sayers Peden (London: Harcourt Press, 2003). If page references are absent in the footnote, then the translation is new, although this usually implies nothing more than a slightly freshened-up version of the published translation, which has been modified in order to take account of what the text is required to mean for the purposes of this study's argument.

Valéry asserts that tradition and progress are the two great enemies of humanity, this study reveals them to be, for better or for worse, two keys elements of a constitutive tension within the concept of European literature.[2] Moreover, this late and melancholy mode of writing may be understood as cosmopolitan through its resonances with European cosmopolitan figures, as well as with contemporary discourse on cosmopolitan aesthetics as an assumed attitude or pose. As such, 'melancholy cosmopolitanism' is the most suitable term to describe the mode of writing perceived among this group of novels, especially since while not entirely transnational (and certainly not universal), this mode of writing exists across nations and traditions in European culture.[3] Nevertheless, it still has national literary traditions at its heart, as well as an intentionally unresolved tension between the national and the European, which is key to these European novels' aesthetic practice and constitutes a fundamental aspect of what makes them European. Through its identification and analysis of melancholy cosmopolitanism in European fiction, this study reveals a group of novels with common thematic, aesthetic, and stylistic concerns across national borders, in which each novel exhibits its own specificities determined by its national literary context. 'Melancholy cosmopolitanism', this dissertation argues, suggests that there still remains a residual potential for future aesthetic renewal and artistic meaningfulness in late and melancholy European novels that embody a vestigial cosmopolitanism, as well as the possibility for differences to co-exist within commonality.

In order to elucidate the concept of melancholy cosmopolitanism, this study concerns itself with the investigation of aesthetic commonalities, as well as productive differences and particularities, among the three geographically, historically, and culturally related novels it examines. The following introduction will contextualize and delineate this study's *modus operandi*, presenting the considerations, reflections, and influences which animate the idea of melancholy cosmopolitanism, before turning its attention to the critical discourses of lateness, melancholy, and cosmopolitanism, respectively, outlining how these are synthesized in this study into a new approach, since they constitute the foundations upon which its thesis is constructed. Lastly, this introduction will consider various methodological

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[2] See Paul Valéry, 'Orient et Occident: Préface au livre d'un Chinois', in *Regards sur le monde actuel et autres essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), p. 174.

[3] Transnationalism here is understood following Elisabeth Herrmann, Carrie Smith-Prei, and Stuart Taberner, as 'a plurality of intersecting, and crosscutting flows of products, ideas, and people back and forth over borders'. See Elisabeth Herrmann, Carrie Smith-Prei, and Stuart Taberner (eds.), *Transnationalism in Contemporary German-Language Literature* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2015), p. 1. Melancholy cosmopolitanism, as this study conceptualizes it, is more international than transnational, emerging in discrete yet related national contexts. To prove that mutual border-crossing flows of influence exist among the writers and novels examined here would exceed the scope of the present study.

decisions undertaken in the course of this comparative investigation and the justifications for doing so. Subsequent chapters of this study will examine each novel in turn. These chapters of close reading are all tripartite in structure, drawing out and analysing the novels' forms of engagement with lateness, then exploring the nature of the melancholy perspectives that emerge from this, before finally examining the implications for each novel if it is understood to be cosmopolitan. Over the course of the following three chapters, this study argues for the existence of a mode of writing that resonates both across and within the borders of nations and national literary traditions in Europe and European literature, undertaking a comparative reading that is rooted in the historical and aesthetic circumstances out of which these novels emerged.

In synthesizing the vast range of thought and scholarship on lateness, melancholy, and cosmopolitanism in order to analyse the various manifestations of these interconnected phenomena in three European novels, this study draws on the works and ideas of numerous critics and historians, philosophers and poets, who may not always agree ideologically or methodologically. Taking advantage of the historical perspective afforded by undertaking this investigation almost two decades into a new millennium, this study draws on all findings that aid the construction of its argument, synthesising a new approach by thriving off past differences without being restricted by them. Recourse to canonical figures and works of canonical or 'high' European culture, and especially works of 'high' modernist literature, in what follows is justified and appropriate, given that melancholy cosmopolitan novels are determined by their narrators' self-understanding of coming after just such a literary tradition. Notions of 'high' culture and 'high' literature are much contested in the current intellectual climate and, indeed, are not without their significant historical and geographical biases. Nevertheless, they are necessary and relevant to this study, since they constitute, for better or for worse, the source of melancholy cosmopolitanism.

While this study is not an attempt to establish a universal theory of European literature, and it makes no claims that all novels written around the turn of the millennium in Europe necessarily fall into the category of melancholy cosmopolitanism, it does suggest that these particular novels by Modiano, Sebald, and Muñoz Molina are exemplary of a broader geographically and historically contingent mode of writing in European literature. Given the lack of unanimity within the different national contexts that make up European literature, this study would venture to suggest that any such notion of a universal theory is not only implausible but goes against the very constitution of the idea of literature which is 'European'. As Erich Auerbach notes in the epilogue to *Mimesis* (1953), 'studies of this kind

do not deal with laws but with trends and tendencies, which cross and complement one another in the most varied ways'.[4] This study does not herald the emergence of a movement of authors or prescribe any particular literary features, but rather illuminates, describes, and analyses *a posteriori* a conversation between already existing novels in different languages, delineating the salient characteristics of a selection of literary works that have never before been brought together for comparative study. As such, this dissertation's original contribution to comparative literary scholarship lies not only in its new readings of the individual novels it examines, but also in its presentation and analysis of a distinct constellation of European novels published at the turn of the millennium – a new way of reading that suggests commonalities across linguistic, territorial, and literary boundaries in Europe, and among them unique distinctions that to a certain extent maintain these demarcations, even while the act of reading these novels alongside one another might appear to suggest that such boundaries are overcome. Although literary fiction has long been a medium for interrogating the categories of the nation and the nation state, by exploring the specificities of melancholy cosmopolitan novels in multiple national contexts this study also interrogates the notion of the European. Over the course of its close readings, it extrapolates the ways in which certain novels articulate and embody both a tension between the national and the European, as well as a tension between a past seen to be overwhelming and the potential promise of future renewal. Melancholy cosmopolitan novels thereby emerge as containers for the constitutive tensions of European literature at the turn of the millennium. Before proceeding, however, it will be useful to consider how the term 'European' is understood in what follows.

'EUROPEAN' FICTION

A full investigation into what a precise definition of 'European' fiction, let alone 'European' literature or culture might look like, and any attempt at relativizing the concept, would exceed the aims and purview of the present study. Rather than conceiving of Europe and European culture as delineated by clearly drawn lines, divisions, or parameters, this study adopts an open view of the 'European' as a constructed and imagined category which exhibits many variations within commonalities, since there is in any case no single and fixed *a priori*

[4] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 556.

characteristic that signifies intrinsic 'Europeanness'. One's understanding of 'European' literature and culture necessarily informs and also reflects one's understanding of 'Europe' and vice versa. It is an ongoing process, which is subject to historical and geographical locatedness.

When considering what is meant and understood by the term 'European' alongside the significance of national literary traditions and their incommensurability, it is key to remember that Europe is a constructed idea (as well as, arguably, an ideal), as critics such as Aleida Assmann and George Steiner, among many others, have noted.[5] Bounded by water to the north, west, and south, and roughly delimited by the Urals, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea to the east, the geographical frontiers of and within Europe, not to mention its cultural boundaries, have shifted and changed much and often since Antiquity. Although the exact origins of the continent's name are uncertain, it is nonetheless pertinent to this study's approach to note that the etymology of 'Europe' is sometimes suggested as a compound of the Greek *euros* (wide or broad) and *ops* (eye or face), meaning 'wide-eyed' or 'broad of aspect'.[6] As such, Europe might be understood as an inherently capacious concept, yet still an historical, political, and cultural entity containing shared and interlinked pasts and concerns among its constitutive nations.[7] Europe is a continent full of contradiction, whose cultural, social, political, economic, and religious tensions have conspired for centuries to tear it apart, even while it has many times moved towards greater unification. As Perry Anderson observes in his account of the history and development of the European Union, however, 'the demarcation of Europe poses one set of questions for the Union, [and] another for the history of ideas'.[8] Cultural understandings and expressions of the 'European' are neither easily nor neatly mapped onto historical and political realities, such that the very idea of 'Europe' throughout history has been one fraught with tensions and conflicts as well as unity.[9]

If the emergence of the modern nation state is a fundamentally European phenomenon, then surely the conflicts between these discrete nations is likewise intrinsically

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[5] See, for example, Aleida Assmann, *Der europäische Traum: Vier Lehren aus der Geschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2018) and George Steiner, *The Idea of Europe: An Essay* (New York: Overlook Books, 2015).

[6] For an account of this etymology's curious intersections with the myth of Europa, see particularly the third chapter of Charles FitzRoy, *The Rape of Europa: The Intriguing History of Titian's Masterpiece* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[7] See, for example, Perry Anderson's account of Europe's antecedents, and in particular the retrospective connections between Latin Christendom and the modern Enlightenment conceptualisation of Europe in Perry Anderson, *The New Old World* (London: Verso, 2009), pp. 475–504, p. 476 especially.

[8] Anderson, *The New Old World*, p. 475.

[9] For a concise and insightful summary of the idea of Europe throughout history, see the introduction to *The Novel and Europe: Imagining the Continent in Post-1945 Fiction*, ed. by Andrew Hammond (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 1–52 (especially pp. 7–10).

European.[10] As Pascale Casanova observes, 'one of the few trans-historical features that constitutes Europe, in effect, one of the only forms of both political and cultural unity – one that is paradoxical but genuine – that makes of Europe a coherent whole is none other than the conflicts and competitions that pitted Europe's national literary spaces against one another'.[11] However, rather than conclude, after Casanova, that the only possible literary history of Europe is one which highlights the rivalries, discrepancies, struggles, and power relations between national literatures, this study adopts a more optimistic stance towards the notion of European literature. While the following chapters remain divided along national literary lines, this study in its entirety suggests a way of reading that draws together diverse cultural traditions within Europe, shedding light on the intersections and points of departure among them. This does not constitute an attempt at a fully 'denationalized' and deconstructive examination of the concept of European literature since, for better or for worse, national traditions still define its parameters.[12] Instead, what follows is a piece-by-piece approach that allows for the emergence of national specificities and particularities, building a collage of European literature from the bottom up, so to speak.

Traditionally, the study of European literature has concentrated on a corpus of literary works originating from Europe's geographical purview, broadly defined. Taking as its subjects the canonical authors and works from discrete national literatures, its exegetic focus has remained principally confined to national literary contexts, downplaying the significance of cross-border exchange, as Andrew Hammond notes.[13] Historically, however, there has been in Europe an ongoing attempt at 'salvaging a common European matrix from the debris of two world wars', as Roberto Dainotto observes.[14] Resting on a series of commonplaces that echo across the Western literary tradition, he argues, the very enterprise of conceptualizing European literature constitutes an 'attempt to *invent* a unity in the face of

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[10] For further discussion of the nation state as an intrinsically and uniquely European phenomenon, see, for example, Miroslav Hroch, *Das Europa der Nationen: Die modern Nationsbildung im europäischen Vergleich*, trans. by Eližka and Ralph Melville (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005). For further discussion of this with relation to national literatures, see J. Manuel Barbeito, Jaime Feijóo, Antón Figueroa, and Jorge Sacido (eds., *National Identities and European Literatures / Nationale Identitäten und Europäische Literaturen* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2008).

[11] Pascale Casanova, 'European Literature: simply a higher degree of universality?', in *Literature for Europe?*, ed. by Theo D'Haen and Iannis Goerlandt (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 13–25 (p. 13).

[12] 'Denational' ways of analysing European literature is a hypothetical theoretical approach proposed by Pascale Casanova, which she claims is not yet extant. See Pascale Casanova, 'European Literature: Simply a Higher Degree of Universality?', in *Literature for Europe?*, p. 15.

[13] Hammond, 'Introduction', in *The Novel and Europe*, pp. 7–10.

[14] Roberto M. Dainotto, 'World Literature and European Literature', in *The Routledge Companion to World* Literature, ed. by Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir (Oxford: Routledge, 2012), pp. 425–434 (p. 430).

discord'.[15] While this might bring to mind Benedict Anderson's concept of an 'imagined community', the key difference between that concept and the supranational notion of an imagined European literature is the lack of the institutional and infrastructural framework of support that the nation state itself would provide.[16] In place of that, European literature must, without erasing the specificities of its constitutive nations, languages, and literary traditions, be imagined all the more strongly, bringing together national philologies in comparative literary practices.[17]

Guiding motifs of European culture and history explored in this study, it must be emphasized, are not understood as the sole preserves of Europe. Indeed, the aesthetic elements of lateness, melancholy, and cosmopolitanism examined in the following chapters are certainly not phenomena to be associated exclusively with, or understood as constitutive solely of, a presumed European cultural identity. Nonetheless, their mutual articulation at a particular moment in time in the French, German, and Spanish novels examined here is the deciding factor in their being grouped together as objects of study. The comparative research that follows reveals more insights into the composition and inner workings of the greater imagined whole of European literature, of which the national literatures and languages examined here are seen as but a part. Even then, this study is only one version of events, since, as Theo D'Haen observes, 'there can be no such thing as "a" European literary history'.[18] While this study does not consider French, German, and Spanish culture to be synecdoches either of one homogenous European culture or of other national cultures within Europe – neither *pars pro toto* nor *tota pro partibus* – it does intend to make a contribution towards enriching the understanding of what it means to talk of 'European literature'.

Apropos of this, Walter Cohen's recent study of how European literature has been conceptualized throughout history from Antiquity to the present day offers a useful, albeit somewhat laboured, definition of what it means for literary works to be classed as European literature. For Cohen, the dramatic proliferation of vernacular literary languages in the wake of Latin and Greek in the Middle Ages in Europe constitutes one of European literature's defining characteristics: its plurality and its polyglossia. European literature, he suggests, 'may

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[15] Dainotto, 'World Literature and European Literature', p. 432. Emphasis added.
[16] For further discussion of the notion of 'imagined communities' and its relation to national contexts, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
[17] Dainotto correctly points out that while imagined communities on a national scale have long been established and reinforced through the institutionalization of state-sponsored departments, as well as national curricula, school books, and prizes, 'nothing comparable has ever happened in the case of the European Community. For the recent Union, literature has remained largely marginal if not ignored'. See Dainotto, 'World Literature and European Literature', p. 433.
[18] Theo D'Haen, 'Introduction', in *Literature for Europe?*, pp. 5–9 (p. 8).

be defined as the literatures of medieval Latin Christendom's self-constitution as such, of their chosen predecessors, of their successors, of those successors' chosen predecessors, of the cultures deeply influenced by those successors, of their chosen predecessors, and so on'.[19] Such a definition's potentially infinite capacity for extension and inclusion is both one of its strengths and one of its weaknesses, as Cohen acknowledges. As writers' chosen predecessors change, and those of their successors, any definition of European literature remains fluid. Cohen's argumentation is held in place by the image of an hourglass on its side as he suggests that European literature emerges from and returns to forms of 'world literature', a term he employs to encompass all literatures of the world, as well as their structural and stylistic similarities. Having periodized 5,000 years of literature into four epochs ('Antiquity'; 'The Vernacular: From the Middles Ages to Early Modernity'; 'Early Modernity'; and 'Modernity'), Cohen advances the argument that, following Jewish modernist literature in the first half of the twentieth century, the expansionist vocation of European literature ends in a pyrrhic contradiction. Since more and more languages become part of a larger, more global literary scene in the contemporary era, the logic of Western expansionism results in the simultaneous fulfilment and abolition of the idea of European literature.[20] It is on the cusp of such potential dissolution that this study concentrates its synoptic purview.

Rather than advocate the inexorable obsolescence and flattening out of the category of 'European literature' around the end of the twentieth century in an increasingly globalized world, this thesis aims to show that this category may yet prove to be hermeneutically useful when considered with reference to specific national literary traditions within Europe, as well as to the literary heritages explicitly and implicitly drawn on in particular novels. Of helpful significance for the present study is the implication in Cohen's definition that any understanding of what European literature might mean at a particular moment in time, and which particular works of literature might be understood as European, is predicated upon the contingencies of a work's 'chosen predecessors' and implied literary lineage, those works and writers that are both the explicit and the implicit intertextual forebears of and influences

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[19] Walter Cohen, *A History of European Literature: From Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 114.

[20] This is a clear inversion of Auerbach's heralding the simultaneous realisation and destruction of the concept *Weltliteratur* through mass standardisation (see Erich Auerbach, *Die Philologie der Weltliteratur*, in *Weltliteratur: Festgabe für Fritz Strich zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. by Walter Muschg and E. Staiger (Bern: Francke, 1952), pp 39–50). It should be made clear, however, that this study stops short of endorsing Cohen's assertion that, in the case of contemporary literature, 'if prose fiction from around the world now draws centrally on Western forms, and especially on the novel, why not see all of it as Western literature?' See Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 6.

on new literary works. Such an observation underscores the significance of reading forms of lateness in the novels discussed here, as well as the ensuing melancholy and cosmopolitan literary community that may be perceived as emerging from such lateness.

LITERARY LATENESS IN EUROPE

That which is new is bound to define itself in relation to that which already exists. No artistic work exists in isolation and any new work necessarily either draws on or repudiates that which has gone before, thereby marking itself out as a later development – an older instantiation – of artistic expression. In this dissertation, lateness is understood to be in various ways a foundational element of the aesthetics of *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad*, which is both culturally and historically determined. It not only emerges as a useful interpretative heuristic, but also operates as an influential matrix – its place of origin, so to speak – for melancholy cosmopolitanism.[21] The narrators of the three novels examined in this study understand themselves to be both culturally late, coming after great European writers who precede them, and historically late, since they are consciously aware that they are writing at the end of the twentieth century. Melancholy cosmopolitanism is a mode of writing that emerges at the turn of the millennium when a 'sense of an ending' – to use the oft-cited eponymous phrase of Frank Kermode's studies in the theory of fiction – in European culture is particularly heightened.[22] Although the millennium is a largely arbitrary formulation for measuring the passing of time, in a Western European context it is nevertheless a cultural moment freighted with the burden of time that has gone before.[23] Its simultaneous sense of finality and transition engenders in many literary artists a compulsion to examine the cataclysmic events of twentieth-century modernity.[24] Consequently, their works are inflected with an historically and geographically contingent 'sense of ending'.

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[21] This study prefers the terms 'late' and 'lateness' to 'belated' and 'belatedness', since 'belatedness' suggests normative connotations whereby an occurrence is delayed (often unintentionally) and takes place after a specific expected time, rather than consciously taking place towards the end of a period of time.

[22] See Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

[23] For further discussion of the concept of 'Eurochronology', see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) and Pheng Cheah, *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016).

[24] For further discussion of the millennium as a cultural construct, as well as the fears and hopes invested in this signifier at the turn of the twenty-first century, see, for example, Raymond Williams, *The Year 2000* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), Charles B. Strozier and Michael Flynn, eds., *The Year 2000: Essays on the End* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), Christopher Kleinhenz and Fannie J. LeMoine, eds., *Fearful Hope: Approaching the New Millennium* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), and Marlene P. Soulsby

This is not to suggest, however, that an awareness of lateness is only exhibited by novels written at the end of the twentieth century. As Mark Fisher cautions, when discussing the sense of terminal exhaustion emerging in European cultural and political spheres towards the close of the twentieth century, 'this malaise, the feeling that there is nothing new, is itself nothing new'.[25] Alluding to the tension between age and youth, between the late and the new, encapsulated by the discourse of lateness, Pieter Vermeulen declares of the novel, that 'declarations of the form's exhaustion have a long and venerable pedigree: they are a crucial part of the texture of a literary history premised on innovation and originality'.[26] The novel form has a long history of conceptualizing its own lateness, notably explored by Georg Lukács in his *Theory of the Novel* (1914–15), and its impending demise has been routinely trumpeted in many corners for centuries. If, for Lukács, the novel is 'nothing but a struggle against the power of time',[27] then this, as Vermeulen observes, 'casts the novel as a form that is born exhausted'.[28] Emphasizing the novel's status as an intrinsically melancholy form, Vermeulen goes on to remark that 'the novel is always marked by melancholic imitations of its own insufficiency, and the lingering suspicion that it is merely living out its own afterlife'.[29] While for Vermeulen, 'the novel form is constitutively caught up in the question of its own (in)sufficiency',[30] the present study contends that this anxiety intensifies with the impending arrival of the new millennium and is exemplified in the concurrent emergence of melancholy cosmopolitanism as a mode of writing within European fiction. Although to a certain extent Vermeulen's argument might suggest that lateness and melancholy are supratemporal aspects of the novel form, this does not contradict the logic of historicizing these aesthetic phenomena. In the case of the novels examined in this thesis, latent features of the novel's formal inadequacy such as those identified by Vermeulen are enhanced and actualized by the historical crisis of the arrival of the second millennium, as well as by a deeply felt sense of cultural lateness experienced and articulated within European letters at this time.

In literary studies, the hour has been growing late for nigh on several decades and, according to Peter Boxall, concerns around cultural and historical lateness constitute signature intellectual formations of the twentieth century as a whole, taking the form of 'the

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and J. T. Fraser, eds., *Time: Perspectives at the Millennium (The Study of Time X)* (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey, 2001).

[25] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2008), p.6.

[26] Pieter Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel: Creature, Affect, Form* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 105.

[27] Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philiosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. by Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1971), p. 122.

[28] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature*, p. 105.

[29] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature*, p. 106.

[30] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature*, p. 106.

perception of late historical conditions' in literary works.[31] While Boxall argues that contemporary works of dystopian fiction express this most clearly, the present study makes the case for a more prevalent and, indeed, multivalent understanding of lateness in fiction emerging at the end of the twentieth century. Boxall's gaze is fixed forward and he concerns himself principally with works of Anglophone fiction in the early twenty-first century, but he nevertheless acknowledges the significance of the 'co-incidence of late culture and late prose style' in articulating the potential of a new future for the novel form.[32] Indeed, Boxall observes that 'one of the determining characteristics of postwar Western culture – one of its guiding cultural dominants – was accordingly the dawning of an apocalyptic or millenarian mood or cast of thought'.[33] Ultimately, as Boxall recognizes, conceptualisations of late culture and theorisations of the end of history are symptomatic of how Western culture ushered in the closing decades of the twentieth century 'under the sign of a general lateness or belatedness, a vast historical gloaming, a gathered agedness'.[34] It is in this milieu that melancholy cosmopolitan novels emerge, characterized by a perception of a sustained sense of ending and lateness in European culture.

This lack of resolution to a sense of ending echoes one of the principal thrusts of Edward Said's argument in his posthumously published study *On Late Style* (2006), in which he argues for lateness in artistic works as a biographical category. For Said, aesthetic lateness must be understood 'not as harmony and resolution but as intransigence, difficulty, and unresolved contradiction', with artists and their works existing beyond what might be considered normal or acceptable.[35] As such, Said argues, 'late style is *in*, but oddly apart *from* the present'.[36] This implies a distance from the present moment, whereby *now* is rejected in favour of taking refuge in *then*, leaving the future obscure. Embodying the tension of a

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[31] Peter Boxall, *Twenty-First-Century Fiction: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 15.

[32] For Boxall, the millennial caesura inculcates a burgeoning awareness of youth and uncertainty in the Anglophone fiction that he examines, which may lead to a new understanding of temporality in a globalized world (pp. 19 and 39). Unlike in this case of melancholy cosmopolitan novels, however, the writers Boxall discusses deliberately do not attend to the literary traditions from which they emerge. The corollary problem of this is, as Boxall identifies, the temporal estrangement and even greater sense of being left behind by the inexorability of time's continued passing that results from the ending of a culture whose historical and geographical orientation is so deeply imbricated with 'the late-cultural, millennial logic of the post' (p. 33). In Boxall's account, there is a definitive moment of ending at the turn of the millennium in Anglophone literature, rather than the ongoing sense of ending argued for in this thesis. Boxall's use of the term 'post' also denotes occurring after, whereas the term 'late', in this thesis's understanding of it, suggests that a final end point has not yet arrived. While it is true that 'late' may be used in English to refer to the posthumous, this study does not wish suggest in any way that the novel form is finally dead and buried.

[33] Boxall, *Twenty-First-Century Fiction*, p. 22.

[34] Boxall, *Twenty-First-Century Fiction*, p. 23.

[35] Edward Said, *On Late Style* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), pp. 7 and 13.

[36] Said, *On Late Style*, p. 24. Emphasis in original.

'deliberately unproductive productiveness going *against*', Said draws on Theodor W. Adorno's formulation of Beethoven's late style as process but not development.[37] In recent years, however, Said's formulation of late style has been criticized as a normative reconceptualisation of the figure of the genius applied to mostly male artists, who, in Saïd's formulation, 'acquire a new idiom' in their work and thoughts towards the end of their life.[38] The notion of aesthetic lateness is often most immediately understood to imply an expression of late style in a biographical sense, whereby artists reach a new level in the final phase of their lives. The forms of lateness exhibited by melancholy cosmopolitan novels are not classifiable in such terms, however, with perhaps the unfortunate exception of Sebald. As will be discussed in greater depth in the second chapter of this dissertation, although Sebald's death was premature, his writing at all stages in his life might be understood as late.[39] Nevertheless, to draw on one particular phrase in Said's conceptualisation of late style and apply it to literary works, it is the unresolved tensions of melancholy cosmopolitan novels that emerges as key constitutive elements of their aesthetic practice. Furthermore, it is a contention of this study that the novels examined here might imply individually a process of engagement with lateness, but reading them together might suggest the possibility (however latent) of future artistic development and the potential for cultural renewal.

Late style may be understood as an aesthetic quality with implications beyond artists' biographical circumstances, yet highly influenced by their historical and geographical location. As Karen Leeder argues, 'like any other aesthetic phenomenon, it [late style] is a complex product of the artist's experiences as a being *in a particular time and place*, rather than a universal mode or technique that descends on the artist at a certain moment in the aging process'.[40] Leeder's observations indicate how an aesthetics of lateness may move beyond the implication of biological senescence to be understood as an emergent category in literary works that responds to a sense of historical and cultural agedness through 'a spectrum of anxieties: obsolescence, redundancy, anachronism, the sense of always coming after a legitimizing model, but also losing touch with an originating authority'.[41] Lateness in

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[37] Said, *On Late Style*, p. 7. See also Theodor W. Adorno, 'Late Style in Beethoven', trans. by Susan H. Gillespie, in *Essays on Music*, ed. by Richard Leppert (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 564–567 (p. 567).

[38] Said, *On Late Style*, p. 6. For a refreshing critique of Said's notion of late style in the field of life writing, see Emma Parker, 'Penelope Lively's Speculative Life Writing: A Discussion of *Making It Up* and *Ammonites and Leaping Fish*', in *Moving Worlds*, 18:1 (2018), pp. 63–76.

[39] For further discussion of this, see, for example, Ben Hutchinson, *Die dialektische Imagination* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), p. 170.

[40] Karen Leeder, 'Figuring Lateness in Modern German Culture', in *New German Critique*, 125 (2015), pp. 1–30 (p. 8). Emphasis added.

[41] Leeder, 'Figuring Lateness', p. 2.

literature, therefore, may express both a sense of epigonal inadequacy and the perception of historical latecoming. If, as Leeder suggests, an aesthetic style of lateness may be consciously adopted by an artist at any chronological point in their lives, in order 'to eschew harmony and to be critical of a particular outmoded or obsolescent status quo',[42] then such lateness has the potential to resist said status quo through what Anne Fuchs calls its 'desynchronisation'.[43] A late perspective thereby offers an alternative understanding of temporality to the ever-increasing speed of hypermodernity under capitalist globalisation. Melancholy cosmopolitan novels, therefore, perform a slowing down of their own temporalities through their responses to and engagement with cultural and historical lateness. If European culture experiences an ongoing sense of ending as the millennium approaches, then reading melancholy cosmopolitan novels alongside one another may constitute a form of resistance to the anticipated obsolescence of European culture in the wake of the catastrophes of the twentieth century as it draws to a close.

Dora Bruder's investigation into disappearances during the French Occupation, *Austerlitz*'s excavation of traumatic experiences of the *Kindertransport* and the Holocaust, and *Sefarad*'s reimaginings of persecution and exile in Spain and abroad, constitute a range of literary responses to question of what it means to live through and after European modernity. For Gordon McMullan, the conscious adoption by cultural practitioners of forms of late style is best understood as an artistic and critical construct that is fundamentally imbricated with European modernity itself.[44] Indeed, as Ben Hutchinson notes in his 'Afterword' to McMullan's and Sam Smiles's volume on *Late Style and Its Discontents* (2016), 'the feeling of being "born late" provides one of the driving forces of aesthetic modernity'.[45] Debilitating epigonal self-consciousness and an awareness of historical latecoming may yet constitute a generative aesthetic force in European literary culture. Hutchinson's monograph on *Lateness and Modern European Literature* (2016) explores how modern European literature has repeatedly defined itself via a sense of epigonality or senescence as late in an expression of literary modernity's continuing search for legitimacy. Countering the conventional view that modern literature is progressive and new, backward-looking overdetermination emerges as an unacknowledged generative impulse in European literature since the mid-nineteenth

[42] Leeder, 'Figuring Lateness', p. 8.
[43] See Anne Fuchs, 'Temporal Ambivalence: Acceleration, Attention and Lateness in Modernist Discourse', in *Time in German Literature and Culture, 1900–2015: Between Acceleration and Slowness*, ed. by Anne Fuchs and J. J. Long (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). pp. 21–28.
[44] See Gordon McMullan, 'The "Strangeness" of George Oppen: Criticism, Modernity, and the Conditions of Late Style', in *Late Style and its Discontents: Essays in Art, Literature, and Music*, ed. by Gordon McMullan and Sam Smiles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) pp. 37–38.
[45] Ben Hutchinson, 'Afterword', in *Late Style and its Discontents*, pp. 235–239 (p. 236).

century. Hutchinson emphasizes that, while the writing of a history of lateness in European literature has begun, there is more still to tell, concluding by quoting Adorno's view that 'if lateness really is a "truly European language", we must learn to speak it'.[46] Taking up this injunction, the present study draws on Hutchinson's work and moves beyond it to a millennial moment in order to show how lateness persists as an aesthetic driver of European literature beyond modernism and up to the turn of the millennium. By examining the emergent forms of melancholy cosmopolitanism in various European novels, the present study uncovers a later lateness, investigating the further aesthetic implications of the '*longue durée* of modern European lateness' for European literature.[47]

Such an investigation entails understanding *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* not as *post* modernist, however, but rather as *late* modernist works. Although this may seem counterintuitive, given that the period in which Modiano, Sebald, and Muñoz Molina are writing is historically postmodern, it is nonetheless justified. There is certainly little in the way of consensus regarding the exact characteristics of the postmodern, especially since the term is regularly used to denote both a temporal historical period as well as certain stylistic characteristics. Nevertheless, it is unavoidably defined in terms of its relationship to modernism. For Fredric Jameson, postmodernism's predominant characteristics include a lack of emotional depth or meaning along with a loss of historicity.[48] Exhibiting a tendency to refract reality into playful language games, postmodern literature questions the possibility of fiction to adequately represent it, while rejecting the modernist belief in certain universal truths in favour of a deconstructed distrust of the notion of truth itself.[49] The novels examined in this thesis, however, embrace their historicity, understanding themselves as fundamentally historically implicated and positioned towards the ending of modernity. The literary techniques employed by Modiano, Sebald, and Muñoz Molina that will be discussed in the following chapters are certainly reminiscent of modernist writers.[50] Even while the notion of framing of one story within another, for example, is arguably a distinctly postmodern technique, its purpose in the novels examined here is quite different. Rather

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[46] Ben Hutchinson, *Lateness and Modern European Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 21 and 339).

[47] See Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 334.

[48] See Fredric Jameson, *Postmoderism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

[49] For further discussion of this, see also Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1987), Lawrence E. Cahoone, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology Expanded* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), and Peter Brooker, ed., *Modernism/Postmodernism* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014).

[50] See, for example, Rebecca Walkowitz's account of Sebald's achieving his 'vertiginous' prose style by borrowing modernist literary practices in Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 155.

than rejecting after a postmodern fashion any possibility of locating truth in their work, the narrators of *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* are still concerned with the search for moral truths, pushing the boundaries of fiction, not unlike 'high' modernist writers who understood themselves to be doing so in the early twentieth century. That the narrators of the novels examined in this study ambiguously resemble the novels' authors is likewise not a technique employed towards postmodernist ends, whereby the figure of the author is reduced to a linguistic sign within the text to encourage further ontological scepticism. On the contrary, the self-consciousness of the narrators of *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* serves to highlight their narrative projects, their historical position, and their perspective on the past. While Hutchinson suggests that the narrative of modern lateness ends in the late modernist period because theorisations of the postmodern render its tensions obsolete, this study contends that this period of late modernism is nonetheless as ongoing as the sense of ending in European literature to which the novels examined here respond.[51] They are the inheritors of Walter Benjamin's concern of 1940 that all modernist poets and critics were fighting not to be the 'last European'.[52]

For Hutchinson, the *locus classicus* of lateness in modern European literature is Nietzsche's characterisation of modern poets as 'rückwärts gewendete Wesen' ('beings facing backwards').[53] Literature throughout modernity emerges as an expression of this backward-facing stance, and this still holds true, as this study postulates, for certain European writers over a century later. The perception of lateness in these late modern novels and their narrators' subsequent understanding of history echoes Nietzsche's concept of modern writers as latecomers and epigones.[54] Although he would later move towards a criticism of modernity as decadent, in Nietzsche's earlier work – particularly in *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1876) and *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1878) – his perception of nineteenth-century Europe as oversaturated with preceding cultures leads him to critique modernity and modern writers as epigonal, as well as encouraging modern man's understanding of himself as a

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[51] See Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p.331.
[52] Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe 1919–1924*, vol. 6, ed. by Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), p. 442. Cited in Hutchinson, *Lateness,* p. 331. Benjamin's original observation, written in French in a letter to Stephan Lackner in Paris in May 1940 folds together the two Nietzschean notions of the 'good European' and the 'last man', and reads as follows: 'On se demande si l'histoire n'est pas en train de forger une synthèse ingénieuse de deux conceptions nietzschéennes, à savoir des guten Europäers et des letzten Menschen. Cela pourrait donner den letzten Europäer. Nous tous nous luttons pour ne pas le devenir'.
[53] See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Cited in Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 4 and 204.
[54] For further discussion of Nietzsche and the 'latecomers' of modernity, see Hutchinson, *Lateness*, pp. 198–213.

latecomer.[55] For Nietzsche, such lateness and epigonality has both positive and negative implications, however. From a philosophical perspective, epigonality is entirely unproductive. 'The belief that one is a latecomer of the age is', Nietzsche argues, 'paralysing and depressing: but it must appear dreadful and devastating when such a belief one day by a bold inversion raises this latecomer to godhood as the true meaning and goal of all previous events, when his miserable condition is equated with a completion of world history'.[56] Nonetheless, Nietzsche considers epigonality and lateness as essential and productive categories for modern poets, who 'have to be in many respects beings looking backwards [*rückwärts gewendete Wesen*], so that they can be employed as bridges to quite distant ages and conceptions, to dead or dying religions and cultures. They are, in fact, always and necessarily epigones'.[57] Forgetting and burying the past is a passive and momentary option for Nietzsche: 'it is at any rate as well to know about all that has occurred, since it is too late to do anything better'.[58] As such, in order to overcome the anxiety of arriving at the end of the century and the immensity of what has gone before, Nietzsche advocates that modern writers become self-conscious of their lateness and epigonality, making these the preconditions for cultural renewal. 'The thought of being epigones, which can often be a painful thought, is also capable', Nietzsche observes, 'of evoking great effects and grand hopes for the future in both an individual and a nation, provided we regard ourselves as the heirs and successors of the astonishing powers of antiquity'.[59] Self-conscious awareness of lateness and epigonality on the part of the narrators of the novels examined here, along with the melancholy anxiety caused by their historical position, may then be worked through, such that, 'even if they themselves are late born [*Spätlinge*]', as Nietzsche declares of modern poets, 'coming generations will know them only as first-born [*Erstlinge*]'.[60] As Hutchinson also observes, for Nietzsche, 'truly strong moderns will not look to bury the past, but rather to generate the future'.[61] Rather than attempting to forget the past and ignore one's late historical position and sense of epigonality, the self-conscious acknowledgement of these factors – and, by extension, of the melancholy view of the past that may emerge from them – has the potential to suggest the possibility of futurity, of renewal, and of innovation.

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[55] See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 81–90.
[56] Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, p. 104.
[57] See Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, p. 81.
[58] Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, p. 102.
[59] Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, pp. 103–104.
[60] Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, pp. 106–7. Cited in Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 203.
[61] Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 203.

Such self-consciousness is an essential foundational element of melancholy cosmopolitanism as this thesis conceptualizes it. By drawing together several novels written around a particular point in time whose narrators are individually self-conscious of their lateness and their melancholy, a cosmopolitan community of literary works emerges, suggesting that European literature still contains a residual potential for cultural renewal. If, as Rosi Braidotti observes, 'consciousness is about co-synchronicity: shared time zones, shared memories and sharable timelines of projects', then this is *a fortiori* the case for the self-consciousness of the late narrators of the novels examined in what follows.[62] These novels' narrators may be considered self-conscious principally through their explicit insertion of themselves into the narratives they tell. In *Dora Bruder*, the narrator periodically interrupts his account of Dora's life and final days not only with references to events in his own life that his investigations cause him to recall, but also with explicit accounts of the process of investigation and construction of the narrative. The narrator of *Austerlitz*, meanwhile, is at pains to mediate Jacques Austerlitz's account of his life by regularly reminding the reader that these are not the narrator's own words through his sustained use of the *Konjunktiv I* to indicate reported speech, as well as markers such as 'sagte Austerlitz' ('said Austerlitz'), which appear throughout the narrative.[63] Sebald himself considered this 'periscopic' form of narration, which he claims to borrow from Thomas Bernhard, to be integral to the aesthetics of his prose fiction.[64] In *Sefarad*, furthermore, the narrator's imaginings of experiences of persecution and exile are routinely interspersed with his accounts of being at home or with his family or sat at his desk, pondering the stories with which he is working. By layering and mediating their narratives in these ways, the narrators of these novels not only distance themselves from the people, events, and places in history they describe, they also draw attention self-consciously to their act of periscopic narration and, as such, to their Nietzschean lateness and epigonality, as well as the melancholy outlook that emerges from this.[65]

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[62] See Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), p. 95.

[63] For further discussion of this in relation to the ethical dimensions of *Austerlitz*'s retelling of Jewish experiences of the Holocaust, see Stuart Taberner, 'German Nostalgia? Remembering German-Jewish Life in W.G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten* and *Austerlitz*', in *Germanic Review*, 79 (2004), pp. 181–202.

[64] See Lynne Sharon Schwartz, ed., *The Emergence of Memory: Conversations with W. G. Sebald* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2007), p. 82.

[65] In the case of Sebald's literary project, for example, Anne Fuchs among others argues that the self-conscious reflections of the Sebaldian narrator prevent appropriative identification on the part of a German narrator with his Jewish subject. See, Anne Fuchs, *Die Schmerzenspuren der Geschichte: Zur Poetik der Erinnerung in W. G. Sebalds Prosa* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), pp. 28–34. As Mary Cosgrove also notes, 'this kind of narrative signalling communicates, on the aesthetic level of the text, how the German must always respect the inalienable difference of the Jewish victim other'. See Mary Cosgrove, *Born under Auschwitz: Melancholy Traditions in Postwar German Literature* (Rochester: Camden House, 2014), p. 160.

Given the time- and location-bound nature of cultural and historical constructions of lateness, it may seem anachronistic to draw on Nietzsche's thoughts from the latter half of the nineteenth century to elucidate the aesthetic attitudes of novels written over a hundred years later. Needless to say, the Europe of Nietzsche's day was markedly different to that of the end of the twentieth century. This, however, is precisely why it is not only useful to consider Nietzsche in order to understand these novels' melancholy cosmopolitanism, but arguably essential. Nietzsche warns that 'the isolation of nations due to engendered *national* hostilities' works against the achievement of a more transnational European ideal.[66] He suggests that a 'community can exist which is both more than the nation state and less vague than humanity', as Christian Emden has argued.[67] Yet this future-oriented cosmopolitan philosophy for Europe to exist beyond the limits of nationhood did not come to pass. This finds its echo in the lateness-inflected melancholy of European writers at the end of the twentieth century, since over the preceding hundred years Europe failed to become what Nietzsche envisioned. This is not to suggest that all European intellectuals and novelists desired or desire Europe to be fashioned after Nietzsche's ideas. Yet from the late vantage point of the turn of the millennium, novels such as *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* look back at the seemingly irretrievable loss of European optimism in the face of rising nationalism and its ensuing horrors. In doing so, they not only implicitly mark the absence of Nietzsche's vision for Europe, but also the passing away of the notion of 'high' European culture following the catastrophes of the early twentieth century. European modernity is tainted and rendered suspect. The marked disappearance of 'high' European culture in its wake is registered in melancholy cosmopolitan novels through their understanding of history as melancholy and the past as irretrievable. The optimism of Nietzsche's vision appears to be lost for them.

The sequence of catastrophic historical events over the course of the twentieth century prompted, as Shane Weller among others argues, a radical questioning among European writers and thinkers of the very idea of European culture itself.[68] Following two world wars, the rise of totalitarianism, and the Holocaust, Europe experienced a levelling out of its 'high' culture. The subsequent emergence of the postmodern embodied, as Fredric

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[66] Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, p. 228. Emphasis in original.
[67] Christian Emden, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 286.
[68] See Shane Weller, *Language and Negativity in European Modernism: Towards a Literature of the Unword* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 2–3.

Jameson observes, 'specific reactions against the established forms of high modernism'.[69] While this was to some extent prefigured by the elimination of illiteracy in Western Europe in the early twentieth century, as Béla Tomka notes,[70] it was nonetheless fuelled by what Andreas Huyssen describes as 'modernism's running feud with mass society and mass culture'.[71] Coming after what Huyssen defines as the 'great divide' between 'high' modernist culture and mass postmodern culture, melancholy cosmopolitan novels written at the end of the twentieth century register through their late and epigonal Nietzschean echoes this perceived loss of 'high' European culture and the end of great literary movements. The generative potential of these novels' lateness, however, is not exhausted through melancholy reflection and narration. By thematizing the difficult history of twentieth-century Europe through aesthetic attitudes of lateness and epigonality, which resonate across the boundaries of different national literary traditions – be it through *Dora Bruder*'s engagement with the legacy of Jewish writers' troubled relationship to the French and European literary canon, or *Austerlitz*'s apocalyptic late modernism fused with reworkings of the German Romantic tradition, or *Sefarad*'s confrontation of Spain's repeated exclusion from European cultural history and the implications of this – these novels collectively gesture towards the possible future exemplification of Nietzsche's transnational European vision. Conceiving of these novels in terms of a literary community, which emphasises their comparable understandings of their present in relation to the past, expresses the transnational optimism of the very vision whose absence these texts mark. Out of the pathos of lateness and the melancholy of history, then, the potential for cosmopolitan optimism and future cultural renewal begins to emerge.

FROM LITERARY LATENESS TO THE MELANCHOLY OF HISTORY

The aesthetics of lateness in the examples of European fiction explored in this study encourage a melancholy understanding of history, such that the past itself is understood as melancholy. In the final decades of the twentieth century, many psychologists and sociologists suggested that the period of anxiety experienced across Europe in the aftermath of World War Two subsequently led to a new age of melancholy in Western society.[72] The political and

[69] Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. by Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1983), pp. 111–125 (p.111).
[70] Béla Tomka, *A Social History of Twentieth-Century Europe* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 364.
[71] Andreas Huyssen, 'Mapping the Postmodern', in *New German Critique*, 33 (1984), pp. 5–52 (p. 49).
[72] See, for example, G. L. Klerman, 'Is this the Age of Melancholy?', in *Psychology Today*, 12 (1979), pp. 36–42; Olle Hagnel, Jan Lanke, Birgitta Rorsman, and Leif Öjesjö, 'Are we entering an age of melancholy?', in

military tension between the West and the East, the terror of the possibility that nuclear war would break out, the threat of imminent economic crises or environmental disasters, along with population explosions and other potentially catastrophic events pertinent to the post-industrial societies of late-twentieth-century Europe, all contributed to this sense of social and psychological melancholy. In a literary context, this relates to and is reflected in the cultural and historical lateness documented in works produced during this time. If, as Steiner observes, there is 'a core-tiredness' in Western European culture at the close of the twentieth century, then, he argues, this is undoubtedly because 'we are, or feel ourselves to be latecomers'.[73] With the impending turn of the millennium, Steiner heralds the arrival in European culture of what he terms 'the eclipse of the messianic'.[74] Understood in either a personal or metaphorical sense, the 'messianic' signifies in Judeo-Christian religion and culture a sense of rejuvenation, the end of historical temporality, and the coming of a new world. For Steiner, the events of the twentieth century have done away with this optimism. As such, his notion of the eclipse of the messianic is far more melancholy in tone than, for example, Francis Fukuyama's much-criticised (and later recanted) thesis of the 'end of history', which heralds the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution with the end of the Cold War and the arrival of Western liberal democracy as the final and ultimate form of human government.[75] For Steiner, the darkness of this eclipse, and its concomitant sense of ending, is ongoing and insoluble. Yet, while suggesting that the notion of the messianic may be eclipsed at the close of the century, Steiner nonetheless acknowledges that 'the forces emanating from the eclipse of the messianic will find manifest expression', thereby anticipating the potentially generative qualities of lateness and melancholy that this study investigates.[76]

Although not unique to European culture, melancholy has enjoyed a longstanding and diverse history in European letters, from the early modern period, through the Renaissance to Romanticism, and up to and beyond modernity.[77] Indeed, for Matthew Bell,

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Psychological Medicine, 12 (1982), pp. 279–98; and Anthony J. Marsella, Norman Sartorius, Assen Jablensky, and Fred R. Fenton, 'Cross-cultural studies of depressive disorders: an overview', in *Culture and Depression* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

73 George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation* (London: Faber & Faber, 2001), p. 2.

74 See Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, pp. 7–8.

75 See Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', in *The National Interest*, 16 (1989), pp. 3–18 and Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992). Although Fukuyama's vestigially Hegelian view of history and his optimistic endorsement of Western hegemony appears naïve at best with the benefit of hindsight, the suggestion in his work that the future would remain haunted by Nietzschean spectres (pp. 300–327) is, this thesis submits, not so wide of the mark.

76 See Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, p. 8.

77 For further discussion on the development of melancholy from the perspectives of various thinkers, see Jennifer Radden, ed., *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For further discussion of how engagement with history in modernist literature in particular is closely entwined

melancholy may be understood as 'the Western malady'.[78] Although scholarship on melancholy and its aesthetics in European literature has until now principally remained confined to discrete national contexts, melancholy may be considered a prevalent European aesthetic attitude, especially given the evident interconnectedness of national literary traditions in Western Europe.[79] Nonetheless, the term itself is inherently slippery since it has been redefined and reappropriated over the centuries through religion, medicine, and the humanities. While understandings of melancholy have altered over time, however, its symptoms have remained the same: affected sadness and fear, expressions of grief and of a desire for solitude, which results in an inability to act and a loss of interest.[80] If melancholy, broadly defined, is an affective withdrawal from the world, then it is one which, as Mary Cosgrove notes, entails 'a contemplative response to recent history that is embedded in the ancient cultural traditions of writing about and depicting the universal human experience of sorrow'.[81] As such, the emergence of melancholy cosmopolitan novels after the cataclysmic events of twentieth-century European history, after an apparent end of grand narratives, and in the shadow of the 'eclipse of the messianic', to quote Steiner, constitutes a literary response to a perceived lateness in history and the burden of engaging with prior literature and historical events through the affectation of a melancholy aesthetic attitude.

The idea of Europe has long been one of a continent and culture that is 'weighed down by the burden of its history', to use Valéry's concise summation, which itself echoes Nietzsche's reading of European modernity as an age that is oversaturated with history.[82] As self-consciously epigonal latecomers writing at the perceived end of an era, it is perhaps unsurprising that the narrators of novels such as those examined in this thesis should adopt such a melancholy outlook on the past thematised in their narratives. But what particular form does this melancholy take? Writing after the catastrophes of European twentieth-

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with the history of melancholy in European art, see, for example, Sanja Bahun, *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[78] See Matthew Bell, *Melancholia: The Western Malady* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[79] For recent examples of studies of melancholy aesthetics in various European national literary contexts, see Ross Chambers, *The Writing of Melancholy: Modes of Opposition in Early French Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Roger Barta, *Melancholy and Culture: Essays on the Diseases of the Soul in Golden Age Spain*, trans. by Christopher Follett (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008); and Cosgrove, *Born under Auschwitz*.

[80] For further discussion of the symptoms and history of melancholy, see Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[81] See Cosgrove, *Born under Auschwitz*, p. 9. Cosgrove's study opens with a comprehensive introduction to melancholy as a performative affected mode, as well as a history of melancholy through Antiquity, the Renaissance, and Modernity, with a focus on its conceptualisations in psychoanalysis, religion, and medicine. The present study follows Cosgrove in consciously preferring the term 'melancholy' over 'melancholia', since, as Cosgrove explains, 'while it was a synonym for "melancholy" during the Renaissance, its [melancholia's] application, in other epochs, has often been restricted to descriptions of disease' (p. 9).

[82] See Paul Valéry, *Cahiers/Notebooks*, vol. IV, trans. by Paul Gifford, Robert Pickering, Joseph Rima, Norma Rinsler, and Brian Stimpson (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 521.

century history and distanced from the past that precedes them, the narrators of *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* engage with and attempt to work through the legacy of modernity, driven by their late historical location, as well as their literary epigonality. As Fredric Jameson notes, 'the more we seek to persuade ourselves of the fidelity of our own projects and values with respect to the past, the more obsessively do we find ourselves exploring the latter'; for Jameson, this constitutes 'the latecomer's melancholy reverence'.[83] Such a reverential focus on the past relies on temporal distance and separation from earlier events, which is to say, on a fundamental understanding of one's present as unavoidably and irrevocably separated from the past. These narrators and their narratives are at once separated from and determined by the time that came before them.

For Aleida Assmann, the emergence of modernity from the nineteenth century in the wake of the French and industrial revolutions encouraged an understanding that 'with the split between the past and the present time could now be seen as an ever widening gulf, reflected by a new historical consciousness and temporal alienation'.[84] For the late modern narrators of melancholy cosmopolitan novels, who emerge towards the perceived end of twentieth-century European modernity, their historical consciousness constitutes a melancholy perspective on the past determined by a sense of loss and separation, of irrecoverability and irreconcilability with history. Yet, in their position as epigonal latecomers, they are also overdetermined by earlier events and literary works. They are compelled to engage with history due to their historical and geographical location; from this emerges a melancholy perspective on prior events. History itself may thus be construed as melancholy. As Peter Fritzsche argues, if 'the losses of the past are irreversible; this is what constitutes the melancholy of history'.[85] This is not to say, however, that such a perspective is debilitating and passive. Melancholy aesthetics in novels such as those examined here emerge as quite distinct from more weary forms of melancholy, such as the resignation expressed by Benjamin's left-wing melancholia, which condemns the political left's nostalgia-inflected tendency towards backward-looking and conservative attachment to the way things used to be or might have turned out had history followed a different course.[86] Although, as Walter

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[83] Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 24.
[84] Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 81.
[85] Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 1–10 (p. 8).
[86] The 'left melancholic', as Benjamin tersely notes, 'takes as much pride in the traces of former spiritual goods as the bourgeois do in their material goods'. Loss and melancholy are central to Benjamin's thought and, although his writing on melancholy is not explicitly acknowledged as a response to Freud, Benjamin's observations build on Freud's earlier work. However, where Freud views melancholy as a condition to be diagnosed in an individual, Benjamin sees melancholy, particularly the left-wing variety, as an historical problem

Moser argues, melancholy and nostalgia might be thought of as the two 'affects' of lateness, he defines them in contradistinction to each other. If nostalgia expresses a desire to return to the past, then melancholy, he argues, is the recognition that this is impossible, that the past and the present cannot be reconciled.[87] Whether it be through ekphrastic contemplation of photographs and abandoned objects in *Dora Bruder*, descent into alternative fairy tale realms in *Austerlitz*, or memories of lost homelands and fleeting moments in time in *Sefarad*, the narrators of melancholy cosmopolitan novels respond to their perceived historical and cultural lateness via a melancholy aesthetic attitude that acknowledges, embodies, and reflects the mutual irreconcilability of the past and the present.

For Fritzsche, the disconnection between past and present renders history an object of intense scrutiny for cultural practitioners in the present, and this is certainly true in the case of the novels examined here. However, this study posits a different characterisation for the self-understanding of literary artists and the present they inhabit. While, for Fritzsche, 'insofar as the present was characterized by the new, the past appeared increasingly different, mysterious, and inaccessible',[88] a reading of the present not as *new* but as *late* further underscores the bereft sense of coming after articulated in the novels examined here, intensifying their conceptualisation of history *as* melancholy. Franco Moretti suggests that by understanding that literature '*follows* great social changes – that it always "comes after"', then it is able to not only repeat or reflect the problems of history, but to resolve them.[89] That such resolution should be automatic is perhaps overly optimistic, and not evidenced in any substantial way in the novels examined here. As such, this study prefers to qualify the causality expressed by Moretti, arguing that in coming after, and being self-conscious of this, novels engaging with cultural and historical lateness, which exhibit in various ways a melancholy aesthetic and a melancholy perspective on history, collectively express a possibility for the resolution of historical problems and the potential for a generative sense of future renewal in literature to emerge.

This potentiality recalls in particular Sebald's understanding of his own literary project as 'Ein Versuch der Restitution', as his final public speech at the opening of the Literaturhaus

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related to the experience of modernity. See Walter Benjamin, 'Left-Wing Melancholy', in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. by Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 304–306 (p. 305.)

[87] See Walter Moser, 'Mélancholie et nostalgie: Affects de la *Spätzeit*', in *Etudes littéraires*, 32 (1999), pp. 83–103. Cited in Hutchinson, *Lateness*, pp. 13 and 26.

[88] Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*, p. 7.

[89] See Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to García Márquez*, trans. by Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1996), p. 6. Emphasis in original.

in Stuttgart attests.[90] Such a project holds that the recovery, restoration, and reparation of historical damage may be enacted through fiction, thereby meaningfully moving closer towards the rectification of the catastrophes stemming from what J. J. Long has termed the 'meta-problem' of modernity, which haunts Sebald's œuvre.[91] For Long, the melancholy aesthetics in Sebald's work constitute an epiphenomenon of his thematisation of this meta-problem. Melancholy may thus be understood as a restorative aesthetic form, a means of recognition and of bearing witness that allows the meta-problem of modernity to be articulated, as well as an active and effective response to its legacy of destruction and loss. This study's comparative reading of *Austerlitz* alongside *Dora Bruder* and *Sefarad* builds on the notion of a literature of restitution, but expands the focus from the reparation of historical calamity to include the restitution of literary form and style. If, as well as the restoration of property to rightful owners, the term restitution may connote, as Russell Kilbourn argues, the restoration of works of art, then the novels examined here may be understood as offering recompense to literature by dint of their narrators' late and melancholy self-consciousness.[92]

The quintessentially late and melancholy perspective of these novels not only recalls and draws on Nietzsche's aforementioned characterisation of modern poets as beings facing backwards, but also evokes Benjamin's celebrated figure of the Angel of History. Blown backwards into the future by the storm of progress, the *Angelus Novus* presides over the ruins of modernity's failure, fixedly contemplating history while inextricably moving away from it.[93] Such an awareness of the past's irreconcilable and unbridgeable distance from their present lends the narratives of these end-of-the-twentieth-century novels a melancholy perception of history. If Benjamin's Angel acts as a metaphor for modernity's progress, metaphysically presiding over the destruction wreaked by Western advancement, then Nietzsche's earlier categorisation of modern writers as unavoidably epigonal renders them a cultural embodiment of lateness and melancholy, endowing their work with pathos. The view of history expressed at such a late hour in the novels examined here gestures towards a way of understanding late and melancholy aesthetics in European fiction as moving towards a form

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[90] 'An attempt at restitution'. See W. G. Sebald, 'Zerstreute Reminiszenzen: Gedanken zur Eröffnung eines Stuttgarter Hauses', in *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 18 November 2001.
[91] J. J. Long, *W. G. Sebald: Image, Archive, Modernity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 1. See also, Taberner, 'German Nostalgia?'.
[92] See Russell J. A. Kilbourn, 'The Question of Genre in W. G. Sebald's "Prose" (Towards a Post-Memorial Literature of Restitution)', in *A Literature of Restitution: Critical Essays on W. G. Sebald*, ed. by Jeannette Baxter, Valerie Henitiuk, and Ben Hutchinson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 247–264 (p. 261).
[93] See Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), pp. 253–264 (pp. 257–8). For the original German, see Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), p. 697.

of potential restitution for European literature. Such melancholy – such grief over history and the inability to reconcile past and present in these novels – suggests, when they are read alongside one another, not a loss of interest or an inability to act as they individually articulate, but rather a generative potential to salvage something from the wreckage of European literary modernity.

THE LATE AND THE MELANCHOLY AS COSMOPOLITAN

Recalling Nietzsche's figures of *Spätlinge* and *Erstlinge*, the narrators of late modern novels such as *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz,* and *Sefarad* embody the potential of achieving future renewal in European literature through self-consciousness of their lateness and, by extension, of their melancholy outlook on the past. If the mediated or periscopic style of the narrators of the novels examined in this study evinces their self-consciousness of their lateness and their melancholy, then a collective of self-consciously late and melancholy *Spätlinge* suggest the possibility of futurity, that *Erstlinge* may yet come. By paying attention to the narrators' stylisation of themselves as melancholy latecomers in the novels examined here, it is possible to understand this shared aesthetic attitude as 'cosmopolitan'. To do this, it will be helpful to consider a corollary figure to Nietzsche's backward-facing modern poets: the 'good European', for whom personal stylisation and self-consciousness are essential. Through the ethos of the 'good European', Nietzsche imagines a community that has risen above nationalism, since this figure was initially conceived as a response to the emergence in the late 1800s of nationalist tendencies across Europe. Nietzsche claims that by being 'undaunted in presenting [one]self' as a good European, it is possible to exhibit a self-consciously cosmopolitan European identity.[94] It is up to each individual, Nietzsche argues, to make themselves and their lives more aesthetic, more artistic, more poetic, and more beautiful, thereby enriching the totality of European culture and society. The 'good European' is, as Martine Prange has noted, 'the exemplary cosmopolitan practitioner', and his form of cosmopolitanism is a highly individual praxis, whose focus centres around self-consciousness and self-renewal, but within a collective of similarly self-conscious practitioners.[95] Through

[94] Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, p. 228. Emphasis added. (Original German: 'so soll man sich nur ungescheut als *guten Europäer* ausgeben').

[95] See Martine Prange, 'Cosmopolitan roads to culture and the festival road of humanity: The cosmopolitan praxis of Nietzsche's good European against Kantian cosmopolitanism' in *Ethical Perspectives: Journal of the European Ethics Network*, 14: 3 (2007), pp. 269 - 286 (p. 270). To draw further connections between lateness and the cosmopolitan ethos of the 'good European', it is interesting to note that for Adorno, a key feature of artistic

their narrators' self-consciously assumed stance of lateness and melancholy with respect to the past, which already contains the seeds of possible future renewal, the novels examined in this study embody a particular form of European cosmopolitan futurity. This is not to argue that the narrators or, indeed, the authors of melancholy cosmopolitan novels are themselves actively striving to embody the figure of the good European, however. Rather, it is to suggest that, when viewed through a Nietzschean lens, it is precisely out of a self-consciousness of lateness and a melancholy perspective on the past in these novels that a form of European cosmopolitanism may begin to coalesce. When they are read alongside one another, these novels echo Nietzsche's suggestion of the potential for an aesthetic literary community to exist beyond individual national contexts and traditions without being lost in the totality of humanity.

Emerging from self-consciousness, the melancholy form of cosmopolitanism explored in this study is understood as an aesthetic attitude in European fiction. The adjective 'cosmopolitan' is employed in an attempt to best encompass the collective late and melancholy aesthetic attitude demonstrated by the narrators of these novels, rather than in any political or philosophical sense – such as prominent theorisations by Immanuel Kant or Jürgen Habermas, for example – or as an explicitly anthropological, ethical, political, philosophical, or sociological descriptor.[96] Nevertheless, the use of the term 'cosmopolitanism' to describe the late and melancholy aesthetic attitude of the novels examined here requires substantial legitimisation and defence, not least because the idea of qualifying or quantifying 'cosmopolitanism' may initially appear to be at odds with the universalizing impetus of the term itself. Etymology will provide a helpful point of departure here. Beyond its literal translation from the Greek as 'citizen of the world', the term cosmopolitanism, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, has been understood since at least the early 1840s in Europe as an adjective denoting 'the characteristics that arise from, or are suited to, a range over many countries'.[97] This usage is borne out by the 'Centre national de ressources textuelles et lexicales', which claims that as early as 1825, the word 'cosmopolite' was understood in the following terms: 'où coexistent des éléments de plusieurs nations'.[98]

late style is an intense expression of the artist's 'uninhibited subjectivity' or personality, whereby heightened self-expression is favoured above aesthetic norms. For further discussion of this, see Adorno, 'Late Style in Beethoven', p. 564.

[96] See, for example, Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', in *Political Writings*, ed. by H. S. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 41–53 and Jürgen Habermas, 'Towards a Cosmopolitan Europe', in *Journal of Democracy*, 14:4 (2003), pp. 86–100.

[97] See <www.oed.com/viewdictionary/Entry/42259>. Last accessed 26 July 2019.

[98] 'Where elements of several nations coexist'. See <www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/cosmopolite>. Last accessed 26 July 2019.

As such, even on a purely semantic level, 'cosmopolitanism' may not only denote universalist ideas of 'world citizenship', or the ethical, philosophical, and political imperatives of recent discourses such as 'cosmopolitan memory'.[99] It might also signify characteristics arising out of more than one national context, as well as those which are suited to multiple (but not necessarily all) national contexts. As the following chapters will show, the forms of lateness and melancholy in the novels examined here relate not only to the specific national literary contexts out of which they emerge, but are also common to more than one national literary context within European literature, thus simultaneously reflecting and informing the concept.

Highlighting the aforementioned usages is not merely an attempt to make a pedantic point about the history of the word's etymology, especially since such definitions are neither binding nor exclusive. However, it does reveal a particular significance of the word 'cosmopolitan' within the European milieu in which this study situates itself, not least that in spite of superficially transparent etymological roots, 'cosmopolitanism' has long been a term weighted with a multitude of implications. Throughout the long history of cosmopolitanism and the many variations in its usage, the term 'has kept generating provocative questions about the ethics, aesthetics and politics of belonging, community, citizenship and humanity', as Stefano Evangelista and Richard Hibbitt observe.[100] As such, when attempting to navigate the substantial discourse on cosmopolitanism, it is important to recall, as Stuart Taberner notes, that 'there are multiple forms of cosmopolitanism which relate quite differently to the particular and the other, to the nation and the world'.[101] All of these forms of cosmopolitanism articulate in various ways a move away from nationalism, imagining a form of community that transcends national and linguistic boundaries. Although universalist notions of cosmopolitanism are often all too utopian or abstract for practical use, defining the term within a particular epistemological context may threaten to impede its inherent openness. However, since the multifaceted epistemology of 'cosmopolitanism' is one of its inherent qualities, it offers a lens through which comparative literature scholarship, freed from the rigid restrictions of theoretical frameworks, may perceive and reimagine literary works in new ways, while simultaneously offering specific insights into the notion of 'cosmopolitanism' from a particular epistemological purchase. For better or for worse,

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[99] For further discussion of this, see Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, 'Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory', in *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5:1 (2002), pp. 87–106 (pp. 88–9).
[100] Stefano Evangelista and Richard Hibbitt, 'Guest Editors' Introduction: *Fin-de-siècle Cosmopolitanism*, in *Comparative Critical Studies*, 10:2 (2013), pp. 123–138 (p. 134).
[101] Stuart Taberner, 'Memory, Cosmopolitanism and Nation: Christa Wolf's *Stadt der Engel* (2010) and J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999)', in *Comparative Critical Studies*, 11:1 (2014), pp. 49–67 (p. 50).

cosmopolitanism is a term defined by its limitations and specificities as much as by its capaciousness.

Fittingly for the purposes of this study, literature is, as Kristian Shaw observes, 'a late arrival' to the field of cosmopolitan studies, whose values attempt to preserve individual cultural heritages while acknowledging the existence and validity of disparate cultures in the new millennium.[102] Particularly in recent Anglophone literary scholarship, cosmopolitanism has gained wide currency via a plethora of theorisations in the past twenty years. In Shaw's own work, British and American novels are understood to be examples of cosmopolitan fiction when they respond to the accelerated changes in world society that led to a sense of cultural fragility at the turn of the millennium by imagining new configurations of cultural identity and community, as well as socio-political interdependence. While Amanda Anderson attends to the ways in which cosmopolitan practices in nineteenth-century British culture are informed by ideals of critical detachment, Jessica Berman explores how many modernist writers such as Henry James, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, and Gertrude Stein developed cosmopolitan models for social organisation, since their writings return again and again to issues of commonality, shared voice, and exchange of experience.[103] For Alan McCluskey, meanwhile, the notion of a modern cosmopolitan novel is inherently connected to questions of materiality in contemporary fictional works, such that the unconventional stylistic techniques of authors such as J. M. Coetzee, Caryl Phillips, and Philip Roth elicit a critical and materially attentive engagement with issues of race, gender, and class, which thus qualifies them as cosmopolitan.[104] Berthold Schoene, furthermore, suggests that Britain's historical complicity in colonialism and imperialism marks the nation as a prime example of cosmopolitan cultural relations. Concentrating on the importance of cosmopolitanism to nation state paradigms, Schoene recognizes that narrative imaginings of global community in British fiction are increasingly localized and pragmatic, moving away from what he perceives to be utopian naïveté, while remaining focused on combatting the worst effects of globalisation through what he calls the 'cosmopolitan imagination'.[105] Responding directly to Schoene, Fiona McCulloch offers further readings of the ways in which identities are imagined in contemporary British fiction through the lens of cosmopolitan political theory,

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[102] See Kristian Shaw, 'Teaching Contemporary Cosmopolitanism', in *Teaching 21st Century Genres*, ed. by Katy Shaw (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 167–185 (p. 169).
[103] See Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) and Jessica Berman, *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[104] See Alan McCluskey, *Materiality and the Modern Cosmopolitan Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
[105] See Berthold Schoene, *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 180–186 especially.

arguing that empathetic shifts from entrenched territorialism to an idealized all-encompassing planetary impetus may enable a curative response to capitalist globalisation.[106] McCulloch also takes Schoene to task for his 'phallocratic' attempt to 'pin down and fix a definition to a concept that should remain open'.[107] Indeed, if one thing can be drawn from all of these scholars' accounts, it is that the term 'cosmopolitan' and the ideas it denotes are inherently capacious, sometimes threatening to become impractically nebulous. Yet, seen in another way, its potential disadvantages might in fact be regarded as advantageous, since cosmopolitanism's intellectual pliancy may open up new ways of imagining literature, revealing something about certain novels that would otherwise not have come to light. In the case of those novels which are this study's focus, they are understood as cosmopolitan through their self-consciously European melancholy lateness.

What is immediately striking in the theorisations of cosmopolitanism in literature sketched out above is not only how these readings focus almost exclusively on Anglophone novels, surely revealing an implicit but nonetheless relevant limitation to the cosmopolitan ideal they pursue, but also how the discourse around cosmopolitanism swelled around the turn of the millennium. Given the historical situatedness and perspective of this thesis and the novels it examines, this is fitting. Beyond the Anglophone literary sphere, David D. Kim's analysis of what he terms 'cosmopolitan parables' in twentieth-century German literature from Hans Christoph Buch's *Die Rede des toten Kolumbus am Tag des Jüngsten Gerichts* (1992) and Michael Krüger's *Himmelfarb* (1993) to W. G. Sebald's *Die Ringe des Saturn: Eine Englische Wallfahrt* (1995) brings sociological and political formulations of the cosmopolitan to bear on literary analysis of trauma and memory. For Kim, these novels 'produce dissonant social relations through which readers are able to reflect on their own implicated relationships with strangers in pain'.[108] As such, the cosmopolitan forms of world citizenship extrapolated from these novels by Kim have a principally didactic impetus, with Sebald, for example, producing in what is arguably his most ambitious work 'a fugue of international voices or a mosaic of cross-referential claims to truth in world citizenship'.[109] For Kim, the form of cosmopolitanism in these post-*Wende* German novels is principally rooted in memories and imagined experiences of trauma, which haunt the present and provide a foundation for political cosmopolitan action.

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[106] See Fiona McCulloch, *Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary British Fiction: Imagined Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[107] McCulloch, *Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary British Fiction*, p. 7.
[108] David D. Kim, *Cosmopolitan Parables: Trauma and Responsibility in Contemporary Germany* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017), p. 185.
[109] Kim, *Cosmopolitan Parables*, p. 181.

The present study's delineation and analysis of melancholy cosmopolitan novels is less concerned with attempting another theorisation of a political or philosophical cosmopolitan ethos through literary works, however, and more geared towards describing and examining a literary sensibility or aesthetic attitude that emerges among novels written around a similar time in discrete national contexts within Europe. Such an assumed pose is not unlike that of Nietzsche's 'good European'. Indeed, as Rebecca Walkowitz argues, not only do 'cultural strategies of posture have a significant role in cosmopolitan paradigms', but, in fact, 'cosmopolitan literary style emerges 'as [an] attitude, stand, posture, and consciousness'.[110] Cosmopolitan literary style ultimately constitutes a defence of cosmopolitanism as aestheticism, in that it privileges a rarefied set of high-cultural literary gestures, as Pieter Vermeulen has suggested.[111] However, as Vermeulen goes on to remark, the critical potency of such aesthetic styles and literary postures is not to be disqualified outright by its elite provenance. Even if a form of cosmopolitan aesthetics is identifiable with a literary elite, this does not automatically render it invalid and unable to provide deeper insights into literary works. Rather, it shifts the focus, as Bruce Robbins argues, towards identifying 'a proper tone in which this can be acknowledged'.[112] Studying transnational and cosmopolitan aspects of literature is naturally suggestive of a normative notion of literature without borders or boundaries. Nevertheless, this easily attracts accusations of elitism that cast it as a product of Western expansionism and an excuse for cultural imperialism, even as it attempts to resist monocultural nationalism. Reading melancholy cosmopolitanism in European fiction is a means of revealing and cataloguing the constitutive tensions at play between the European and the national within European literature by containing this analysis within a European context. As Moretti notes, 'the nation state… found the novel. And viceversa [sic.]: the novel found the nation-state. And being the only symbolic form that could represent it, it became an essential component of our modern culture'.[113] This has its roots in earlier forms of European culture, as discussed previously, given the emergence of European literature with the rise of the vernacular languages in Western Europe as a container for

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[110] See Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style*, pp. 6 and 17. In the final chapter of her study, Walkowitz's analysis focuses exclusively on Sebald's *Die Ringe des Saturn*, arguing that in this novel Sebald both 'enhances and disables the place of national fiction' through its attempt to understand how people's lives in one place might be reliant or contingent on the lives of others in a different place. What Walkowitz identifies as the cosmopolitan style of Sebald's prose is thus reliant on the reassertion of the value of aesthetic culture – the stylised literary pose of the European cosmopolitan writer – at a time when contemporary society refuses to do so. For further discussion of this, see Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style*, p. 170 especially.

[111] Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature*, pp. 89–91.

[112] Bruce Robbins, 'The Village of the Liberal Managerial Class', in *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture*, ed. by Vinay Dharwadker (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 15–32 (p. 16). Cited in Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature*, p. 90.

[113] Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800–1900* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 17.

national literatures, as Cohen argues.[114] All of which is to say that the study of forms of literary cosmopolitanism must be culturally grounded within particular contexts, as Bruce Robbins argues, especially if the novel is to prove to be a testing-ground for cosmopolitanism, as Kwame Anthony Appiah suggests.[115] In the late twentieth century, as Walkowitz asserts, conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism and the development of modern European literature are closely intertwined.[116]Accordingly, the novels examined in this study hypothesize a particularly European and literary cosmopolitan pose grounded in a late and melancholy aesthetic attitude emergent in fiction written around the turn of the millennium.

The national, it emerges, is not at odds with the ideas of the European or the cosmopolitan; they are intimately connected. In a European context, as Appiah neatly puts it, 'literature and nationalism were born twins'.[117] Literature, for Appiah, emerges and takes shape within cartography. Johann Gottfried Herder, theoretician of the nation *par excellence*, saw European expansionism as an immoral catastrophe and, while he championed the notion of the *Volksgeist*, his cosmopolitan concept of *Humanität* also emerges out of this theorisation of the nation.[118] For Herder, then, nations and national traditions offer a non-aggressive framework for particularities to be thought through within a broader collective. Being part of a particular national tradition within European literature, as James Hodkinson observes, may already entail being cosmopolitan, since philosophical and academic thinking of all-inclusive models of *Humanität* such as Herder's were historically also caught up in evolving discussions of nationhood.[119] As a result, the category of the 'cosmopolitan' does not collapse ethnic or cultural diversity, but rather acts as a container for it, within which the impulse to define national characteristics leads to the understanding that the national already contains the cosmopolitan, just as European cosmopolitanism comprises a multiplicity of national contexts. Parallels between the self-conscious stylisation of the 'good European' and the self-

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[114] See Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, pp. 81–116 especially.
[115] See Bruce Robbins, 'Comparative Cosmopolitanism', in *Social Text*, 31/32 (1992), pp. 169–186 and Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Cosmopolitan Readings', in *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture*, ed. by Vinay Dharwadker (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 197–227 (p. 207).
[116] See Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style*, p. 20.
[117] Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Boundaries of Culture', in *PMLA*, 132:3 (2017), pp. 513–525 (p. 514).
[118] See, for example, Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Results of a Comparison of Different People's Poetry in Ancient and Modern Times (1797)', in *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, ed. by David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongiseni Buthelezi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 3–9. For further discussion of this, see also Hans Adler, 'Herder's Concept of *Humanität*', in *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. by Hans Adler and Wulf Koepke (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2009), pp. 93–116 and Alan Patten, '"The Most Natural State": Herder and Nationalism', in *History of Political Thought*, 31:4 (2010), pp. 657–689.
[119] See James Hodkinson, 'Impersonating an Ideal? Islam, Orientalism and Cosmopolitanism in Political, Academic and Popular Literary Discourses of *Fin-de-siècle* Germany', in *Comparative Critical Studies*, 10:2 (2013), pp. 283–302 (p. 283).

consciously late and melancholy *rôle* assumed by the narrators of the novels examined in this study may help navigate the tricky waters between restrictive *Nationalität* and nebulous *Humanität*. Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, Friedrich Meinecke remarks that over the course of European history, 'Kosmopolitismus und Nationalität standen noch geraume Zeit in einer engen Blut- und Lebensgemeinschaft'.[120] Although Meinecke is inclined to assert that a gradual move away from cosmopolitanism towards nationalism, which he sees as a better form of political organisation, would constitute a positive trend, he is correct to highlight the mutual imbrication of the two terms. While he might desire to break the symbiosis between the national and the cosmopolitan, its existence is indisputable.

If the novels examined in this thesis exhibit an engagement with historical and cultural lateness that implies a sense of futurity, then this is not least because lateness is inherently invested with the potential of overcoming itself. Furthermore, if these novels' narrators' self-consciousness of their lateness and of their melancholy view of the past constitutes an aesthetic cosmopolitan attitude redolent of Nietzsche's 'good European', then this form of melancholy cosmopolitanism is also one which exists in various national traditions, forming a collective of writers that goes beyond the context of the national within Europe. As such, this study delineates and analyses a form of European literary cosmopolitanism, qualified by melancholy and informed by lateness. After examining the forms of lateness and melancholy in *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad*, therefore, each chapter of this study will conclude by asking, if their self-consciously late and melancholy modes of writing can be conceived of as exemplifying a cosmopolitan literary attitude or stance, then what are implications of this for the novel in question. An essential element of this study's understanding of cosmopolitanism is its multiple valences and limitations in spite of its implied universalism, as well as the ways in which it constitutes a stance or attitude that may be qualified. If, as Alexander Beecroft observes, 'cosmopolitan literatures, almost by definition, represent themselves as universal, and yet their very reach often brings them in touch with rival cosmopolitanisms', then cosmopolitanism in literary works may be defined by hyperbole and demarcated by its own limitations while remaining legitimately cosmopolitan.[121] For Beecroft, literature that may be classed as cosmopolitan includes works that emerge 'wherever a single literary language is used over a large territorial range and through a long period of time'.[122] Recalling both the

[120] 'Cosmopolitanism and nationalism stood for some time in a close community of blood and life'. Friedrich Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, seventh edition, ed. by Hans Herzfeld (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1963) p. 111.
[121] See Alexander Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (London: Verso, 2015), p. 35.
[122] Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature*, p. 35.

synchronic and diachronic aspects of late and melancholy novels outlined above (and stretching the definition of the word 'language' to include a mode of writing, which is suggestive of a common speech among the novels examined here, in spite of the different languages in which they were originally composed), novels exhibiting late and melancholy aesthetics in Europe at the close of the twentieth century may fulfil Beecroft's criteria of the cosmopolitan, since they self-consciously emerge after a long tradition of 'high' culture and across the broad geographical space of several European nations. Novels inflected by aesthetics of lateness and melancholy do not therefore constitute a failed form of cosmopolitanism through their (over-)determination by a European literary tradition and canon, insofar as cosmopolitanism always inevitably falls short of its universalist intention of world citizenship. As Mariano Siskind observes, it is possible to view the inevitable so-called failure of cosmopolitanism in positive terms and still as a form of cosmopolitanism, by understanding it 'as an imaginary discourse […] that, although it fails to realise its maximalist universal purpose, nonetheless widens the margins […] and illuminates new meanings by reinscribing cultural particularities in larger, transcultural networks'.[123] Not every European novel written around the turn of the millennium falls into the mode of writing delineated by this study, but a collective of self-consciously late and melancholy novels may still be understood as cosmopolitan in spite of or, perhaps better, by virtue of their own limitations. What emerges over the course of the following study, therefore, is an understanding that the tension between the nation and a broader European context, not its resolution, is essential to the aesthetic practice of certain significant works of European fiction around the turn of the millennium. Accordingly, a reading of melancholy cosmopolitanism contains both the national and the cosmopolitan within a European literary context, revealing and examining European literature's constitutive tensions.

DORA BRUDER, *AUSTERLITZ*, and *SEFARAD*

The three novels examined in this study are celebrated literary works both within and beyond their authors' national contexts.[124] They have been lauded with literary prizes and are regularly

[123] Mariano Siskind, *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2014), pp. 21–22.

[124] It should be noted, however, that certain discrepancies exist between the relative international prestige of Modiano, Sebald, and Muñoz Molina. Since winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2014, Modiano is probably the most widely known and certainly the most prolific writer of the three. Over the course of the almost two decades since his death Sebald has been regularly recalled as a potential winner of the Nobel Prize, yet he

singled out for academic study, although until now all three have never before appeared in the same study alongside one another.[125] As regards the selection of texts for examination, this study echoes Auerbach's remark in the epilogue of *Mimesis* that his 'interpretations are no doubt guided by a specific purpose. Yet this purpose assumed form only as I went along, playing as it were with my texts, and for long stretches of the way I have been guided only by the texts themselves'.[126] Novels, not theories about them, were the starting point of this study and have been its guiding thread throughout. It is in the interplay of the similarities and differences observed among these novels upon first and subsequent readings that the whole idea of melancholy cosmopolitanism was born. Nevertheless, this study is one whose form and structure mirror its argument: the progression from engagement with and responses to lateness, to a melancholy conception of history, towards a cosmopolitan group of European novels, is reflected in the structure of the chapters that follow. Such a formally determined project is obliged, more so than might be the case for other projects of comparative literary criticism, to prove its worth, its usefulness, its *raison d'être*. It is hoped that the close readings of individual novels, as well as their cumulative force over the course of this study and its ultimate conclusions, will do this.

One key aspect of this study's approach to reading the three novels it examines is its focus on the narrators of the novels as distinct from the authors. It is true that these narrators share ambiguous traits with the authors of the novels – in the case of the narrator of *Dora Bruder*, for example, he has even published other novels that share titles of works written by Modiano. However, this study's focus throughout is on the fictional figure of the narrator in

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remains a writer who is better known in the Anglophone sphere than in his native Germany, even though never wrote very little in English. Lastly, while Muñoz Molina is highly regarded both as a novelist and cultural critic in Spain, beyond the Hispanophone sphere, his international profile is admittedly less substantial than that of Modiano and Sebald. The positive reception of recent translations of his earlier and current works in the Anglophone world looks set to change that, however, with the translation of his most recent novel *Like a Fading Shadow* (2018) being shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2018, for example.

[125] Patrick Modiano was awarded the Prix Fénéon (1968), the Prix Roger-Nimier (1968), the Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie Française (1972), the Prix Goncourt (1978), the Institut de France Prix mondial Cino Del Duca (2010), the Österreichischer Staatpreis für Europäische Literatur (2012), and, as already mentioned above, the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2014. W. G. Sebald was the recipient of the Fedor Malchow Lyrikpreis (1991), the Johannes Bobrowski Medaille (1994), the Berliner Literaturpreis (1994), the Preis der Literatour Nord (1994), the Heinrich Böll Preis der Stadt Köln (1997), the Mörike Preis der Stadt Fellbach (1997), the Los Angeles Times Book Award (1998), the Joseph Breitbach Preis (2000), the Heinrich Heine Preis der Stadt Düsseldorf (2000), the National Book Critics Circle Award (2001), and was awarded the Independent Foreign Literature Prize posthumously in 2002. Antonio Muñoz Molina has received the Premio Nacional de Narrativa twice (1988 and 1992), as well as the Premio Planeta de Novela (1991), the Premio Príncipe de Asturias (2013), and the Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society (2013). Margaret Sayers Peden's English translation of *Sepharad* was also named as the winner of a PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Translation Prize in 2004. Regarding academic research on these writers, see the bibliography of this study, which, despite having no pretentions to being an exhaustive list, gives some of an indication as to the breadth and depth of research undertaken on these novelists' lives and works.

[126] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 556.

the novel and it refrains from drawing lines of comparison and connection between the biographical features of author and narrator. Such speculations often lead to circular arguments, not least because potential references to the author's biography in the narrator's words 'provoke the reader into a constant *mise-en-abîme*, where identity with the author is reinstated as soon as it is denied', to use Helen Finch's formulation.[127] While such comparisons would not necessarily be invalid or uninteresting, the goal of this study is to investigate what these literary texts as literary texts reveal when they are read as examples of a melancholy cosmopolitan mode of writing. As such, it confines its critical purview to the fictional works, and their aesthetic, stylistic, and symbolic points of similarity and difference. Before proceeding with further remarks on the methodological underpinnings of the present study, however, it will be useful to briefly rehearse the plots of the three novels.

Although the events of the novel are not narrated chronologically, but rather assembled piecemeal and intercut with other reflections, *Dora Bruder* primarily concerns its narrator's recollections of his investigation into the history of the disappearance of a fifteen-year-old girl during the Occupation and of his own life. Having come across a notice in an old edition of *Paris Soir* announcing her as a missing person, the ambiguously autobiographical narrator-Modiano begins searching for any trace of Dora Bruder in documentation from the time. He is familiar with the neighbourhood where Dora disappeared, although he has often passed by the house at number 41, unaware that it had once been the home of the Bruder family. Learning that one day Dora, for reasons the narrator is unable to uncover, did not return to her convent school before the evening curfew prompts him to recall a time he ran away from home in the winter of 1960. Later in life the narrator goes on to write a novel based on these historical events entitled *Voyage de noces* ('Honeymoon'), which appears in 1990, and is also the name of a novel written by Modiano himself in 1990. In the years following that novel's publication, however, the narrator continues to research Dora's life, unearthing files about her and her parents. He is able to reconstruct the events of their lives until December 1941, when Dora disappeared. According to a police memo, Dora returned to her mother in April 1942, by which time her father had already been interned. Later Dora was taken to the internment centre at Les Tourelles and then to Drancy transit camp in August, where she was reunited with her father. They were then both deported to Auschwitz where, in February the following year, Dora's mother was also imprisoned. These investigations are juxtaposed with the narrator's ruminations on his family history, particularly

[127] See Helen Finch, 'Revenge, Restitution, Ressentiment. Edgar Hilsenrath's and Ruth Klüger's Late Writings as Holocaust Metatestimony' in *German Jewish Literature after 1990*, ed. by Katja Garloff and Agnes Mueller (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2018), pp. 60–79 (p. 61).

his troubled relationship with his Jewish father. During the Occupation, his father was arrested, only narrowly avoiding deportation through a friend's intervention. The narrator recalls how his father once re-enacted this event with his eighteen-year-old son in his former position as the arrested party, reporting the narrator to the police for loudly knocking on his father's door and creating a public disturbance after being sent by his mother to collect maintenance payments owed. This traumatic arrest is a frequent point of reference for the narrator's ruminations on investigating the past, on his father's motivations, and on Dora's experiences during the Occupation.[128] The novel ends with the narrator walking through the streets of Paris, occasionally feeling an echo of Dora Bruder's presence, traces of which he is still attempting to uncover. He admits to never knowing what she did in the weeks she ran away, where and in whose company she was hiding. By acknowledging that this is as far as he will allow his narrative to go, Dora is allowed a *fugue*, the freedom of her flight: 'j'ignorerai toujours à quoi elle passait ses journées', declares the narrator. 'C'est là son secret' (*DB*, pp. 144–145).[129] The narrator declares this to be a private secret that she may keep, upon which neither he nor anyone else will intrude. As such, while the narrator's searching – or at least his account of it – is over, there is still a gulf between his present and Dora Bruder's past that remains ultimately unbridged.

While *Dora Bruder* is generally understood as Modiano's least novelesque novel, and remains one of the few of his many works not to bear the label 'roman', *Austerlitz* is read by many as the literary work by Sebald which most closely resembles a novel, as the second chapter of this study will discuss. That these two works meet in the middle, so to speak, is further justification for reading them together, and as works of fiction. *Austerlitz* opens with the unnamed Sebaldian narrator recounting the story of the eponymous retired architectural historian's investigation of his unremembered childhood in Eastern Europe through a series of coincidental meetings that take place in a variety of places across Europe between 1967 and 1975. After their paths cross coincidentally once again in the saloon bar of the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street Station in 1996, the majority of the novel consists of the narrator's reporting of Austerlitz's continued investigations into his personal history, specifically his attempts to recover the memories of his early life, of which he has no

[128] For further discussion of elements of the traumatic in *Dora Bruder* within the framework of Marianne Hirsch's concept of 'postmemory', see Judith Greenberg, 'Trauma and Transmission: Echoes of the Missing Past in Dora Bruder', in *Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature*, 31:2 (2007), pp. 351–377. This special edition of *Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature* is devoted to *Dora Bruder* and contains several useful introductory articles to the novel and its writing of history. See also, Richard J. Golsan and Lynn A. Higgins, 'Introduction: Patrick Modiano's Dora Bruder', *Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature*, 31:2 (2007), pp. 317–324.
[129] 'I shall never know how she spent her days […] That is her secret' (*DB*, p. 137).

recollection until a physical and mental breakdown many years later. Until his retirement after a long career as a lecturer in England, Austerlitz represses all memories of his past, of his transportation from Prague to Wales in the 1930s, and of his Jewish heritage. Having believed himself to be Dafydd Elias, having lived an alias life with a puritanical parson and his wife, he experiences a shocking moment of recollection as he returns to the site in Liverpool Street Station where he arrived as a *Kindertransport* evacuee. As a result he sets out on a journey to Prague to meet his old nursemaid and learn more of his mother, then travels to the Czech concentration camp of Terezín (Theresienstadt), before finally heading to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris on the search of more information about his father. With every step and every uncovered clue, Austerlitz's sense of loss intensifies, his quest becoming more and more impossible to conclude. As the narrator who mediates his story remarks, the sense of darkness 'verdichtet sich bei dem Gedanken, wie wenig wir festhalten können, was alles und wieviel ständig in Vergessenheit gerät, mit jedem ausgelöschten Leben, wie die Welt sich sozusagen von selber ausleert' (*A.*, p. 39).[130] As the novel comes to a close, Austerlitz leaves his collection of photographs and his writing to the unnamed narrator and heads off to attempt to discover more of his father's life and fate. Sitting alone at the Belgian fortress of Breendonk, which he visits earlier in the novel on Austerlitz's recommendation, the unnamed narrator comes to the end of a chapter of the book he is reading, *Heshel's Kingdom* by Dan Jacobson, a former colleague of Austerlitz. Significantly, however, he does not finish reading the book, before he sets out on his way back to the nearby town of Mechelen, arriving 'als es Abend wurde' (*A*, p. 421).[131] Walking away into gathering darkness, the novel ends inauspiciously with a narrator haunted by the story he has inherited and by his and Austerlitz's inability to reconcile their present with the past.

Sefarad, Muñoz Molina's eleventh novel but only his second to be translated into English, is a novel constructed of fragments, a cycle of seventeen chapters, which share stylistic and thematic features, as well as recurring characters and settings. Shifting across many locations and drawing on various epochs and events including the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, and the Sephardic diaspora of the fifteenth century, the novel explores ideas of guilt and shame, wandering and alienation, and exile and homeland in European history. Over the course of its discrete yet interrelated chapters, *Sefarad* refers to and reproduces the stories of the lives of figures such as Jean Améry, Walter Benjamin, Margarete Buber-Neumann, Victor Klemperer, Milena Jesenskà, Franz Kafka, and Primo

[130] 'Becomes yet heavier as I think how little we can hold in our mind, how everything is constantly lapsing into oblivion with every extinguished life, how the world is, as it were, draining itself' (*A.*, p. 31).
[131] 'As evening began to fall' (*A.*, p. 415).

Levi, among many others. The novel explores various geographical locations and historical periods in order to elaborate a broadly transnational history of European exile and totalitarian victimhood, all of which is presented via the empathetic imaginings of a reserved and reticent narrator who acts as both a mediator and transmitter for all these stories. The notion of 'empathetic imagining', which will be discussed in greater detail in the third chapter of this study, certainly recalls the periscopic form of narration (to use Sebald's terminology) common to the novels examined in this study, whereby the events they recount are mediated through multiple narrative layers. In *Sefarad*, however, while nonetheless present, this form of narration is less immediately conspicuous. The principal narrator figure only occupies the foreground of the novel in the first and the final chapter, although he periodically resurfaces in other chapters to comment explicitly on the writing and construction of the text itself, as well as to give his reflections on empathetically imagining the experiences undergone by those characters who are the focus of the chapters he writes. The novel's long paragraphs and hypotactic sentences prove disorienting, especially given the narrator's tendency to suddenly switch the tense he is writing in, while also alternating between the first, second, and third persons of the verb, as well as the singular and the plural. Through their swirling grammar and syntax, *Sefarad*'s chapters bring together a cacophony of various historical instances of trauma and persecution, exile and displacement, restlessly shifting the narratorial perspective from the past to the present, all the while demonstrating a distance on the part of the narrator from the past and from the literary works on which he draws.

While these brief summaries make the similarities among these three novels clear, it should also be apparent that there are productive differences and points of diversion among them. In bringing them together in this comparative study, a greater understanding of these tensions and connections, as well as their implications, emerges, revealing how the discrete national expressions of late and melancholy aesthetics may be understood both as an indication of generative potential and as an expression of a fundamental tension in European novels at this time. As Cohen advocates in the conclusion to his history of European literature, if respect for difference is undoubtedly a positive thing, then recognition of commonality, cultural similarity, and mutual indebtedness among literary works across time and place is just as significant.[132] The three novels examined in this thesis are brought together with a view to perceiving the aesthetic, stylistic, and thematic resonances among them as an example of an international and intracontinental conversation. As Catherine Brown notes, 'ideally, comparatists bring together works which are capable of conducting with each other

[132] See Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 503.

a conversation, on one or more topics, which is worth overhearing for what the conversation reveals'.[133] Perfect alignment is never necessary for forms of communication to occur, especially across national and linguistic boundaries, yet there is much to be overheard among these novels. This study's investigations were not intended to arrive at any sort of foregone conclusion, however. The tensions out of which European fiction emerges remain constant; indeed, their lack of resolution and its ongoing deferral emerge as a crucial defining feature of melancholy cosmopolitan novels. While this study may have no pretensions to being either a comprehensive survey nor an exhaustive analysis of all European fiction at the turn of the millennium, it is nonetheless an attempt to understand the nature, function, and forms of certain European novels at a particular moment in their long history.[134]

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The works examined here – and to a certain extent the present study – collectively embody an attempt to salvage something meaningful from what appears to be an increasingly obsolescent European tradition and perspective in the hope that it may offer a form of redemption, enhancement, or re-enchantment, along with better orientation and insight. Nevertheless, the question remains as to how comparative research on European literature might engage with the epistemic privilege of European culture and its legacy without replicating and endorsing its biases. In attempting to do just that, this thesis asserts that a form of literary criticism that acknowledges its troubled legacy is still more worthwhile than either the pretence of ignorance through abstraction or outright condemnation and repudiation. The work of identifying the pathologies of a culture has to be transformed into the more lasting, more compromising, and more patient work of reclaiming it from them. Too often in contemporary criticism the dominant mode of analysis seems to hold that the only serious and intellectually valid pursuit – and, indeed, the only way to correctly interpret works of art or literature – is to articulate the ways in which something is irretrievably

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[133] Catherine Brown, 'What is Comparative Literature?', in *Comparative Critical Studies*, 10:1 (2013), pp. 67–88 (p. 83).

[134] Such an approach shares much in common with the Danish comparatist Georg Brandes's view of comparative literature as a telescope that is able to see further by focusing on specific objects. For further discussion of this, see Sven Erik Larsen, 'Georg Brandes: The Telescope of Comparative Literature' in *The Routledge Companion to World* Literature, ed. by Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir (Oxford: Routledge, 2012), pp. 21–29.

deficient. This is not the kind of work this study sets out to do.[135] Although the present study is Euro*centred* by its very nature, it is not intended to be Euro*centric*. While it is internal to the history of European ideas, culture, and history, it does not claim the superiority of this culture or attempt to assert its authority over others. Melancholy cosmopolitanism is neither concerned with questions of superiority or inferiority, nor with evaluations of any potentially compromised ethics of European culture. Rather, it constitutes a way of reading that allows for the coexistence of both critique and tradition. A pessimistic view of melancholy cosmopolitan novels would determine them as reliant on aesthetic modes that contradict any collective cosmopolitan potential and tarnish the future with the past. A more positive, more optimistic reading, however, would understand them as novels which make use of privileged structures, conventions, and history as a means of representing this and reflecting on it, looking not only to the past but also to the future. Such a reading does the harder work of recognizing the troubled legacy of European literature, and of the concept of Europe itself, without throwing the proverbial baby out with the bathwater.

If, as Edward Said notes, 'the European novel is grounded in […] a changing society […] seek[ing] to construct a new world that somewhat resembles an old one left behind',[136] then the recuperation of forms of writing deemed to be damaged or diminished may constitute a means of resisting the 'fading of the future' in Europe that Aleida Assmann, among many others, has described.[137] This is especially relevant given the sense of obsolescence of a European perspective described in this study during a time of increased globalisation, transnational study, and the re-emergence of debates and theories concerning the notion of a 'world literature', which are as ubiquitous as they are multivalent.[138] These

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135 See, for example, Paul Ricoeur on the 'hermeneutics of suspicion', which attempts to decode hidden meanings in texts as a form of ideological critique, as opposed to 'hermeneutics of faith', which aims to restore meaning, in Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 28–36. See also, Rita Felski, 'Critique and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion', in *M/C – A Journal of Music and Culture*, 15:1 (2012), <www.journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/431>. Last accessed 26 July 2019. For suggested alternatives to such a hermeneutics of suspicion, see, for example, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You', in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 123–152 and Timothy Bewes, 'Reading with the Grain: A New World in Literary Studies', in *Differences*, 21:3 (2010), pp. 1–33.

136 Edward Said, 'Reflections on Exile', in *Reflections of Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 173–186 (p. 181).

137 Aleida Assmann, *Ist die Zeit aus den Fugen?* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2013), p. 13.

138 Recent polemics from the past two decades which variously engage with questions of what world literature might be and how it might work include, for example, David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004); Franco Moretti, 'Conjectures on World Literature,' in *New Left Review*, 1 (2000), pp. 54–68 and 'More Conjectures', in *New Left Review*, 20 (2003), pp. 73–81; Eric Hayot, *On Literary Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London: Verso, 2013); Siskind, *Cosmopolitan Desires*; Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature*; Rebecca Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*

debates and approaches, furthermore, evince a tendency to use the term European as a pejorative shorthand for Western colonialism and elite structures of power, engaging in often oblique readings of literary works in search of hidden colonialist subtexts.[139] It cannot be denied that the aesthetic attitude of melancholy cosmopolitanism does draw on a European literary tradition and a legacy of 'high' culture that inevitably brings with it problems of the European canon and broader connotations of Western cultural privilege. Indeed, the present study's exegetic focus on white male writers arguably does little to dispel this.[140] Yet, while melancholy cosmopolitanism may arguably reinforce what is often taken to be the old fortress of European culture, caution must be taken to not simply set up European culture as an obsolete straw man (or, indeed, edifice). An object of critique ought always to be taken at its strongest and it is the view of the present study that novels written and published around the close of the twentieth century and the dawn of the twenty-first articulate a latent sense that there is yet something to be salvaged for the future from the besieged fortress of European culture, from its sense of ending, and from its potentially impending obsolescence. If anything, such an approach allows this fortress to be perceived more clearly, since a fortress is never more recognizable as a fortress than when it is under siege.

Great artistic and literary works of European culture undoubtedly exist within an historical continuum of colonial expansion, oppression, and domination. And yet, they also represent a triumph of innovation and ingenuity on the part of those who strove to create them. Although a critical perspective on the expansionist vocation of the West – and of its *modus operandi* – is essential, it would nevertheless be a mistake to regard everything produced by Western European civilization and culture since the late fifteenth century as nothing but a sustained series of acts of violence. This entails a form of essentialist thinking grounded in the conviction that Western European culture is and always has been fundamentally compromised and that if it is doing anything, then it is, by definition, impossible for this to be good. However, as Cohen notes, 'it does not follow that tradition is necessarily regressive, rupture automatically progressive', especially since 'virtually any text is a compound of tradition and innovation'.[141] All forms of art have power structures, and may even disguise

(New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015); Cheah, *What Is a World?*; B. Venkat Mani, *Recoding World Literature: Libraries, Print Culture, and Germany's Pact with Books* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016); Cohen, *A History of European Literature*; and Sandra Richter, *Eine weltgeschichte der deutschsprachigen Literatur* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 2017). There is as yet no consensus.

[139] See, for example, WReC, *Combined and Uneven Development*, pp. 37–38 especially.

[140] That being said, this study would assert that the reductive narrative of dismissing many literary figures as simply pale, male, and stale – i.e. the cliché of the dead white men – belies these writers' significant biographical identities and subjective experiences.

[141] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 10.

barbarity, as Benjamin suggests when he argues that 'there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism'.[142] Yet, if this is the case for all acts of writing, then barbaric history can be acknowledged and understood in literary works and scholarship on them, without automatically entailing the outright branding of the cultural tradition out of which these works emerge, or indeed the scholarship on them, as bogus or invalid. Nor does this mean that such works only have a relevance and a reality that is social and political. Works of literature also have an existential and aesthetic reality, which exists in a quasi-sacred relation to their own cultural histories. Deconstructing the canon, and being suspicious of it, is an invaluable pursuit, especially when it elicits an understanding of how the canon and certain literary traditions were constructed in a particular way to explicitly or implicitly push certain agendas and ideas. However, this cultural tradition, this established canon, must be added to and extended, without claiming that it and later works that draw on it are of no inherent worth or fundamentally compromised. It is hard to imagine such aesthetically meaningful and culturally significant works as ineluctably oppressive.

All people – fictional narrators and characters included – are political subjects in history and no human action can be entirely apolitical. However, the problem with the question of whether all works of art are political – and, by extension, whether all acts of writing are political – is the presupposition that the political precedes the creative act of imagination. This study holds that, to the extent that it is a category of art, the novel can never be entirely reducible to a container of ethical or political messages.[143] While it is not possible to ever fully separate novels from the world or from the societies and histories out of which they emerge, they also have a fundamentally irreducible surplus element that exists outside of or beyond the realms of the purely political or ethical. As such, although the thematic content and time of writing of these novels do still play a role in the analysis that follows, this study's intervention constitutes more of an aesthetic investigation, focusing not solely on what is written but also on how. It does not concern itself with evaluating the ethical and moral virtues and failings of the narratives in question, partly since these novels do not attempt to create a mimetic reconstruction of the past, but rather exist as self-reflexive, self-consciously mediated engagements with history. Such an overly evaluative reading of these novels' ethics and morals would also entail understanding them as more than constructed works of fiction, which they so manifestly are. As such, the present study also does not engage in speculation

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[142] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', p. 256.

[143] For an insightful account of the relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic in English, French, and German modernist literature, however, see David Ellison, *Ethics and Aesthetics in European Modernist Literature: From the Sublime to the Uncanny* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

about the authors' personal or psychological motivations in writing these novels, preferring instead to focus on the narrator figures of these works of fiction.

Regarding mediated engagement with history, however, the issue of post-Holocaust literature must also be addressed here. Almost without exception, debates around literature written after the Holocaust take as their starting point Adorno's famous denunciation of writing poetry after Auschwitz as barbaric.[144] However, as Gert Hofmann, Marko Pajevic, Rachel MagShamhráin, and Michael Shields emphasize, Adorno would later develop his position in 1962 to argue that, rather than being condemned outright as barbarians, 'the true artists of today are the ones in whose work absolute horror still quakes'.[145] Ultimately, the Adornian view does not imply that the Holocaust should remain the epicentre of art nor that it should overwhelm either the art or criticism of it, but rather that it resonates throughout and under the surface of great literary works. While aware of the Holocaust's centrality to the thematics of each of the novels it examines, the present study concerns itself primarily with their stylistic and aesthetic aspects, finding them to be more fruitful lines of enquiry to the study of comparative literature. An intense focus on memory, testimony, ethics, and politics during the past two decades has to a certain extent obscured significant aesthetic and poetic aspects of literature written in response to the events of the twentieth century in Europe in favour of prioritising the centrality of the Holocaust and memory of it in literary criticism.[146] Today, the Holocaust has 'gone global', as Aleida Assmann suggests, as the paradigm for framing and understanding historical and current traumatic events and artistic works that engage with them.[147] However, Sebald himself, for example, is reported to have commented in relation to Holocaust fiction that 'it's a dreadful idea that you can have a sub-genre and make a speciality out of it; it's grotesque'.[148] This study accordingly distances itself from

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144 Written in 1949 and first published in 1951, the original quotation reads: 'Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch'. See Theodor W. Adorno, 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 10:1, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), pp. 11–30 (p. 30).

145 The original quotation reads: 'Die authentischen Künstler der Gegenwart sind die, in deren Werken das äußerste Grauen nachzittert'. See Theodor W. Adorno: 'Jene zwanziger Jahre', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, p. 506. Cited in Gert Hofmann, Marko Pajevic, Rachel MagShamhráin, and Michael Shields, 'Introduction', in Gert Hofmann, Marko Pajevic, Rachel MagShamhráin, and Michael Shields, eds., *German and European Poetics After the Holocaust: Crisis and Creativity* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2011), pp. 1–15 (p. 4).

146 See, for example, Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Richard Crownshaw, *The Afterlives of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Robert Eaglestone, *The Broken Voice: Reading Post-Holocaust Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

147 Aleida Assmann, 'The Holocaust – a Global Memory? Extensions and Limits of a New Memory Community', in *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, ed. by Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 97–117 (p. 114).

148 Maya Jaggi, 'Recovered Memories', in *The Guardian*, 22 September 2001. See <www.theguardian.com/books/2001/sep/22/artsandhumanities.highereducation>. Last accessed 26 July 2019.

conceiving of the novels it examines as solely or principally works of Holocaust fiction, reading them instead as works that confront the aforementioned 'meta-problem' of European modernity, while restricting its critical purview to the examination of the aesthetic and stylistic forms this engenders in particular contexts at a particular moment in time. That *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* engage with the past through the thematic framework of the Holocaust, and that the narrative strategies they employ to confront the past clearly position these novels within a European literary and cultural tradition, initially invite reading them alongside one another, although their points of connection go beyond thematics. As such, the chapters that follow focus less on the thematic content of the novels and the ethical or political implications of this with regards to remembering the past. Rather, this study turns its gaze to the ways in which the novels are written, how they resonate stylistically and aesthetically with one another, and the points of commonality and tension that emerge from such a comparative reading. While acknowledging the significance of the Holocaust to the engagement with the 'meta-problem' of modernity in *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad*, this thesis departs from previous scholarship in the well-ploughed furrow of Holocaust memory in these novels, desiring not to be constrained by it.[149]

This study focuses on a range of national traditions in order to emphasize the particularly Western European dimension of melancholy cosmopolitanism as it develops diachronically and operates synchronically. Within European literature the nation is a foundational element and, as such, a comparative project in this field benefits greatly from studying European literature on its own terms. The problems of a nationally oriented approach to literature must not go unacknowledged, however: the erasure of multiple languages and ethnicities within literary cultures on the one hand, and the implication that languages and cultures move ever forward and unchanging through historical periods on the other. Nevertheless, the gains offered by the form of comparative work this thesis undertakes, which would always be dogged by such questions of cultural difference, far outweigh the limitations of a narrower focus and extreme specialisation. The comparative and international focus of this study allows an approach that crosses cultures, languages, and traditions, both illuminating the similarities and the tensions between notions of the national and the European. In spite of its historical use as a shorthand for nationalism, the aforementioned Herderian concept of the *Volksgeist*, along with Herder's insistence on the protean and contingent nature of literature, provide a useful touchstone for conceptualizing this tension.

[149] Numerous examples of the wealth of scholarship on each novel examined here and their relationship to memory of the Holocaust will be provided in the following chapters.

When Herder observes that literature 'changes form according to the people's language, customs, habits', he understands the people – the *Volk* – in terms of the nation state.[150] However, he is also keen to point out that changes and developments in literature occur not just within nations, but among different nations also. As Appiah advocates, 'study these interconnected European literatures […]. They make sense together. They were made for each other'.[151] European literature is, after all, an international phenomenon, emerging in the interaction of national literatures.

Following Cohen's suggestion that the best means for literary critics to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and cross-cultural understanding is 'attention to the formal properties of language', this study adopts the view that research in the field of comparative literature is best attained through engagement with works in their original language.[152] This form of close reading provides key insights into the aesthetic and stylistic formulations of works of literature that may be missed in translation. The focus on working with texts in the original language is also in keeping with this study's contention that melancholy cosmopolitanism emerges in discrete national traditions and contexts around a particular point in time; the only way to test this hypothesis is to engage directly with these traditions and these languages. It is, however, a vain fantasy to imagine that anyone might have unfettered or privileged access to a work of literature in the original language, let alone in translation, since every act of reading itself arguably constitutes an act of translation, as Steiner, channelling W. H. Auden, asserts.[153] Nonetheless, this study takes the view that working with original language sources might offer a more compound and more meaningful context, as well as closer access to the literary and artistic truths contained within a given text. As Steiner also declares, 'an informed, avid awareness of the history of the relevant language, of the transforming energies of feeling which make of syntax a record of social being, is indispensable. One must master the temporal and local setting of one's text, the moorings which attach even the most idiosyncratic of poetic expressions to the surrounding idiom'.[154] The present study limits itself to French, German, and Spanish novels for the simple reason

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150 See Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Results of a Comparison', p. 4.
151 Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Geist Stories', in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. by Charles Bernheimer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 51–57.
152 See Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 504.
153 See George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 28: 'When we read or hear any language statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate'. For further discussion of this notion, see Matthew Reynolds, *The Poetry of Translation: From Chaucer & Petrarch to Homer & Logue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 9–11. Steiner's remark echoes W. H. Auden's sentiment that 'To read is to translate, for no two persons' experiences are the same'. See W. H. Auden, 'Prologue: Reading', in *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays* (London: Faber, 1948), pp. 3–12 (p. 3).
154 Steiner, *After Babel*, p. 25.

that these are the languages and literary traditions with which its author is most familiar. Other languages and national contexts, may have been considered, should this study have aimed to produce a more comprehensive survey of European literature, but since access to these texts would have been limited either by rudimentary language skills and by access through translations, or by unfamiliarity with the field of study, any readings of them would have appeared somewhat conditioned or disingenuous in comparison with the other chapters offered here.

While this is a comparative study, its three principle chapters focus on each novel, as well as the discrete national literary tradition out of which said novel emerges, separately. Not only is such an approach in keeping with the main thrust of the argument of this study that melancholy cosmopolitanism emerges in distinct national literary contexts; this decision was also taken for practical reasons. While a more discourse-driven comparison, with three chapters focusing in turn on the forms of lateness, melancholy, and cosmopolitanism in all the novels, may seem more immediately comparative, there would inevitably be a risk of the comparison of three separate novels in three languages together simply becoming too unwieldy. Furthermore, although to an extent the structure and argumentation of each of the following chapters contain similar elements, the identification of related aesthetics in all three texts at once would have resulted in a certain amount of repetition. Especially given that melancholy cosmopolitanism is conceived as a tripartite progression from the late to the melancholy to the cosmopolitan, it makes more sense to examine this progression internally to specific novels, rather than interrupt the flow of the argument and divide up the specificities of each text. Since historical lateness and the time of writing are such a significant component of this study's approach, the chapters proceed chronologically according to the date of each novel's publication: *Dora Bruder*, then *Austerlitz*, then *Sefarad*. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction to the novel concerned and the chapter's line of argument, before identifying and analysing the forms of lateness, the emergent kinds of melancholy, and the implications of conceiving of this as a form of literary cosmopolitanism. To chart their own distinct strains of lateness, melancholy, and cosmopolitanism, each chapter draws on its own particular selection of ideas, philosophies, and theories in the advancement of its specific lines of enquiry and argumentation. These will be addressed in the chapters themselves.

While productive links and discrepancies emerge over the course of what follows – and connections are made in and across all chapters – the force of this study's comparison necessarily lies in its being a unitary whole, with each chapter and each novel constituting a phase in a single argument. In Chapter 1, the tensions between the narrator's positioning of

himself as an epigonal inheritor of both a French and Jewish modern literary heritage in *Dora Bruder* are identified and explored. Through subsequent investigation of the narrator's interest in photographs and photography, a form of melancholy aesthetics emerges, this chapter argues, which reinforces the narrator's unbridgeable historical distance from the subjects of his investigations. This chapter closes with consideration of how the narrator's concurrent embodiment of the figures of the cosmopolitan Jew and the Parisian flâneur modifies the position of privilege traditionally associated with flânerie, such that *Dora Bruder* emerges as a container for irresolvable tensions between the national and the more broadly cosmopolitan and European. Chapter 2 examines *Austerlitz* as an expression not only of a late and apocalyptic modernism, as Sebald's work is usually understood to be, but also of late Romanticism via the narrator's engagement with the figure of the Romantic suffering artist. It is through melancholy modifications of *Kunstmärchen* tropes and conventions, this chapter argues, that the novel's understanding of the irreconcilability of the past and the present is intensified. These reworkings of Romantic conventions demonstrate a self-consciousness that suggests the possibility of Romantic cosmopolitan futurity, which embodies tensions between the German and the European, but which is also deferred in the novel. Chapter 3 explores the attempt by the narrator of *Sefarad* through acknowledged and unacknowledged intertextual references to reconcile a Spanish literary tradition with a European one from which it has been historically excluded. A melancholy aesthetic attitude emerges that is overdetermined by a sense of nostalgia and images of emptiness, while the divisions the novel attempts to overcome are replicated and reinforced. Ultimately, understanding this novel as a late and melancholy cosmopolitan work highlights the Quixotic echoes of elements of its narrative through allusions to Cervantes which evoke constitutive tensions between Spain and Europe. The conclusion of this study offers further reflections and analysis of the way of reading identified and explored and its implications, considering melancholy cosmopolitanism as a form of explicitly backward-facing but implicitly future-oriented defiance against the obsolescence of European culture and an assertion that forms of aesthetic and artistic value may yet be salvaged from it.

If there is a tendency over the course of this study to adopt a more tentative tone in place of an authoritative form of absolutist theoretical universalism, then this is not least because the idea of Europe – and of European culture especially – is nothing if not imagined. In place of any empirically provable and universally applicable theory, this study gestures towards an allusive trend or tendency within the cultural imaginary of Europe. Theoretical discourse can threaten to suffocate writers and their texts, and so discussions that move away

from the literary text must be reconciled with the invaluable work of close reading. Much contemporary scholarship evinces a tendency to reductively extrapolate heavily theorized excursus from literary texts at the expense of their artistry. This results in a discussion of authors and their works as a form of highly abstracted philosophy instead of finely constructed literary works within particular historical and geographical contexts. Attention must be paid to the specificities of individual literary constellations in their particular historical and geographical contexts. While formal institutional spaces such as universities, literary canons, and today's world book market, along with authors' and critics' political and ideological perspectives, may influence literary tastes and practices, caution is needed with theoretical models and approaches that rely solely on these to interpret the dynamics of literary works. As discussed above, the present study has no pretentions to being an all-encompassing work of literary theory, but rather an observational, discursive, and analytical work of comparative literature, a creative experiment undertaken to imagine a new way of reading and test the validity of its claims in particular novels, in particular languages, at a particular moment in history. To adapt an oft-used political slogan, there shall be no theorisation without historicisation.

This study adopts the view that historical circumstances on a macro scale are at least in part the cause or origin of the particular individual works of literature examined here on the micro scale. However, these novels are not just mimetic representation, but rather creative, suggestive, and imaginative works. Moving away from a form of literary criticism that addresses texts merely as epiphenomena of Western European expansionism, this study contends that when read alongside one another these novels articulate the potential of a cosmopolitan futurity in European literature borne out of their melancholy lateness. By grouping these novels together, this dissertation not only offers new readings of some of the most culturally significant works of European fiction published around the turn of the millennium. It also provides a fresh perspective on what it sees as a collective of literary works whose responses to European cultural lateness and melancholy form the negative preconditions for an optimistic sense of futurity which resists the obsolescence of the idea of European culture, suggesting that forms of aesthetic and artistic value may yet be salvaged from it. This inevitably raises the question of the causality of lateness, melancholy, and cosmopolitanism, as well as the intentionality of the novels examined here to ultimately express this. To a certain extent the performativity of melancholy cosmopolitanism makes it so: enacting its own concerns with the possibilities, as well as the limitations, of aesthetic

representation, it creates its potentiality out of itself.[155] Its manner conveys its meaning. If, as Cohen argues, 'culture, language, writing, literary language, and, possibly, literary forms, individual writers, and individual forms, are not just products of major historical change. They are also agents of change',[156] then the present study offers itself as a meeting point for these phenomena and suggests not only a way of reading that reveals meaningful ways in which they map onto social events and changes, but also how they gesture towards European literature's vestigial potential for future change and renewal.

Although her work is generally more concerned with philosophy than literary criticism, Hannah Arendt provides a helpful illustration of this sense of literary futurity. According to Arendt, it is 'the revelatory character of action as well as the ability to produce stories and become historical, which together form the very source from which meaningfulness springs into and illuminates human existence'.[157] In her own German translation of this text, Arendt's rending of this passage is of a slightly different tenor, as is often the case with the translations she produced of her own work.[158] She writes of how 'die Enthüllung der Person auf der einen Seite und das Hervorbringen von Geschichten auf der anderen' together constitute 'die Quelle […], aus der sich in der Menschenwelt selbst ein Sinn formiert, der dann wiederum als Sinnhaftigkeit das menschliche Treiben zu erhellen und zu erleuchten vermag'.[159] To the extent that the verb 'hervorbringen' denotes the act of bringing *forth* into being, creating something out of nothing, it also connotes bringing something *to the fore*, implying a past lineage to that which is brought forward from a place where it already exists. The ambiguities of Arendt's German formulation thereby suggest that the act of writing may also involve reworking stories that have gone before, not simply creating something from nothing, but bringing that which is already there to the fore in a new form. Coupled with the self-conscious personal revelation and understanding that Arendt describes, this evaluation of the creation of meaningfulness resonates closely with this study's line of argument. Drawing on and responding to artistic works that precede them, the novels examined here express the potential to imagine new future potentialities out of backwards-

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155 The term performativity is understood here following John L. Austin's original definition, whereby the act of communication enables and entails the consummation of an action. In Austin's own words: 'to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it'. See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 6. Emphasis in original.

156 See Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 8.

157 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 234.

158 For further discussion of this, see Marie Luise Knott, *Verlernen: Denkwege bei Hannah Arendt* (Berlin: Matthes & Seiz, 2011).

159 Hannah Arendt, *Vita Activa oder Vom tätingen Leben* (Munich: Piper, 1958), pp. 316–317.

facing melancholy lateness, constructing new categories to make sense of human experience in literature in a meaningful way.

Having explored in this introduction what melancholy cosmopolitanism is and why it emerges in European fiction at the turn of the millennium, this study turns in the chapters that follow to the question of how it does so and what its implications are. Is the emergence of melancholy cosmopolitanism at the turn of the millennium simply another iteration of an endless sense of ending, or does it mark an ultimate end for European literature, a point of no return? Does it indicate an end to European literature as a viable hermeneutic and critical category? Are these late Europeans also in some way the last? These are some further questions that will emerge over the course of this study's close readings, which its conclusion will attempt to address. Certainly, one issue this study implies is that of the different historical temporalities involved in both lateness and its critique, hovering as it does between a critical investigation of melancholy cosmopolitanism and a residual endorsement of the sensibility of lateness. The question that this then raises is the following: is an implicitly non-late, non-melancholic futurity possible and, if so, what forms might it assume? Is there time for something new, or is it too late? And will its temporality be as it was in the twentieth century? Can there ever be such an absolute break with the past and an immediate realisation of a new historical beginning in European literature? While an analysis of melancholy cosmopolitanism in European fiction may not provide the ultimate answers to these question, nevertheless it is hoped that this study will provide a foundation upon which they might be imagined.

CHAPTER 1

Dora Bruder by Patrick Modiano

'Paris change! mais rien dans ma mélancolie
N'a bougé! palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs,
Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie
Et mes chers souvenirs sont plus lourds que des rocs'.

~ Charles Baudelaire, 'Le Cygne', *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857)

Midway through *Dora Bruder*, the narrator recalls how, as a younger man, he came across some anti-Semitic literature from the 1940s, which inadvertently inspired him to write his first novel. Looking back to the writing he subsequently produced, the narrator reflects on his ambitions:

> je voulais dans mon premier livre répondre à tous ces gens dont les insultes m'avaient blesse à cause de mon père. Et, sur le terrain de la prose française, leur river une fois pour toutes leur clou. Je sens bien aujourd'hui la naïveté enfantine de mon projet: la plupart de ces auteurs avaient disparu, fusillés, exilés, gâteux ou morts de vieillesse. Oui, malheuresement je venais trop tard (*DB*, p. 71).[1]

This might initially appear to be merely a regretful throwaway remark, as the narrator focuses on his intense desire to react against fascist writers and considers himself to have been somewhat immature, juvenile, and naïve in his hopes of confronting these supporters of the National Socialist regime. However, on further reflection, this statement offers an intriguing point of departure for examining the form of melancholy cosmopolitanism in *Dora Bruder*, since it demonstrates a clear awareness on the part of the narrator of the late historical position from which he is writing, as well as of the national literary tradition in which he sees himself. Looking back on events and figures from the past, he is aware of himself as a latecomer, as well as of the ways in which his engagement with history is contingent on this

[1] 'I wanted my first book to be a riposte to all those who, by insulting my father, had wounded me; to silence them once and for all on the field of French prose. I can see now that my plan was childishly naïve: most of the authors were gone, executed by firing squad, exiled, senile or dead of old age. Yes, alas, I was too late.' (*DB*, p. 65).

lateness: he is both determined by and distanced from the past that is the focus of his narrative. Moreover, it is on the field of French literature where his engagement with authors and literary works of the past will take place.

The first chapter of this dissertation traces how the narrator of Patrick Modiano's twentieth novel *Dora Bruder* consciously positions himself as an epigonal latecomer not only on the field of French literature, but also at the end of a genealogy of Jewish modernist writers. An often neglected yet significant feature of European modernist literature, as this chapter will discuss, Jewishness is central to understanding *Dora Bruder*'s particular form of melancholy cosmopolitanism. The novel's Jewish narrator's investigations into the life and fate of Dora Bruder, as well as his engagement with his own personal history, constitute an attempt to write Jewishness back into a modern European literary tradition in which its significance has long been ignored. The narrator's perceived epigonality as a writer at the end of the twentieth century who is both French and Jewish, as well as European, becomes a means of legitimizing his own work and the traditions out of which it emerges. What emerges in Modiano's novel is a narrative defined by tensions: between a reliance on lateness in order to try and overcome epigonality; between an irreconcilable past and present, the investigation of which locates the narrator at the centre of the narrative just as much as Dora Bruder herself; between presence and absence in the photographs he finds; between motifs of imprisonment and attempted escape; and between the figures of the Parisian flâneur and the cosmopolitan Jew, both inside and outside of European literature of the twentieth century. The tensions the narrative of which *Dora Bruder* attempts to overcome are ultimately constitutive of its aesthetics and it is through this sense of aesthetic irreconcilability that a clearer picture of the novel's melancholy cosmopolitan nature emerges.

A prolific writer, Modiano has written over thirty novels, which tackle themes of identity and loss, and in 2014 he became the eleventh French writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. His literary œuvre explores the veracity of memories, their maintenance, and their potential recovery when they have been, or appear to have been, forgotten. Frequent authoritarian violence (such as that of the police during the Occupation of France by National Socialist forces during the Second World War), conflicts between parents and children, and meandering searches for a clearer sense of identity against all odds, are common thematic features of Modiano's work. His narrators unearth names, dates, and other documentary evidence pertaining to vanished individuals and his plots frequently turn on events that occurred during the Occupation. Over the course of his novels – in particular those known as his 'Modianos', the slim volumes published between the mid-1970s and the

present, which feature amnesiac narrators or protagonists in a noirish setting – history is excavated in lyrical, elegiac prose. That towards the end of the twentieth century a novel by Modiano should engage with and respond to perceptions of literary and historical lateness, is perhaps unsurprising. Even as early as 1975, less than a decade after his first novel *La place de l'étoile* (1968) was published, the centrality of time and history to the novel form constitutes a perennial concern in Modiano's work: 'Le grand, l'inévitable sujet romanesque', he declares, 'c'est toujours, de toute manière, le temps'.[2] A somewhat grandiose observation such as this threatens to reinforce some criticisms of Modiano's literary style as exhibiting, to use Alison Finch's description in her cultural history of French literature, 'a tendency to portentous generalisations'.[3] Nevertheless, time, time-keeping, and records of the past are frequent obsessions of Modiano's narrators. Historical events, figures, and objects are logged in his novels with regularity and precision, often down to an exact date and time. This provides a scaffolding upon which his narrators may structure their investigations into the history that eludes them. Earlier in his career, Modiano presented himself as a writer obsessed with recovering the losses of the past, echoing the sentiment of his later narrators, most especially the narrator of *Dora Bruder*: 'moi, j'avais la manie de regarder en arrière, toujours ce sentiment de quelque chose de perdu, pas comme le paradis, mais de perdu'.[4] This sense of looking backwards towards postlapsarian historical losses is crystallized in *Dora Bruder*, as the narrator looks back not only to the historical events which precede him, but also to the literary works and writers of whom he perceives himself to be an epigonal descendant. Through its examination of the sense of lateness in *Dora Bruder*'s narrative, its ensuing melancholy aesthetics, and the implications of reading these narrative elements as indicative of a form of literary cosmopolitanism, this chapter dispels claims of Modiano's portentous generalities by revealing the complexities of the novel's literary legacy in its aesthetic attitude, as well as its influence on the narrator's preoccupations with historical events and his own life. *Dora Bruder* emerges as a distinctly French example of a specific mode of writing that emerges around the turn of the millennium in European literature, which holds these national and the European literary contexts in tension.

Dora Bruder stands out from Modiano's body of work for its more ambiguous fictional status, not least because the text purports to be an autobiographical account of the author's research for another novel. The investigation and deliberation of the fictional or factual status of the novel is one of two principal avenues of research within the significant

[2] Jean-Louis Ezine, 'Patrick Modiano ou le passé antérieur', in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 2501 (1975), p. 3.
[3] Alison Finch, *French Literature: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p. 175.
[4] Dominique Jamet, 'Patrick Modiano s'explique', in *Lire*, 1 (1975), pp. 23–36 (p. 36).

body of existent scholarship on Modiano and his work, and especially on *Dora Bruder*.[5] Particularly within French literary scholarship, connections are often drawn between *Dora Bruder* and Serge Dubrowsky's concept of autofiction, that distinct brand of fictionalised autobiography most notably found in French literature of the late twentieth century.[6] While Claude Burgelin observes that Modiano's œuvre as a whole embodies a 'dissolution' of autofiction, he ultimately concludes that Modiano's novels stand as 'un compromis entre autoportrait (se peindre) et autoprofération (se dire) : un autoportrait où le peintre se représenterait en receptacle d'images et en chamber d'échos'.[7] In an analysis such as Burgelin's, a closed loop is created, whereby Modiano's work informs the state of autofiction, which informs his work in turn, creating a 'façon toute personelle' for Modiano to engage with the thematic concerns of his novels. The present chapter, however, is an attempt to move beyond this kind of thematic analysis.[8] The other principle strand of scholarship on Modiano concentrates on the role of forms of memory in the author's novels, and their contribution to francophone 'memory work' of the events of the twentieth century.[9]

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[5] For an indication of the extensive range of scholarship on Modiano's entire œuvre, see John Flower, 'Introduction' in *Patrick Modiano*, ed. by John Flower (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp.7–18. For further discussion of questions of memory and the (non-)fictional status of *Dora Bruder* and other works by Patrick Modiano, see, for example, Colin Nettelbeck, 'Novelists and their engagement with history: some contemporary French cases', in *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 35:2 (1998), pp. 243–257; Akane Kawakami, *A Self-Conscious Art: Patrick Modiano's Postmodern Fictions* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 121–131; Dervila Cooke, *Present Pasts: Patrick Modiano's (Auto)Biographical Fictions* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005); Annelies Schulte Nordholt, '*Dora Bruder:* le témoignage par le biais de la fiction' and Joseph Jurt, 'La mémoire de la Shoah', in *Patrick Modiano*, ed. by John Flower (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 75–87 and 89–108; Susan Rubin Suleiman, '"Oneself as Another": Identification and Mourning in Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder*', in *Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature*, 31:2 (2007), pp. 325–350; and Sven-Erik Rose, 'Remembering Dora Bruder: Patrick Modiano's Surrealist Encounter with the Postmemorial Archive', in *Postmodern Culture*, 18:2 (2008), pp. 1–37. In light of Modiano's winning of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Richard J. Golsan and Lynn A. Higgins provide reassessment and overview of Modiano's œuvre, especially given the apparent sameness or repetitiveness of his work. See 'Richard J. Golsan and Lynn A. Higgins, eds., '"Detecting" Patrick Modiano: New Perspectives', *Yale French Studies* (special issue), 133 (2014).

[6] For further discussion of this, see Serge Doubrovsky, *Fils* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977). For further discussion of the ongoing relevance and legacy of autofiction particularly in relation to contemporary French and German literature, see Stephanie Obermeier, 'Reluctant Autofictionalists: Twenty-First-Century: Revisions of the Autofiction Genre in French and German Novels' (forthcoming doctoral thesis, University of Kent, 2019).

[7] Claude Burgelin, 'Modiano et ses "je"', in *Autofiction(s)*, ed. by Claude Burgelin, Isabelle Grell, and Roger Yves-Roche (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2010), pp. 207–222 (pp. 220–222).

[8] Since, as Richard Golsan and Lynn Higgins observe, *Dora Bruder* is widely understood as 'the book that best sums up Modiano's *oeuvre*', the synecdochic elision of one novel as representative of a body of work made here is not unreasonable. See Golsan and Higgins, 'Introduction: Patrick Modiano's Dora Bruder', p. 322.

[9] The notion of 'memory work' has particular nuances in the French context, incuding 'devoir de memoire' and 'travail de memoire'. Esther Benbassa, for example, advocates an ethical response to the Shoah whereby French Jews see themselves as part of a larger 'travail de mémoire' in which 'nos mémoires singulières s'entrelacent dans notre commune histoire d'hommes et de femmes', as opposed to claiming exclusive victimhood. Furthermore, Benbassa argues, 'le devoir de mémoire n'aide pas à se projeter dans l'avenir, il est plutôt fermeture sur le passé'. She calls instead for political engagement in the present, through combating discrimination in France as it appears in the forms of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, sexism, or homophobia. For further discussion of this, see Esther Benbassa, *La Souffrance comme identité* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), pp. 252, 275, and 250 especially.

Comparatively little, however, has been written to date on the particular ways in which stylistic and aesthetic features of Modiano's novels intersect with ideas of literary lateness in *Dora Bruder*, the ensuing melancholy of the novel's narration, and the broader cosmopolitan implications of this, which this chapter will tease out.[10]

In *Dora Bruder* the narrator resolutely refuses to invent or fictionalise Dora's life outside of what documentary evidence can relate. Dervila Cooke views this as a form of resistance, remarking that 'Modiano [is] concerned to create a sense of consciousness using his own in default of Dora's where necessary, in order to counter in some small way the dehumanisation of the Holocaust'.[11] She goes on to affirm that 'while it is impossible to access the reality of Dora's life or that of others, Modiano shows that a sincere attempt at representation is always better than silence'.[12] Throughout the text the narrator demonstrates an ethical awareness of the dangers of potentially appropriating the story of Dora and her family, or of inappropriately identifying with them, by always insisting that there will always remain an essential element of their lives and histories that remains unknown to him. Although he refers to that which will never be known about the Bruders as 'ce blanc, ce bloc d'inconnu et de silence' (*DB*, p. 28),[13] his description of this space as a 'marque en creux ou en relief' (*DB*, p. 29),[14] which is central to Cooke's reading, nevertheless suggests a revealing *double-sens* in French. These words hint at a conscious awareness on the part of the narrator that he is constructing a work of fiction. The term 'en creux', meaning hollow, is an almost perfect homonym in French for 'encre', meaning 'ink'. The Bruders' blankness or their hollow imprint therefore not only provides the narrator with space to fill, but also prompts the writing of a new story. On the one hand, this 'marque en creux' is indicative of the narrator's respectful approach to his historical sources. Yet, on the other hand, it is a means for him to also acknowledge his conscious invention and new writing in setting down the fictional narrative of *Dora Bruder*. As outlined in the introduction, this study understands each of the works it investigates as consciously constructed works of literature, as novels.[15] This

[10] Only a handful of articles and reviews have to date referred to the sense of melancholy in Modiano's writing, and even then, this usually occurs in a rather superficial way via a general survey of his œuvre. See, for example, G. D. Dess 'The Melancholy of Patrick Modiano', *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Available on-line: <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-melancholy-of-patrick-modiano>. Last accessed 26 July 2019.
[11] Dervila Cooke, 'Hollow Imprints', in *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 3:2 (2004), pp. 131–145 (p. 143).
[12] Cooke, 'Hollow Imprints', p. 144.
[13] 'This blank, this mute block of the unknown' (p. 23).
[14] 'An imprint, hollow or in relief' (p. 24).
[15] For further discussion of the apparent unclassifiable nature of *Dora Bruder* due to its inclusion of elements of fiction, biography, and autobiography, see Jennifer Howell, 'In defiance of genre: The language of Patrick Modiano's Dora Bruder project', in *Journal of European Studies*, 40:1 (2010), pp. 59–72. Howell not only reads *Dora Bruder* as an example of 'second-generation Holocaust ekphrasis' (p. 60), but also focuses on the ways in which minute editorial changes in the various editions of Modiano's novel play a key role in the conceptualisation of Modiano's novel as an ongoing work of mourning and reconstitution.

overwriting of the Bruder family's 'marque en creux' by the narrator's own ink anticipates a key feature of the particularly palimpsestic aspects of the form of melancholy cosmopolitanism that is to be found in Modiano's novel, as this chapter will argue.

Before proceeding, however, it must be acknowledged that, as anyone already familiar with the work of both authors will recognize, Modiano's novel shares many thematic resonances with the work of W. G. Sebald, whose novel *Austerlitz* is the subject of the next chapter of this dissertation. This is not, however, the first time that these works have appeared alongside one another in literary criticism. As Robert Kahn has noted, the two authors are practically contemporaries, both belonging to the same postwar generation of writers born after 1945, who grew up in the shadow of the Second World War and the collective silence of their parents' generation with regards to it. Both Sebald's and Modiano's subsequent œuvres might be summarized, to use Kahn's words, as 'des récits d'enquête'.[16] Though brief, Kahn's study offers the most concise summary of thematic points of connection for the two novels, drawing principally on how memory and the act of remembering are similarly represented in the novels. Although, as he notes, Sebald 'invente bien sûr une fiction très plausible à partir de faits historiques', Modiano's novel is more of a 'tente de réconstruire une existence réelle à partir de documents et d'hypothèses'.[17] Observing similarities in the novels' representations of cultural memory via their approaches to authorial and narratorial ambiguity, questions of autofiction, as well as the role of photography in the two works, Kahn identifies the point at which the two novels diverge: 'Sebald propose dans le cadre de cette enquête un exposé infinitivement détaillé et labyrinthique sur la crise de la culture européenne, qui l'inscrit dans la ligne de Walter Benjamin, alors que Modiano, une fois de plus, s'interroge sur l'identité, la famille, la fuite, dans une période, celle de l'Occupation, dont on sait qu'elle ne cesse de le hanter'.[18] Where Sebald's novel broadens its scope, in other words, Modiano's tightens its focus.

Other scholarship comparing the points of commonality between the two works likewise focus on formal aspects of the texts and how they engage with the representation of memory. Steven Ungar examines *Dora Bruder* and *Austerlitz* in conjunction with contemporary diaspora literature, arguing that both texts defy conventional literary categories by mixing elements of novel, autobiography, and essay, although he elects not to differentiate

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[16] Robert Kahn, 'Les Lambeaux de la mémoire: *Dora Bruder* de Patrick Modiano et *Austerlitz* de W. G. Sebald', in *Culture et mémoire: Représentations contemporaines de la mémoire dans les espaces mémoriels, les arts du visuel, la littérature et le théâtre*, ed. by Carola Hähnel-Mensard, Marie Liénard-Yeterian, and Cristina Marinas (Paris: École Polytechnique, 2008), pp. 401–408.
[17] Kahn, 'Les Lambeaux de la mémoire', p. 402.
[18] Kahn, 'Les Lambeaux de la mémoire', p. 402.

between the authors and the narrators of the novels.[19] Eurídice Figueiredo also analyses the Second Generation's issue of postmemory through one novel by each author, concluding that these writers who excavate history take up and employ 'elementos minúsculos do passado para fazer uma montagem da história'.[20] Comparative work on Modiano and Sebald thus far, however, has remained principally limited to thematic and formal concerns, often focusing upon areas of commonality, generally regarding the presentation and articulation of memory in the novels. However, it is also worth noting that, unlike Sebald's looping hypotaxis, for example, Modiano's prose is characteristically straightforward, employing for the most part a relatively unchallenging vocabulary and a manner reminiscent of the mystery novels of French writers such as, perhaps most notably, Georges Simenon.[21] Moreover, whereas in *Austerlitz* the narrator is submerged in extended periods of the protagonist's recollections and layers of history, the narrative of *Dora Bruder* is much more disordered. The narrator's recollections of his investigations into the lives of the Bruder family and others are presented unchronologically in short sections resembling unmarked chapters, most of which are between two and eight pages in length with the longest running to fourteen. These sections are comprised of relatively short paragraphs, again unlike Sebald's largely unparagraphed style. This suggests that, while conscious of his historical and literary lateness, like the narrator of *Austerlitz*, the narrator of *Dora Bruder* is animated with a sense of urgency in completing his task, as opposed to a more resigned weariness in undertaking it.

Such thematic and structural points of similarity and difference that emerge when comparing the two novels, while neither irrelevant nor uninteresting, tend to be somewhat superficial and do not constitute the primary concern of this chapter or of the thesis in its entirety. The ways in which different novels exhibit their own distinct modes of lateness and melancholy aesthetics, which then suggest the potential to express a collective sense of European cosmopolitanism are the key focus of this study. Investigating the particularities and distinctions of these individual works, while positioning them within a common framework, yields new insights into the aesthetic and structural tensions within the novels, as well as the influences and the effects of their melancholy cosmopolitanism both within the individual texts and in the context of European literature more broadly. By examining

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[19] Steven Ungar, 'Modiano and Sebald: Walking in Another's Footsteps', in *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature*, 31:2 (2007), pp. 1–25.

[20] 'Tiny elements of the past in order to create an assembly of history'. Eurídice Figueiredo, 'A Pós-memória em Patrick Modiano e W. G. Sebald', in *Alea*, 15:1 (2013), pp. 137–151 (p. 151).

[21] Modiano's frequent use of ellipsis in the narrative of *Dora Bruder*, for example, owes much to Simenon's style. For further discussion of this, see Bill Alder, *Maigret, Simenon and France: Social Dimensions of the Novels and Stories* (London: McFarland & Company, 2013), p. 8.

the intertextual references in *Dora Bruder* that establish the novel as one emerging from a French literary tradition, as well as one bound up with questions of Jewishness, this chapter examines the forms of historical and cultural lateness and epigonality present in the novel. These are most clearly embodied in Jewish figures encountered by the narrator, whom he perceives to be legitimizing his investigation and his writing. The chapter then subsequently moves to consider the nature of the narrator's melancholy style, which articulates the irreconcilability of the past and present through ekphrastic interactions with photographs that signify both the presence and the absence of the Bruder family, as well as through recurring motifs of attempted escape and imprisonment. If, as Susan Rubin Suleiman observes, 'the "melancholy" tone of Modiano's works is not (or not only) a sign of pathology but the result of artistic shaping', then, as this chapter will show, such artistic shaping is the work of a narrator preoccupied with the tensions of a French, Jewish, and European literary heritage.[22] This results in a melancholy separation of past and present that centres on the narrator, even as he tries to bridge this gulf by investigating the life of another. To conclude, this chapter considers the implications of reading *Dora Bruder*'s late and melancholy narrative as exemplary of a form of European literary cosmopolitanism by examining the specific nature of this imprisoned wandering in Paris and analysing how the narrator embodies a conjunction of those two significant yet dissimilar cosmopolitan figures, the wandering Jew and the Parisian flâneur, thus revealing the key constitutive tensions of the novel.

LATENESS

Throughout the narrative of *Dora Bruder* the narrator both explicitly and implicitly positions himself as a late and epigonal descendant of prior literary figures. Although many of the intertextual literary references across the novel point to the narrator as an epigone emerging at the end of a distinctly French literary tradition, there are also other forces at play in his literary genealogy, such as questions of Europeanness and Jewishness. Explicit intertextual references to writers of particular significance to a French literary tradition, as well as the ways in which implicit similarities to the palimpsestic style of Marcel Proust in particular, to whom Modiano has often been compared, are indicative of an engagement with a tradition of modern European literature, the key Jewish aspect of which has been routinely marginalized in Western literary history. *Dora Bruder* emerges as an attempt to suture these

[22] See Susan Rubin Suleiman, '"Oneself as Another": Identification and Mourning', p. 341.

traditions together from a late vantage point at the end of the twentieth century. Other Jewish figures, such as the brocanteur (a second-hand-salesman or bric-a-brac trader), as well as forms of narrative bricolage, contribute to the narrative's sense of lateness, while also pointing to the narrator's ongoing quest for legitimacy in investigating and writing the story of Dora's life and fate. Ultimately, the narrator casts himself not only as epigonal latecomer, but also as a literary brocanteur.

The narrator of *Dora Bruder* consciously seeks to embed his narrative in a French literary tradition, but with a clear *décalage* from writers and literary movements that preceded him, by making explicit reference to Jean Genet, Victor Hugo, Edgar Allan Poe, and Robert Desnos, a Surrealist poet who was murdered in the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp in 1945. This literary self-positioning establishes *Dora Bruder* as a novel that is in dialogue with, as well as historically and geographically contingent on, a Western European and particularly French literary tradition. These allusions to other works of literature made by the narrator constitute an attempt to bestow authority and legitimacy on his narrative by positioning it at the end of a literary genealogy. When recalling a trip in a Black Maria police carriage with his father after being reported for creating a public disturbance, the narrator mediates what he knows of Dora's flight and capture through his own experiences. He acknowledges that his own journey was merely 'la répétition inoffensive et la parodie' (*DB*, p. 99) in comparison to hers.[23] This statement is suggestive of the narrator's sense of epigonal lateness and of his desire to in some way legitimize the story he tells in *Dora Bruder* by drawing not only on the facts of her life but also on other literary works, which he will imitate, repeat, and rework. One such attempt at legitimizing the novel may be glimpsed when the narrator declares that his awareness of the name of the prison in which Dora was held before her deportation to Auschwitz, originally came from *Miracle de la Rose* (1946), a novel by Jean Genet (*DB*, p. 138). This is an autobiographical novel of Genet's experiences in prison, and in fact his previous novel, *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs* (1943), was written while he was incarcerated. The narrator of *Dora Bruder* recalls how Genet identified in the voices and the slang of children in Paris a particular 'tendresse attristée' (*DB*, p. 139).[24] Since, like Dora, the narrator is a child of Paris himself, he implicitly draws attention to the sad tenderness in his melancholy narration, as well as to an author writing in prison, the greater significance of which will become apparent later in this chapter through examination of the importance of motifs of imprisonment and escape in the construction of the narrator's melancholy aesthetics. In this brief intertextual

[23] 'A harmless repetition, a parody' (*DB*, p. 93).
[24] 'Sad tenderness' (*DB*, p. 132).

nod to Genet, however, the narrator establishes himself as a literary latecomer and suggests an understanding of himself as an inheritor of Genet's status as a significant figure of French literature, positioning his narrative as a later work while attempting to legitimize it via reference to thematic and aesthetic resonances with its literary forebears.

The narrator's tracing of his work's literary genealogy goes beyond Genet and twentieth-century French literature in a further attempt at bestowing credibility, as well as a sense of melancholy pathos, on his narrative. In the first half of *Dora Bruder*, the narrator recalls reading the fifth and sixth volumes of *Les Misérables* (1862), in which Hugo describes the characters of Jean Valjean and Cosette, pursued by the inspector Javert, crossing Paris by night from the Saint-Jacques toll gate, across the Pont d'Austerlitz, to Hugo's imaginary district of Paris, the Petit Picpus. Charted in scrupulously realistic detail in the original novel, this passage acts as a literary map onto which the narrator of *Dora Bruder* plots his and Dora's movements. The moment in *Les Misérables* when the two fugitives escape by slipping behind the wall of a convent, before they enter Hugo's imagined territory, provides the narrator of *Dora Bruder* with the opportunity to establish an instance of deliberately staged coincidence as he claims that the convent in *Les Misérables* is located at the exact address of the convent where Dora was a boarder (*DB*, pp. 51–52). Quoting verbatim from Hugo's novel, the narrator declares that it is not possible for him to pass this building without thinking of 'l'histoire mélancholique de Jean Valjean' (*DB*, p. 52).[25] He thereby suggests parallels between his tale and Victor Hugo's monumental account of France in the early 1800s. Although he elevates himself by association to the level of a canonical writer within the field of French letters, by conceiving of himself as a late imitator of Hugo's work he also constructs an epigonal identity whose lateness heightens the pathos of the story he recounts.[26] He cannot pass by these Parisian locales, neither physically nor mentally, without engaging with the past. Yet he must do so – or feels obligated to do so – via reference to other literary works that preceded his, thus casting himself as an epigonal latecomer.

The actual or possible movements of Dora and her family are presented in *Dora Bruder* through a frame of the narrator's own experiences and situation, which makes use of other 'histoires mélancholiques' as a literary lynch pin to hold together his own narrative.

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[25] 'The melancholy story [or history] of Jean Valjean' (*DB*, p. 47).

[26] Other French literary figures from the Goncourt brothers, to Gustave Flaubert, to Charles Baudelaire in fact originally criticised Hugo's novel for being artificial, disappointing, and lacking in any sense of truth. This is, perhaps, a veiled reference by the narrator of *Dora Bruder* to the potential futility of his attempting a reconciliation between the past and the present in his narrative, although clearly he holds Hugo in greater esteem than the aforementioned literary figures. For further discussion of their views on *Les Misérables*, see, in particular, Lois Boe Hyslop, 'Baudelaire on *Les Misérables*', in *The French Review*, 41:1 (1967), pp. 23–29.

With reference to the work of Edgar Allan Poe, a writer greatly respected in the French literary tradition thanks to translations of his work undertaken by Charles Baudelaire, the narrator further embellishes his literary credentials by referencing the work of a key figure in American Romantic literature and early proponent of the detective story at another point during his tracing of Dora's movements.[27] Describing the building used by the Préfecture of Police, for example, as a great spectral barracks on the Seine, the narrator of *Dora Bruder* claims this reminds him of the House of Usher (*DB*, p. 83). His reference to this house, which splits in two and crumbles into rubble at the end of Poe's tale, underscores the pathos and fragility of the narrator's late perspective on history. In Poe's story, the House of Usher and its environs reflect the mood and relationships of the characters that inhabit it, just as the narrative created by the narrator in *Dora Bruder* is imbued with the narrator's late and melancholy mood and preoccupations. The building is spectral, a ghost of the past, yet one which could disintegrate at any moment. The narrator gestures towards significant literary figures, but must simultaneously continue with his own writing, aware of the precarious epigonal position he is in. He declares that his brief mention of the place where Dora lived in his earlier novel *Voyage de noces* was 'le seul moment du livre où, sans le savoir, je me suis rapproché d'elle, dans l'espace et le temps' (*DB*, p. 54).[28] He places his own literary engagement with Dora at the centre of the narrative, but cannot overcome his sense of epigonal lateness, since he is in a place that compels him to make reference to other literary works in recording what happens to him. The fact that his investigations later continued after the publication of his earlier work further heightens the pathos of his epigonality. The constitutive tension of his attempts to overcome his epigonal latecoming while drawing on precisely this in the telling of Dora's life story is thus emphasized all the more.

Nevertheless, the narrator moves closer towards the possibility of overcoming this sense of fragile epigonality, as his references to works by Robert Desnos and Jean Jausion reveal. His attempts at literary innovation and his engagement with his Jewish literary heritage become further entangled as he lists the names and biographies of several writers all of whom disappeared during the Occupation in 1945, the year he was born, thereby implying that he perceives himself to be their successor (*DB*, pp. 92–100). While he does not equate his own personal difficulties to these writers' traumatic experiences, his account of a suspected illness, which appears during his presentation of these writers, nonetheless suggests itself as a

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[27] For further discussion of Baudelaire's translations of Poe, see Gary Wayne Herner, 'Edgar Allan Poe in France: Baudelaire's Labour of Love', in *Poe and His Times: The Artist and His Milieu*, ed. by Benjamin Franklin Fischer (Baltimore: The Edgar Allan Poe Society, 1990), p. 218.

[28] 'The only moment in the book when, without knowing it, I came close to her in time and space' (*DB*, p. 49).

physical manifestation of his anxiety and insecurity of his epigonal lateness. Visiting a doctor, however, he is later informed that there is no shadow on his lung as he had expected (*DB*, p. 96). This connects to a subsequent visit to another doctor, during which the narrator is shown a novel by Robert Desnos, which bears the same name as the first novel the narrator wrote. This is entitled *La place d l'étoile*, just like Modiano's first published work, and, as the narrator self-consciously confesses, 'je lui avais volé, bien involontairement, son titre' (*DB*, p. 100).[29] The irony of the narrator's unintentional theft of Desnos's title is suggestive of a certain inevitability to his epigonality, since he is left with only imitation and parody even when he does not initially realise or intend it. However, the fact remains that it was only the title of the novel that he inadvertently stole, not the contents. As such, this suggests that a potential for originality in the content of the narrator's work still remains. While confined to work within a particular framework of a French literary tradition, indicated by the stolen title, the vestigial possibility of creating something new within this restriction is still present. Another novel entitled *Un homme marche dans la ville* (1945) by Jean Jausion, a man whose Jewish fiancée was arrested during the Occupation to prevent their marriage from taking place (*DB*, p. 118–120), hints at the constitutive tension between innovation and constraint embodied in the narrator's epigonal lateness, as well as providing another way for him to reimagine himself through the works of others. Once more, the narrator is the inheritor of this title as the man who walks in the city and, as this chapter will later show, this epithet is an apposite means of describing the particular kind of melancholy cosmopolitan aesthetic that emerges from the sense of lateness in *Dora Bruder* through the conjunction of the flâneur and the wandering Jew.

It is through a more elusive intertextual dialogue with the work of Marcel Proust, however, that the narrator's constructions of lateness in *Dora Bruder* become more nuanced and complex. Proustian prompters in the novel open up questions concerning the relationship between modernist literature and Jewishness, as well as palimpsests of style and of memory that articulate the sense of lateness in *Dora Bruder*, while gesturing towards the melancholy that emerges from it. Parallels between Modiano and Proust have been frequently made. Notably, for example, when awarding Modiano the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2014, the spokesperson for the committee, Peter Englund, named him a 'Marcel Proust for our time'.[30] While memories in Proust's work emerge from sensory experience

[29] 'Quite unwittingly, I had stolen his title from him' (*DB*, p. 94).

[30] See <www.theguardian.com/books/2014/oct/09/nobel-prize-literature-winer-patrick-modiano-hailed-modern-marcel-proust>. Last accessed 26 July 2019. Alan Morris also offers a brief analysis of Proustian themes in Modiano's work, declaring that 'he is set to be the Marcel Proust of the years to come as well'. See

and the subjective means by which recollections are prompted and enabled, as opposed to the contents and veracity of these memories, *Dora Bruder* is not concerned with the function or structure of remembering, nor the process by which memories rise in an individual's consciousness. Although time is recorded, remembered, and taxonomized as lost in *Dora Bruder*, there is no 'time regained', thanks to Dora's *fugue* – the period when she ran away and about which the narrator refuses to speculate – which remains her secret. Nevertheless, through the motif of the palimpsest, which is key to both Proust's literary style and to Modiano's aesthetics of memory, a complex relationship emerges. Palimpsest is understood here in both the sense of a reused text or a text overwritten by another, as well as in the more metaphorical sense of something altered yet still containing vestigial traces of its earlier form. The image of the palimpsest surfaces not infrequently in critical studies of memory, such as in Andreas Huyssen's study of the urban politics of memory, which argues that memory of historical trauma has a unique power to generate works of art as urban spaces that witness social or political traumas are rebuilt and reconfigured into sites of commemoration and monumentalisation.[31] However, the epigonal narrator of *Dora Bruder* draws on the often sidelined significance of Jewishness in modernist literature in various figurations of Proustian palimpsest, which emerges as an attempt to suture this significance together with the tradition of European fiction via the narrative of *Dora Bruder* from his late position at the end of the twentieth century.

According to Gérard Genette, the literary style of Marcel Proust in *A la recherche du temps perdu* is encapsulated in the image of the palimpsest, since 'by bringing together two sensations separated in time, [Proust] is able to release their *common essence* through the *miracle of analogy*'.[32] While Genette observes that 'this palimpsest of time and space, these discordant views, ceaselessly contradicted and ceaselessly brought together by untiring movement of painful dissociation and impossible synthesis […] is the Proustian vision',[33] there is nonetheless a central tension or apparent contradiction to this Proustian palimpsest, namely that this palimpsestic structure of the novel ultimately consumes its substance.[34] Although

Alan Morris, 'Patrick Modiano: A Marcel Proust of our Time?', in *French Studies Bulletin*, 36:134 (2015), pp. 1–3 (p. 3).

[31] For Huyssen, such acts of physical rewriting constitute the urban palimpsest. Focusing on the issue of monumentalisation in divergent artistic and media practices, he suggests that the transformation of spatial and temporal experience by memory politics is a major cultural effect of globalisation. For further discussion of this, see Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

[32] Gérard Genette, 'Proust Palimpsest', in *Figures of Literary Discourse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), pp. 203–228 (p. 204). Emphasis in original. For further discussion of this, see also Ben Hutchinson, *Modernism and Style* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 135–142.

[33] Genette, 'Proust Palimpsest', p. 213.

[34] Genette, 'Proust Palimpsest', p. 218.

Genette argues that, 'having set out to locate essences, it ends up constituting, or reconstituting, mirages', he also observes how Proust's *Recherche* 'discovers a level of the real in which reality, by virtue of its plenitude, annihilates *itself*'.[35] For Proust, then, the truth of reality is not to be found in the people, the events or the objects he examines *per se*, but rather in instances of their palimpsestic overlapping and the sense of aesthetic and historical profundity that this creates. The palimpsest therefore brings together discrete essences, simultaneously creating something new, while concealing its literary provenance. In Modiano's novel, the palimpsest is just as significant; the question is, what provenance is concealed? For Max Silverman, intertwined memories of the Holocaust and of French colonialism in Algeria haunt the narrative of *Dora Bruder* in a process that he terms 'palimpsestic memory'. Like Huyssen, Silverman's understanding of the palimpsest is rooted in urban layering. This 'post-war presence of the concentrationary universe' emerges through an 'imbrication of colonial and Holocaust denial', which is subtly indicated by the fact one of the narrator's points of access to a story about the Holocaust and the Occupation is a structure that the narrator recollects as being a barracks for colonial troops.[36] However, it is striking that no common essence is found between palimpsest of the narrator's present and Dora's past, which are overlaid in the novel. Whereas the palimpsestic nature of Proust's work evokes plenitude, the palimpsestic in Modiano's novel connotes brevity. Yet behind this palimpsest lies a frequently overlooked literary heritage, which Modiano's narrator attempts to bring to light over the course of *Dora Bruder* superimposing it onto his already established literary lateness and thereby bolstering the significance of both his narrative and the tradition on which he draws.

The confluence of Jewishness and modernist literature has received surprisingly little in the way of scholarly interest until recently. While, as Walter Cohen argues, 'the period between the turn of the century and the beginning of World War II witnesses a remarkable and rather sudden rise to literary prominence of things Jewish and especially of writers of Jewish descent', this is most evidently the case in prose fiction.[37] Framing his analysis within various contexts, including the Jewish heritage of persecution and vulnerability, the Jewish cultural ideal of learning and literacy, the perceived advantages of secularisation for a frequently-oppressed minority, and the earlier historical shift in European languages and literatures towards the vernacular, Cohen establishes the conditions of emergence of Jewish

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[35] Genette, 'Proust Palimpsest', p. 214.
[36] Max Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2013), pp. 111–113 (p. 113).
[37] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 406.

modernist literature in the early twentieth century, ultimately concluding that 'Jewishness proves the single most important demographic component of modernist fiction'.[38] If the figure of the Jew was to a certain extent at that time for many Western societies the representative of modernity and the modernist movement, then this fact also goes some way to explaining the relative lack of attention paid to the significance of Jewishness to modernism. As a community of innovative, insecure, questioning exiles, Jewish immigrants in Europe, mistrustful of claims of superiority and authority, were much resented, in spite of the massive and consequential contribution they made to cultural and intellectual history.[39] Shortly after the turn of the century, Henry James, for example, upon returning to visit his native New York after a long absence as an immigrant in Europe, famously (and, it seems, unironically) wrote in his travel account *The American Scene* (1907) that the influence of immigrants of Jewish background and their Yiddish language on English was an 'impudence', assuming the inferiority of Jewish writers and intellectuals to be a given fact.[40] Later, literary critic and travel writer Rebecca West would observe in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) further instances of resentment of the Jewish people as the embodiment of the modern in the Balkans, for example, just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. 'Many primitive peoples', she notes, in reference to local nationalists, 'must receive their first intimation of the toxic quality of thought from Jews. They know only the fortifying idea of religion, and they see in the Jews the effects of the tormenting and disintegrating idea of scepticism'.[41] The Jewish people are thereby categorized as disturbers of the *status quo* and harbingers of uncertainty and change. Anti-Semitism thus emerges in European and Western literature and culture during the period of modernity as a reaction against the embodiment of modernity by the Jewish people and subsequently as a deciding factor in the neglect of Jewishness in accounts of the development of modernism.

Citing works by key literary figures such as Proust, Franz Kafka, and James Joyce, as well as the critical work of Erich Auerbach, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, and Jacques Derrida, Cohen draws on what he describes as 'the myth of the Jew as artist, as

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[38] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 406.

[39] For further discussion of this, see Chad Alan Goldberg, *Modernity and the Jews in Western Social Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017) and Scott Spector, *Modernism without Jews? German-Jewish Subjects and Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017). For another perspective on the decline of and turn towards conservatism in Jewish after 1945, following the flourishing between the age of Enlightenment and the Second World War of the intellectual, literary, scientific and artistic legacy of Jewish modernity, see Enzo Traverso, *The Ends of Jewish Modernity?* (London: Pluto Press, 2013).

[40] Cited in Jonathan Morse, 'English Literature of the Twentieth Century', in *Antisemitism: A Historical Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Persecution: Volume 1: A–K*, ed. by Richard S. Levy (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2005), pp. 206–209 (p. 208).

[41] Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia*, (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006), p. 961

aesthete, as a hypersensitive and anxious man', in order to argue for the centrality of Jewishness to European modernist literature, since 'in this mask [the Jew] has engaged the attention of the great novelists of our century'.[42] Nevertheless, Cohen is mindful both of the question of his historical position looking back on these figures, as well as the significance of questions of national identity to his arguments.[43] 'The potential problem in this remarkably impressive body of writing', he notes, 'is the possibility that the long historical view will fail to do justice to more proximate patterns, particularly if those patterns do not seem to confirm the larger model'.[44] This larger model is what Cohen refers to as 'the teleological distortion involved in looking back through the age of Auschwitz' which 'makes it difficult not to read the culture of early twentieth-century Europe as a prelude to genocide'.[45] 1940, a traditional endpoint for 'high' modernism, takes on a grim and elegiac significance for Jewish modernist literature, as Cohen notes, given that the death camps placed the 'Jewish question' in a new and extreme light, while also drastically reducing the number of Jewish people in Europe. He nevertheless notes that Jewish modernist literature is not significant because of the Holocaust and its aftereffects, but rather because, in the early twentieth century, literature was one of the few remaining areas of European culture where Jewish contributions were relatively new:

> it does not follow that the centrality of Jewishness to modernism occurs simply at the moment when Jews become central to European cultural, social, and political life more generally. […] the crucial point is not that Jews make more important contributions to many walks of life, especially in the early twentieth century, but that only in a few of those areas – notably the novel – is this the first moment when there are such contributions.[46]

These contributions constitute the literary heritage that lies concealed behind the palimpsest of *Dora Bruder*'s narrative, although to a certain extent the narrator of the novel makes use of exactly the teleological distortion that Cohen describes, in that his present narrative is (over)determined by the events of the past. Yet the narrator in fact employs such distortion to quite different ends, given that his narrative aims for the re-inclusion of the significance of Jewishness in modern French, and by extension, European literature. For the narrator of

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[42] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 408.
[43] While Cohen acknowledges 'the ease with which Jewish high culture could be taken for German high culture', he clarifies that 'the roots of Jewish modernism lie in European, rather than specifically German culture', although, of course, German culture and philosophy do play a not insignificant role in the formation of an idea of European culture. See Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, pp. 408 and 410.
[44] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 407.
[45] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 407.
[46] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 412.

Dora Bruder, the Holocaust is not a means to explain away the tragic absence of Jewishness from received understandings of modernist prose fiction. Rather, it constitutes a motivating factor in his attempt to actively suture this key aspect of twentieth century back into a European literary tradition. Any 'teleological distortion' of Jewishness caused by the narrator's late historical perspective in *Dora Bruder* leads to his attempt at literary restitution, not erasure.

One of the defining characteristics of Jewish modernist literature, according to Cohen, is a sense of 'identification between narrator and character that arguably locate[s] the center of the reader's interest not in the plot involving the nominal protagonist but in the reactions to it on the part of the narrator'.[47] This is key to understanding constructions of lateness in *Dora Bruder*. The narrator's palimpsestic assemblage and mediation of his investigations into Dora's story via references to his own experiences is a later embodiment of this Jewish modernist trait, which, as Cohen observes, 'convert[s] what might seem a solipsistic point of departure into a means of reconstructing the social world from the inside out'.[48] This late palimpsestic reconstruction in *Dora Bruder* is further emphasized by Cohen's subsequent comparison of this to Fredric Jameson's provocative claim that, rather than being defined by narrative subjectivity, modernism in fact involves a flight from subjectivity.[49] Dora's *fugue*, her flight from her would-be captors and the time that she evades both them and the narrator, encapsulates just such a flight from subjectivity, albeit one which is expressed in the novel through the narrator's reactions to it. As a result, the narrator's insistence on his centrality in recounting what he knows of Dora's *fugue* and his ignorance of what occurred during it, results in Jewishness being emphasized, rather than ignored, through echoes of Jewish modernist literary techniques. Following Proust, the narrator of Modiano's novel – who, like Modiano himself, identifies as Jewish – positions himself as both inheritor to a French literary heritage and to that of an overlooked Jewish modernist tradition. If his intertextual engagement with the works discussed here articulates an attempt to suture these aspects together from a late perspective in order to legitimize the narrative being told, then this is simultaneously a move to try and overcome the sense of lateness and epigonality that haunts the narrator. As a Jewish narrator investigating the lives and fates of a Jewish girl and her family via intertextual references to works and techniques of Jewish modernist literature, this act of suturing together emerges as a key expression of the sense of lateness in *Dora*

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[47] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 415.
[48] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 416.
[49] See Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, pp. 85–86 and 131–136. Cited in Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 416.

Bruder. Even as the narrator desires to overcome it, he is nonetheless reliant on this lateness. Amassing historical and biographical information throughout the text, even including documentary evidence in the narrative (*DB*, pp.101–127), the narrator reveals Paris as a further palimpsest of different lives and histories. He brings together pre-existing elements, including other literary works, recovered letters, and photographs, as a palimpsestic bricolage that mediates these elements through his own experience and situation. It is through this bricolage, which is embodied principally by another significant Jewish figure in the narrative – the brocanteur – that the narrator's unfulfilled desire to both legitimize his narrative and attempt to overcome his epigonal lateness is most clearly expressed.

Bricolage in *Dora Bruder* centres around the narrator and his interactions with Jewish characters who, not unlike his palimpsestic style, attempt to bring together disparate objects to create something new. Lateness thus emerges not only as a thematic concern of Modiano's novel, but also an aesthetic one. Since bricolage establishes a key narrative metaphor for understanding the sense of lateness evoked in *Dora Bruder*, it further clarifies the narrator's act of suturing together Jewishness and the European literary tradition, while still being constrained by the epigonality it attempts to overcome. The technique of bricolage itself is modelled after Claude Lévi-Strauss's figure of the bricoleur who collects together used elements, items, and objects on the basis that 'they may always come in handy […] and the decision of what to put in each place also depends on the possibility of putting a different element there instead'.[50] Bricolage relies on a fundamental principle of chance: the narrator immerses himself in the contingencies of history so that he may then cut together and order his experiences. As a result, Lévi-Strauss claims, 'a multitude of images forms simultaneously, none exactly like any other, so that no single one furnishes more than a partial knowledge of the decoration and furniture but the group is characterized by invariant properties expressing a truth'.[51] These anthropological theories lend themselves to comparison with the narrative strategies employed by the narrator of *Dora Bruder*. However, unlike Lévi-Strauss's conceptualisation, this is not scientific or anthropological reportage, nor is it left to chance. Rather, *Dora Bruder* exhibits a carefully constructed form of bricolage which situates the narrator and his reactions at the heart of the novel. *Dora Bruder* becomes, in effect, a collection of lost objects and characters, drawn together by the narrator's self-perception as one who is attempting to construct a new narrative from a late historical position.

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[50] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. by George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 18–19.
[51] Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, p. 263.

The figure of the Jewish brocanteur, who seems to appear twice in the narrative – towards the opening of the novel and towards its close – acts as a personification of the narrative strategy of *Dora Bruder* and encapsulates the novel's late form of bricolage. While, as Cooke observes, the brocanteur constitutes a symbolic point of connection for the novel's narrator thanks to their shared Jewish identity as well as their mutual links with the area where both Dora and the narrator have lived and explored, this figure is also emblematic of the narrator's sense of lateness and of his subsequent attempt at redressing the neglected status of Jewish modernist literature. If, as Cooke notes, the reader is invited to make connections between the narrator and a brocanteur 'who puts the used and the forgotten to new use, and who deals in bits and pieces, [as] a symbol of Modiano's own approach in the recording of fragments of lives', then the connections between these figures draw further attention to the tensions inherent to the narrator's attempt to overcome his lateness while legitimizing his narrative.[52] While recalling his childhood at the beginning of the novel, the narrator recalls that 'un juif polonais vendait des valises […] Des valises luxueuses, en cuir, en crocodile, d'autres en carton bouilli, des sacs de voyage, des malles-cabines portant des étiquettes de companies transatlantiques – toutes empilées les unes sur les autres' (*DB*, p. 11).[53] These many and various suitcases metaphorically represent the construction of a narrative of interlocking layers and distinct histories in *Dora Bruder*.[54] The fact that they are sold on second-hand complicates this metaphor, as does a later instances of the narrator himself taking and selling abandoned objects, since this recalls the palimpsestic literary provenance of *Dora Bruder* and the hidden lineage it conceals.

Brocanterie in *Dora Bruder* is indicative not only of the narrator's preoccupations with cultural lateness, however, but also with historical lateness. Towards the end of the novel, the figure of the brocanteur reappears in one of the narrator's recollections of a time in his twenties when a girlfriend of his used to live in borrowed houses and flats. While staying with her, the narrator would take objects – including art books, antiques, clothes, and shoes

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[52] Cooke, *Present Pasts*, p. 287.

[53] 'There was a young Polish Jew who sold suitcases… Luxury suitcases, in leather, or crocodile-skin, cardboard suitcases, travelling bags, cabin trunks labelled with the names of transatlantic companies – all heaped one on top of the other' (*DB*, p. 7).

[54] For Michael Rothberg, the suitcase is a potent metaphor in Holocaust remembrance, since it assists a human agent in the act of transportation and, as such, 'references testimony as a medium for meanings and actions that take place when one leaves home and circulates in the public realm; when one becomes implicated in the world and creates a bodily and verbal conversation between diverse sites of history, memory, and trauma'. See Michael Rothberg, 'The Witness as "World" Traveler: Multidirectional Memory and Holocaust Internationalism Before Human Rights', in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, ed. by Claudio Fogu, Wulf Kansteiner, and Todd Presner (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 355–372 (p. 372). For further discussion of this, see 'Chapter 6: Under the Sign of Suitcases: The Holocaust Internationalism of Marceline Loridan-Ivens', in Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019).

– from these places in order to sell them on. The brocanteur to whom he sold these goods is remarkably familiar, although the narrator seems not to notice, stating simply, 'Lui, il s'occupait d'un autre local du côté du marché aux Puces. D'ailleurs, il était né dans ce quartier […] d'une famille de juifs polonais' (*DB*, p. 134).[55] It seems likely that these two figures are at least from the same community of Polish Jews, if not the same person, but the narrator does not pursue this. Instead, he brings up the topic of the Second World War and the Occupation during their conversation. His primary focus is on the continuation of his investigations of Dora and her family. This reveals the narrator's preoccupation with the past and underscores the difficulty, even impossibility, for him to reconcile the events of history with his present. His sense of historical lateness is evoked by the empty houses and abandoned objects they contain. Yet the fact that he steals these items and sells them on is not an indication of an ethically compromised narrator, but rather of one who feels keenly the anxieties of the time and place he finds himself occupying, which reinforces his awareness of his historical circumstances. He steals out of necessity and poverty; his financial hardships and desperation are the legacies of preceding events. His actions and perceptions here are determined by his sense of historical lateness and the melancholy understanding of history that this entails. He attempts to make something of these lost things, because in his view they are all that he has. The earlier instance of the brocanteur selling on these suitcases invites analeptic connections between the narrator's actions and his encounter with the suitcase seller, such that the narrator's act of assembling a narrative in *Dora Bruder* becomes an act of *brocanterie* itself. The brocanteur passes on items that would encase the possessions of others, not the possessions themselves, whereas it is up to the narrator to find these abandoned objects, and make something new of them. Becoming a brocanteur in his own right during the course of the narrative, the narrator metaphorically fills up the brocanteur's abandoned suitcases by creating his palimpsestic narrative, layering the abandoned objects of history over each other afresh.

If the narrator's casting of himself as a brocanteur emphasizes and thematizes concerns of lateness in the novel, then the exchanges between the narrator and the brocanteur figures imbue the narrator's investigation with an epigonal desire for legitimacy through instances of symbolic investiture. Originally conceptualized by Eric Santner, symbolic investiture consists of 'rights and procedures […] whereby an individual is endowed with a new social status, is filled with a symbolic mandate that henceforth informs his or her

[55] 'He himself had another shop, near the flea market […]. It turned out that he came from a local family of Polish Jews. (*DB*, p. 128).

identity'.[56] The narrator's encounters with the figure of the brocanteur give his investigation a symbolic mandate. As a child, he is offered a cigarette by the suitcase seller, then later the junk salesman suggests they go for a drink together, as if in reward or approval of his search for clues of Dora's life and fate (*DB*, pp. 11 and 134). Their gestures of camaraderie towards the narrator indicate an acquiescence to, and even encouragement of, his excavation of history and, by extension, of the narrative he later constructs in *Dora Bruder*. Yet there is a lack of participation on the narrator's part. He does not say whether he takes the proffered cigarette, nor does he discuss much of what transpires when he has a drink with the brocanteur, just as he appears not to notice any similarities between the two brocanteur figures themselves. Not only does this reveal his preoccupation with the events of the past, but also his sense of coming late or after events, such that he is unable to feel fully present: when asked what he does for a living, he confesses, 'je ne savais pas très bien quoi lui répondre' (*DB*, p. 134).[57] Viewing himself as an epigonal latecomer, the narrator of *Dora Bruder* considers himself unworthy to be called a writer and, as such, has nothing to say, even as he still seeks validation of his undertaking.

As his investigation of Dora's life and fate proceeds, the narrator continually develops and extends the first instance of symbolic investiture by emphasising his suitability for the task of investigating the events of the past. He presents the first of many pieces of documentary evidence, from lists of addresses, to the forms he must complete to obtain information, and the documents in response to his enquiries (*DB*, pp. 14, 15, and 18–19). The narrator frames his presentation of this evidence by insisting not only on his aptitude in acquiring it, but also his own particular value, or even worthiness, in carrying out the task. He declares that in order to succeed in an endeavour such as this 'il suffit d'un peu de patience' (*DB*, p. 13),[58] before then emphasising that he is just such a virtuously patient man: 'je peux attendre des heures sous la pluie' (*DB*, 14).[59] Standing alone as the rain falls is a quintessentially melancholy image, which nonetheless suggests undertones of arrogance and stubbornness. Much like the lost objects and the empty suitcases that litter the narrative of *Dora Bruder*, the narrator himself also appears here under an aspect of gloom and

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[56] Eric L. Santner, *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. xii. In another connection between Modiano and Sebald, Katja Garloff investigates the narrator's quest for legitimacy in W. G. Sebald's novel *Austerlitz* along similar lines of symbolic investiture. See Katja Garloff, 'The Task of the Narrator: Moments of Symbolic Investiture in W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*', in *W. G. Sebald: History, Memory, Trauma*, ed. by Scott Denham and Mark McCulloh (Berlin: De Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2006), pp. 157–170.

[57] 'I didn't quite know what to say' (*DB*, p. 128).

[58] 'All it takes is a little patience' (*DB*, p. 9).

[59] 'I can wait for hours in the rain' (*DB*, p. 10).

abandonment. He builds on instances of symbolic investiture in the novel to emphasise the suitability, even necessity, of his being the person who ought to investigate the past and construct the narrative of Dora's life and fate. These instances of symbolic investiture and self-belief, which on the surface are merely everyday activities, are given narrative weight, since the narrator bestows authority on himself by choosing to recall and include these encounters in his narrative.

Over the course of *Dora Bruder*, the narrator's investigations are legitimised, while his late historical position is reinforced. Although for Lévi-Strauss the concept of bricolage is founded on the notion of chance, the narrator's approach to the past in *Dora Bruder* transforms his bricolage into one which is consciously constructed and used as an attempt to legitimize his narrative. While this may be understood as a means of creating something new out of used and forgotten fragments thanks to symbolic investiture and the narrator's recollections of these encounters, the narrator and his reactions nonetheless remain central to the novel. This recalls a key feature of Jewish modernist fiction, while the whole enterprise is framed as a late and epigonal undertaking. Bricolage in *Dora Bruder*, as well as the palimpsestic elements of the narrative's aesthetics, encapsulates the constitutive tensions of both the narrator's late historical position and his engagement with the past. As he attempts to suture Jewishness back onto the tradition of modern European literature, after which he situates himself, while simultaneously desiring to overcome the very epigonality that enables him to do just this, the sense of lateness in *Dora Bruder* is perpetuated and never overcome. The narrator is unable to bridge the gap between his present and the past, allowing Dora the chance of a *fugue* – a melancholy gulf between then and now that remains open – whose aesthetics likewise articulate and interrogate the constitutive tensions of the novel.

MELANCHOLY

The narrator's sense of epigonal lateness, his feelings of inadequacy, and his desire for validation and legitimacy via *Dora Bruder*'s bricolage and its resultant symbolic investiture are proleptic, foreshadowing later events in the novel, and indeed, the narrative investigation itself. The narrator's development and extension of instances of symbolic investiture over the course of *Dora Bruder* involves the recollection of earlier everyday activities, which imbues them with pathos, such that what might have been just a cigarette or just a drink, for example, accumulates allegorical weight over the course of the narrative. For Walter Benjamin, in such

instances of allegory, 'all of the things which are used to signify derive, from the very fact of their pointing to something else, a power which makes them appear no longer commensurable with profane things, which raises them onto a higher plane'.[60] Crucially, the allegorical signifier appears insignificant and mundane, even as it gestures towards a significance beyond itself. However, through allegory, in Benjamin's view, 'the profane world is both elevated and devalued', such that its mundane significance is hollowed out to provide space for new meanings, not unlike the 'marque en creux' left by the unknown experiences of the Bruder family.[61] As such, the allegorical is for Benjamin a truly historical way of seeing, whereby history is perceived as a process of inexorable ending and decay, since 'allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things'.[62] In rendering everyday objects allegorical in the narrative of *Dora Bruder*, therefore, the narrator renders them more significant than the quotidian, but in doing so, imbues them with a sense of lateness and of melancholy pathos. As when the poet in Baudelaire's 'Le Cygne', an extract from which forms the epigraph to this chapter, declares during his melancholy search for a vanished Paris, that 'tout pour moi devient allégorie', the world around the narrator of *Dora Bruder*, including the buildings and the objects in them, cease to become mere physical objects and take on a higher significance, albeit one which is fragmentary and heavy to bear, such that in his melancholy they may as well be ruins.

At various points in *Dora Bruder*, the narrator reflects upon an image of a single lamp guiding his and Dora's path as he retraces her footsteps through Paris. This image metaphorically sheds light on the narrator's perceived obligation to investigate the past in a melancholy and self-conscious manner, and recurs at several instances during the course of the narrative (see *DB*, pp. 42 and 46, for example). Echoing post-Enlightenment critiques of the notion of progress as the quintessential myth of modernity encapsulated by Benjamin's Angel of History, the narrator exemplifies in this image both the melancholy and the self-consciously late aspects of *Dora Bruder*. The image recalls his sense of coming late and his perceived duty to take on the burden of history, a quasi-mystical feeling of being called to tell this story. He imagines himself as a beacon, a guiding light for how to engage with historical events in fiction as he casts his beams of light back into the past, declaring that, 'en écrivant ce livre, je lance des appels, comme des signaux de phare dont je doute malheureusement qu'ils puissent éclairer la nuit. Mais j'espère toujours' (*DB*, p. 42).[63] He

[60] Walter Benjamin *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: Verso, 1977), p. 175.
[61] See Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 175.
[62] Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 178.
[63] 'In writing this book, I am sending out signals, like a lighthouse beacon in whose power to illuminate the darkness I have, alas, no faith. But I live in hope' (*DB*, p. 37).

acknowledges that he does not possess the ability to reconcile his present with the catastrophic events that precede him, and yet he still endeavours to engage with them. Due to his historical lateness and the view of history it instils in him, he has no choice. The lighthouse image bolsters his self-conscious engagement, while setting him at odds with Enlightenment meta-narratives of historical progress of the *Siècle des lumières*. The narrator perceives only one light shining towards the darkness of the past, and it is he. His words suggest both a self-consciousness awareness of his late and melancholy outlook, as well as a sense of doubt and humility, compounded by a trace of hope. In an image that recalls both the Angel of History and Nietzsche's formulation of epigonal modern poets as beings facing backwards, the narrator looks back towards the catastrophe of the century that came before him. While the signals sent out by his investigations in *Dora Bruder* may not directly illuminate the events of the past, his claim of indefinite hope nonetheless suggests a trace of optimism as opposed to an entirely hopeless melancholy aesthetic attitude. Nevertheless, the narrator's faint sense of hope is never realised in the novel, unless it is achieved *ex negativo* by the fact that he denies himself the chance to recount an imagined version of the events of Dora's *fugue*. Ultimately, the narrative of *Dora Bruder* emerges under a melancholy outlook on the past, which is primarily articulated through the narrator's ekphrastic engagement with photographs of the dead, as well as through his meditations on escape and imprisonment at various locales in Paris.

The abandoned and lost objects scattered throughout the narrative of *Dora Bruder* inculcate an aspect of decay and dereliction across the text, reflecting the late and melancholy mood of the novel itself. The melancholy perspective on the past that emerges over the narrative out of the narrator's sense of his own epigonal lateness recalls the melancholy of history elaborated in the introduction to this thesis, where the past is unavoidably separated from the present, yet the present is likewise unavoidably determined by the past. During the investigations recounted in *Dora Bruder*, the narrator demonstrates a specific interest in photographs and the act of photography itself, which encapsulates his particular melancholy perspective. Through ekphrastic descriptions of the photographs that he uncovers, as well as an encounter with a photographer in Paris, the narrator's ruminations resonate with the work of both Benjamin and Roland Barthes, thanks to a particular concentration on the viewer and their experiential perception of a photograph. The tension between the narrator as a viewer and his relaying of descriptions of photographs in the narrative suggests an inevitable unbridgeable distance between past and present via the narrator's intimacy to these photographs and the fact that he is nonetheless still historically removed from them.

While both Benjamin and Barthes express differing ideas on photography and its ontological significance, these overlap in their mutual fascination with the phenomenology of the photograph itself and what Kathrin Yacavone calls 'the necessary presence of the photograph's beholder'.[64] Both Benjamin and Barthes emphasise the viewer's perceptual and imaginative participation in the singularity of any photographic image. Ascribing a certain dark agency to photography by identifying it as a symptom of modernity and tool for exposing it, Benjamin argues that a photograph's reproducibility has the potential to undermine the uniqueness of the original image.[65] Barthes, writing later in the century, turns to semiotic analysis in response to the rise of mass culture in the 1950s and 60s.[66] For both thinkers, however, 'the figurative space of singularity is the relation between the photograph, its referent or sitter and the beholder of the image', as Yacavone observes.[67] Their most significant commonality is their focus on the viewer of the photograph, alongside an emphasis on the historical context in which the image was taken and beheld. As Benjamin observes,

> the most precise technology can give its products a magical value, such as a painted picture can never again have for us […] the beholder feels an irresistible urge to search such a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, of the here and now, with which reality has (so to speak) seared the subject, to find the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment the future nests so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it.[68]

These considerations on photography are linked with the viewer's particular encounter with a photographic image. The viewer, for Benjamin, interacts with the image in a profoundly individual and personal way, which is refracted through their own experiences. In *Dora Bruder*, the only beholder of the photographs is the narrator. The reader, therefore, may only perceive the photographs of Dora and her family that the narrator discovers via his mediating descriptions.[69] As Benjamin argues, the beholder's engagement with a photograph affects the

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[64] Kathrin Yacavone, *Benjamin, Barthes and the Singularity of Photography* (London: Continuum, 2012), p. 5.
[65] See Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), pp. 217–251.
[66] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981).
[67] Yacavone, *Benjamin, Barthes and the Singularity of Photography*, p. 8.
[68] Walter Benjamin, 'Little History of Photography', in *Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part 2, 1931–1934*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone and Others ed. by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 507–530 (p. 510).
[69] For further discussion of the ekphrastic significance of the narrator's descriptions and their relation to *Dora Bruder* as a work that is halfway between a memorial and an autobiography, see Annelies Schulte Nordholt, 'Photographie et image en prose dans *Dora Bruder* de Patrick Modiano', in *Neophilologus*, 96:4 (2012), pp. 523–540.

singularity of the photograph itself and their interaction is mediated by the viewer's own experiences. However, since the beholder of the photographs in *Dora Bruder* is the narrator alone, his personal interactions with the images affect their mediation in the narrative. According to Barthes, the viewer's engagement with a photograph is likewise highly personal and existential: 'in the image […] the object yields itself wholly, and our vision of it is certain'.[70] Nevertheless, Barthes understands a photograph fundamentally as an index, a tangible trace that its referent existed: 'photography can never deny that *the thing has been there*. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past'.[71] He specifies photography's *noeme*, that is, the classification of its precise essence, as 'That-has-been'.[72] As Yacavone summarizes, however, for Barthes, 'the ontological and technological nature of the photographic image, on the one hand, and the reception, affect and interpretation of it, on the other, are always coexisting, although the relationship between them is highly variable'.[73] As such, while for Barthes, 'every photograph is a certificate of presence', this was a presence necessarily marked by death, such that every photograph reveals in its subject 'the return of the dead'.[74] In *Dora Bruder*, however, the photographs' mediation via the narrator also ensures they are certificates of the Bruders' absence and of the presence in the narrative of the persistent gulf between the present and the past.

Two principal instances in *Dora Bruder* when the narrator encounters photographs of Dora and her family demonstrate the Benjaminian and Barthesian inflections of his descriptions, embodying the tension between presence and absence that suggests a melancholy void between past and present.[75] The first set of photographs are from before the outbreak of the Second World War (*DB*, pp.31–33). They are, however, already tinged with the melancholy of the narrator's perspective as they are ominously prefaced by his observation that 'les années se sont écoulées […] jusqu'à la guerre' (*DB*, p. 31).[76] These photographs of Dora's parents dressed in their best clothes, and of Dora after a school

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[70] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 106.
[71] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 76.
[72] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 77.
[73] Yacavone, *Benjamin, Barthes and the Singularity of Photography*, p. 122.
[74] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 87 and 9. A few years before Barthes's work was published, this connection between photography and death was also articulated by Susan Sontag, who declares that 'photographs state the innocence, the vulnerability of lives heading toward their own destruction' and that 'the contingency of photographs confirms that everything is perishable'. See Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1977), pp. 70 and 80.
[75] Regarding the ways in which photographs of Holocaust victims, while allowing false impressions and misreadings, have shaped private memories and collective histories over the course of the twentieth century, exposing the gap between lived reality and a perceived ideal to witness contradictions that shape visual representations of victims, see Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997).
[76] 'The years slipped by till the outbreak of war' (*DB*, p. 26).

prizegiving ceremony, depict subjects unaware of what will eventually befall the family. From his late position, the narrator is able to project a melancholy air back onto this apparent innocence, armed as he is with the knowledge of what is to come. His presentation of the photographs highlights the unbreachable gulf between his present and the past, especially since the sentences that introduce them contain no verbs, implicitly suggesting an inability to act (*DB*, p. 26), which echoes the narrator's own self-conscious epigonality. Rather than bringing the narrator closer to the people in the photographs, the growing accumulation of unembellished factual details in his descriptions serves as a reminder that they are merely flat images. This recalls Mieke Bal's notion of photographic 'flatness' in her analysis of the relationship between text and image in the work of Marcel Proust. For Bal, fiction is a verbal domain in which the visual can only be represented through subterfuge, which leads to the 'mirage of depth'.[77] If, therefore, a palimpsestic style in both Proust's and Modiano's work indicates the historical depth and aesthetic legacy of literary works and their provenance, then the narrator simultaneously bestows a sense of melancholy pathos upon the subjects of his narrative through the reminder of the photographs' physical and metaphorical flatness.

While his interaction with these photographs causes them to take on greater significance or singularity, his perception of their flatness and the absence they signify simultaneously reaffirms the centrality of the narrator and the necessity of his perspective and his reactions to the narrative of *Dora Bruder*. The chronological progression of the photographs through the Bruders' lives and the factual descriptions of them continues to endow the narrator's historical perspective with a vertiginous sense of being overwhelmed by the past (*DB*, p. 32). At the same time, the more he engages with the photographs, the more distanced from them the narrator feels himself to be. In the last photograph he describes, Dora is younger than in the preceding one. This is partly suggestive of a sense of melancholy return in the past, and a point beyond which the narrator cannot go: here, again, the gulf between him and Dora is emphasised through his perception of the photographs. The narrator's melancholy is further underscored by his contemplation of the colourlessness of the photographs. To a certain extent, it is obvious to describe the photographs as black and white, since they were taken and developed before colour photography was widely available. However, the narrator's particular attention to the absence of colour in the items of clothing and the objects held by the people in the photographs reveal a further preoccupation. He focuses principally on the family members' clothes, all of which are

[77] For further discussion of this, see Mieke Bal, *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually*, trans. by Anna-Lousie Milne (California: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 1–14 (p. 3).

monochromatically described. For the narrator, the fact that the items could be other dark or light colours does not figure in his account: colour or brightness do not matter here. He is interested only in the lack of colour or vibrancy in these photographs. Just as the Bruders are dressed up for the photographs to be taken, the narrator reveals himself to be similarly donning a costume of melancholy style cut from a similar cloth to Hamlet's trappings and suits of woe.[78] His account of the photographs also describes the 'motifs noirs géométriques' (*DB*, p. 32) that continue across the floor in the photograph.[79] This reinforces the repetition of his melancholy perception of the past, which is seeping into the documentary evidence he encounters. The narrator's self-conscious mediation of the past is unavoidably inflected with the melancholy of his late historical position as he looks back at the past in these images he has uncovered. At the close of his description, even the seasons of the year are inflected by his melancholy, as the narrator remarks that 'ces ombres et ces taches de soleil sont celles d'un jour d'été' (*DB*, p. 33).[80] The bright and sunny weather is presented as fleeting or fragmented. No matter how bright and beautiful this summer's day is in the past, it is interpolated by approaching darkness, just as the narrator's individual interaction with the photographs and his description of them colour the narrative of *Dora Bruder* with melancholy.

Looking back from his late historical vantage point, the narrator reads his melancholy understanding of the past onto the photographs he describes, imbuing them with a sense of teleological inevitability. The narrator's second description of other photographs of Dora and her family later in the novel develops his melancholy perspective by drawing further attention to his role as both viewer and mediator of the images (*DB*, pp. 90–91). The last photograph taken of Dora already comes laden with its own particular pathos, and the narrator remarks how it is in complete contrast to any other images he has obtained of her: 'son visage et son allure n'ont plus rien de l'enfance qui se reflétait dans toutes les photos précédentes' (*DB*, p. 90).[81] His plain factual descriptions communicate a sense of melancholy pathos as he perceives the serious facial expressions and sombre clothing of Dora, her mother, and her grandmother. His description ends in suppositions and further rhetorical questions about the photographer and his fate, evoking a growing sense of fatality, which is in opposition to the more innocent optimism of the earlier pre-war images. In a manner reminiscent of the centrality of the narrator and his reactions in Jewish modernist literature,

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[78] See Hamlet, I. ii. 85–86. 'But I have that within which passeth show, / These but the trappings and the suits of woe'.
[79] 'Black geometric motifs' (*DB*, p. 27).
[80] 'These shadows and patches of sunlight are those of a summer's day' (*DB*, p. 28).
[81] 'Her face and her demeanour have none of the childlike qualities which shine out from the earlier photographs' (*DB*, p. 85).

the position of the photographer is vacated here, as the narrator writes himself into this role. Since the photographer is unknown, and the women in the picture face 'cet objectif anonyme' (*DB*, p. 91),[82] the narrator himself acts as the bridge between the photograph and the reader. He self-consciously mediates the past through his individual encounter with the images, endowing them with his melancholy and constraint. It would be possible to read this photograph of three generations of Bruder women as a synecdoche for all Jewish people who suffered and died during the Occupation: the family line ends with Dora's deportation and death.[83] That the photograph is of three women is significant for the narrator, since Jewish identity is traditionally matrilineal. Given that of his parents only the narrator's father is Jewish, his encounter with this photograph of the three Bruder women emphasizes his distance and melancholy separation from them all the more, since he has no immediate Jewish ancestors to connect him to their past.

The question remains, however, if these photographs are so key to the investigation of Dora, why they not are included in the original text? The narrator's decision to describe his encounters with the photographs rather than to include these images in the narrative foregrounds his distance from Dora and the events of the past. He depicts subtle differences and distinctions in the photographs, confining himself principally to factual description. Yet, instead of giving his narrative a more realistic documentary or biographical tone, this reinforces his own sense of melancholy pathos. As he ends his ruminations on the photographs, he finally begins to consider the potential colour of the images, but only to wonder, 'Dora porte-t-elle la jupe bleu marine indiquée sur l'avis de recherche?' (*DB*, p. 91), which returns him to his initial encounter with Dora Bruder and the start of his narrative.[84] The descriptions of the photographs in *Dora Bruder* are just as much a testament to their referents' absence as to their existence, performing what the inclusion of the photographs themselves could not. Looking back for Benjamin's long-forgotten moment of contingent presentness in a photograph from the past, the narrator uncovers the tension between presence and absence in these images, as well as the melancholy contradictions involved in attempting to bridge the gap between Dora's past and his late position in the present. Recalling the techniques of Jewish modernist fiction, which Cohen claims centre the narrator's reactions in a text, these photographs emphasise the narrator's view of the past and his self-conscious engagement with it through their Benjaminian and Barthesian concern with the viewer's individual encounter with an image.

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[82] 'This anonymous lens' (*DB*, p. 86).
[83] For just such an analysis, see Nordholt, 'Photographie et image', pp. 536–537.
[84] 'Could it be that Dora is wearing the navy-blue skirt mentioned in the missing persons notice?'

It should be noted that in some later editions and translations of *Dora Bruder*, one or more of the photographs described by the narrator are, in fact, included as a paratextual frontispiece to the novel.[85] Rather than undermining the melancholy perspective of the narrator, however, their *late* inclusion may be understood as further – and, perhaps, inadvertent – reinforcement of his aesthetic attitude. On the one hand, the paratextual inclusion of the photographs alongside the descriptions by the narrator arguably lends the novel a sense of authenticity, simultaneously clarifying yet further blurring the novel's much-debated fictional or factual status.[86] In a Barthesian sense, the photographs testify to the existence of Dora and her family, included in translations as an act of commemoration and a testimony to their deaths. Yet these images further anchor the text in a specific time and place: the present of the narrator from which these photographic relics of an irretrievable past are unavoidably separated. They are present in their absence, while this absence determines the narrator's present. The inclusion of these images in translations of the novel results in further emphasis, however unintentional, of the temporal gulf between the narrator and the objects of his investigation when viewed alongside his descriptions. The melancholy irreconcilability of past and present returns, even as documentary photographs are included in an attempt to make the text appear less of a fictional construct and more an exercise in documentary autofictional reportage.[87]

In a similar manner to the figure of the brocanteur, the narrator's self-consciously melancholy mediation of the photographs in *Dora Bruder* is encapsulated in another figure he encounters. In this instance, however, the figure disappears over the course of the novel,

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[85] See, for instance, the German translation of the novel (Patrick Modiano, *Dora Bruder*, trans. by Elisabeth Edl (München: Hanser, 1998)) and the American edition of Joanna Kilmartin's English translation (Patrick Modiano, *Dora Bruder*, trans. by Joanna Kilmartin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)). For further discussion of this, see also Dervila Cooke's analysis of the Japanese translation: Cooke, *Present Pasts*, p. 289.

[86] Unlike in Sebald's work, the inclusion of photographs in later editions of *Dora Bruder* is additive, as opposed to a fundamental element of the novel's aesthetics. Nonetheless, the narrator's ekphrastic engagement with the photograph of the Bruder women recalls the concluding lines of W. G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten* (1992), where the Sebaldian narrator describes a photograph of three women taken in the Łódź ghetto but without reproducing the photographs in the text as he has previously done so throughout the narrative. Instead, he remarks, 'Wer die jungen Frauen sind, das weiß ich nicht. Wegen des Gegenlichts, das einfällt durch das Fenster im Hintergrund, kann ich ihre Augen nicht erkennen, aber ich spüre, daß sie alle drei herschauen zu mir […] während die auf der rechten Seite so unverwandt und unerbitterlich mich ansieht, daß ich es nicht lange auszuhalten vermag'. See W. G. Sebald, *Die Ausgewanderten: Vier lange Erzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1992), p. 350. Translation: 'Who the young women are, I do not know. The light falls on them from the window in the background, so I cannot make out their eyes clearly, but I sense all three of them are looking across at me […] whilst the woman on the right is looking at me with so steady and relentless a gaze that I cannot meet it for long'. See W. G. Sebald, *The Emigrants*, trans. by Michael Hulse (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 237. For further discussion of Sebald's engagement with these photographs from the Łódź ghetto, see Lisa Bourla, 'Shaping and reshaping memory: the Łódź Ghetto photographs', in *Word & Image*, 31:1 (2015), pp. 54–72, pp. 62–64 especially.

[87] For further discussion of the minutiae of alterations made between various French-language editions of *Dora Bruder*, see Alan Morris, '"Avec Klarsfeld, contre l'oubli": Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder*', in *Journal of European Studies*, 36:3 (2006), pp. 269–293 and Jennifer Howell, 'In defiance of genre', pp. 59–72.

leaving another space – a hollow imprint – for the narrator to occupy and overwrite. This figure is an unnamed photographer in Paris who positions himself 'dans le flot des passants' (*DB*, p. 8).[88] While the narrator stands at a remove from those around him, attempting to engage with and capture fleeting, irretrievable moments of the past, he invites parallels between himself and this photographer. Although the photographer stands amid the crowd, people pass him by without paying him any attention. The narrator recounts how 'les passants ne semblaient pas vouloir se faire photographier. Il portait un vieux pardessus et l'une de ses chaussures était trouée' (*DB*, p. 8).[89] The fact that he remains ignored, alongside his shabby and dishevelled appearance, recalls how the narrative of *Dora Bruder* is related under an aspect of lateness, dereliction, and decay, as well as the narrator's sense of distance from events and the melancholy irreconcilability of the present with the past. Later, 'le flot des passants du dimanche […] avait dû emporter le gros photographe, mais je ne suis jamais allé vérifier' (*DB*, p. 8).[90] The photographer has been swept away in his attempt to record events, echoing the narrator's concern with being submerged in the enormity of historical events that have gone before. This proleptically references instances of symbolic investiture whereby the narrator's unique suitability to the task is highlighted. The figure of the photographer has vanished, leaving the narrator himself to excavate history in this novel and later mediate the photographs of the Bruders. This reaffirms his centrality – and that of his reactions – to the narrative of *Dora Bruder*, while emphasizing the constitutive tension of presence and absence in the novel's melancholy aesthetics. By focusing on the absent figure of the photographer, the narrator foregrounds his subsequent omnipresence in the narrative of *Dora Bruder*. The narrator fills the 'marque en creux' or hollow imprint left by the photographer, just as his narrative does with the hollow imprint left by the Bruder family. Yet he also gives himself licence and legitimacy to construct this narrative and to make his inky marks, as the homophonic *double-sens* of the 'marque en creux' implies.

The absence of photographers, as well as images of people, recurs towards the end of the novel in a final reinforcement of the narrator's centrality to the investigation of Dora's life and fate, as well as his late and melancholy perspective on the past. If, as Barthes suggests, 'not only is the Photograph never, in essence, a memory […], but it actually blocks memory',[91] then this notion is actualized in the closing pages of *Dora Bruder* as, when visiting

[88] 'Amid the stream of passers-by' (*DB*, p. 4).
[89] 'People seemed not to wish to be photographed. His overcoat was shabby and he had a hole in one shoe' (*DB*, p. 4).
[90] 'The Sunday stream of passers-by […] must have swept away the fat photographer, though I never went back to check' (*DB*, p. 4).
[91] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 91.

a military zone that prohibits photography or filming, the narrator remarks that nobody remembers anything anymore (*DB*, pp. 130–131). In *Dora Bruder*, the ekphrastic descriptions of the photographs emphasise their referents' absence as much as their former existence, thereby further highlighting the unbridgeable gulf between the narrator's present and the past he investigates. From such irreconcilability emerges a narrative melancholy whereby the narrator's act of remembering the Bruder family paradoxically limits how much they may be remembered. The photographs ensure that both narrator and his objects of investigation remain fixed in their particular time and place. Although by the end of the novel the narrator has uncovered photographs of the area where the Bruders and the brocanteur lived (*DB*, pp. 135–137), there are no people in these photographs. On recalling a visit to the area during autumn, the narrator admits that 'de nouveau je ressentais un vide' (*DB*, p. 135).[92] The figure of the photographer, who might have constituted a conduit between the past and present, is gone, leaving only the narrator and his self-conscious investigation. In their autobiographical writings on photography, Benjamin and Barthes both discuss what Katja Haustein refers to as 'the paradigm of the autobiographical self' by shifting the emphasis of the self onto the figure of the other.[93] In other words, the viewer sees themselves through the person whose image they encounter. In *Dora Bruder*, the narrator reveals just as much of himself as of those whom he investigates thanks to his focus on photography and his taking the place of the beholder while remaining distanced from the object of his observations.[94] This again recalls Cohen's identification of the particular trait in Jewish modernist fiction of locating the narrative's centre in the narrator's reactions rather than in the text's nominal protagonist, while also highlighting the centrality of photography and the question of presence or absence to the construction of melancholy in *Dora Bruder*. The narrator's echoes of Benjaminian and Barthesian views on photography are a further indication of self-conscious engagement with both a European and an often explicitly French cultural tradition, while also highlighting the narrator's centrality to the narrative, which reinforces the unbridgeable gulf between past and present in the novel.

The emptiness of the Parisian cityscape where Dora lived encapsulates *Dora Bruder*'s abandoned and derelict aspect, while also evoking a tension between absence and presence.

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[92] 'I had a sense of emptiness' (p. 129).

[93] Katja Haustein, *Regarding Lost Time: Photography, Identity, and Affect in Proust, Benjamin, and Barthes* (London: Legenda, 2012), p. 5.

[94] For further discussion of how theorisations of such non-violent contemplation in the works of Helmuth Plessner, Theodor W. Adorno, and Roland Barthes may be conceived of in various ways as an ethics of indirectness, a suspicion towards certain forms of intimacy, as well as a preference for individual difference over communal identification, see also Katja Haustein, 'How to Be Alone with Others: Plessner, Adorno, and Barthes on Tact', in *Modern Language Review*, 114:1 (2019), pp. 1–21.

Yet, in this instance, the narrator wishes to escape this emptiness, as opposed to desiring to occupy it. Over the course of the novel he draws at times closer to Dora, and at times further away, never quite reconciling his present with her past, all the while maintaining the narrative tension between presence and absence. While walking through Paris, he remarks that, 'sans savoir pourquoi, j'avais l'impression de marcher sur les traces de quelqu'un' (*DB*, p. 49).[95] Despite the sense of return in his wanderings, the closest he can come to reconciling Dora's past with his present is to stand where she may have once lived. In a concentrated moment of melancholy, he observes that 'le seul point commun avec la fugue de Dora, c'était le saison: l'hiver. Hiver paisible, hiver de routine, sans commune mesure avec celui d'il y avait dix-huit ans. Mais il me semble que ce qui vous pousse brusquement à la fugue, ce soit un jour de froid et de grisaille qui vous rend encore plus vive la solitude' (*DB*, p. 57).[96] Winter, the season of endings, reinforces his melancholy perceptions of Dora's past in his present. In contrast to winters in the past, this one is quite calm and ordinary, he claims. Yet it is this very fact that enables him to more clearly see how one might desire to escape one's current circumstances. This sense of apathy or disinterest with regard to his present recalls his epigonal feelings towards his writing and his investigations of Dora's life, suggesting that, in his melancholy, he would rather return to the winters of the past. However, he knows this is impossible, and that all that remains to connect him with Dora is the bland ordinariness of this winter's day in Paris, which highlights more than ever his solitude.

The narrator's particular use of the word *fugue* invites comparisons of the time in his youth when he ran away, and of his ride in a police van accompanied by his father, with Dora's flight from school and her ride in a police van to the Tourelles internment centre (pp. 60–65), which further suggests that it is only by engaging with Dora's life through his own experiences that can he attempt to bring the past and present together. This articulates once again the tension not only between absence and presence in *Dora Bruder*, but also that between the narrator's centrality to a novel that purports to be an investigation of the life of another, harking back to one of the hallmarks of Jewish modernist literature. In spite of this intergenerational link between traumatic experiences that are heightened by their Jewish connection, however, the narrator cannot fully connect with Dora's story in his present or his past. While the narrator is able to allow Dora her *fugue* by no longer investigating and writing elements of her story – the fact that he is the one who gets to decide this further

[95] Without knowing why, I had the impression of walking in another's footsteps' (*DB*, p. 44).
[96] 'One point in common with Dora's, namely, the season: winter. A calm, ordinary winter, not to be compared with that eighteen years earlier. But it seems that the sudden urge to escape may be prompted by one of those cold, grey days which makes you more than ever aware of your solitude' (*DB*, p. 52).

underscores his centrality to the narrative – his melancholy solitude is emphasized by the fact that he seems unable to enact his own *fugue* from his unresolved abusive relationship with his father. The narrator admits, when recalling his traumatic trip with his father in the Black Maria following his father's arrest, that afterwards communication broke down between them and within a matter of months they had ceased to see one another:

> Nous n'avons pas échangé un seul mot pendant tout le trajet ni dans l'escalier, avant de nous quitter. Je devais encore le revoir à deux ou trois reprises l'année suivante, un mois d'août au cours dequel il me déroba mes papiers militaires pour tenter de me faire incorporer de force à la caserne de Reuilly. Ensuite, je ne l'ai plus jamais vu (*DB*, p. 72).[97]

Still tormented by a father who seems determined to force his son to endure the experience of arrest and rounding-up that he had endured in the 1940s, the narrator is never able to resolve this fraught relationship. The familial, for the narrator, becomes the historical. This sense of irresolution is prefigured earlier in the novel, as the narrator recalls an attempt to spontaneously visit his ill father in hospital, having not seen him since the aforementioned episode in his adolescence. Upon arriving at the hospital, however, the narrator is unable to find his father: 'j'ai arpenté les cours pavées jusqu'à ce que le soir tombe. Impossible de trouver mon père. Je ne l'ai plus jamais revu' (*DB*, p. 18).[98] In another subtle reference to the motif of the palimpsest, the narrator even recalls with reference to Abbé Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* (1731) that the building which is now the hospital had once been a prison for those waiting to be deported from France. Via a reference to imprisonment, the melancholy of the narrator's solitude and his unresolved relationship with his father is thus contrasted with Dora's pathos-filled *fugue* before her deportation and death. There is no sense of an equivalence between the two experiences being made by the narrator, but rather an overriding emphasis on the melancholy perspective resulting from an awareness of his inability to reconcile his present with Dora's past, which is compounded by his own personal melancholy frustrations with his family history. Here, the narrator's reactions provide the means for him to reconstruct Dora's story and experiences from the inside out as far as factual evidence goes, although the price is ultimately imprisonment within the confines of his own narrative.

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[97] 'On the way home, we didn't exchange a single word, not even when we parted on the staircase. I was to see him once or twice in August of the following year on an occasion when he hid my call-up papers as a ruse to have me carted off by force to the Reuilly army barracks. After that I never saw him again' (*DB*, p. 66).
[98] 'I tramped the cobblestoned courtyards till dusk. It was impossible to find my father. I never saw him again' (*DB* p. 13).

It is through such motifs of attempted escape and imprisonment that the tensions of the melancholy aesthetics of *Dora Bruder* are further articulated and developed. Indeed, the narrative of *Dora Bruder* is confined to a Parisian context to such an extent that the city itself is regularly described as a literal and metaphorical prison.[99] As Cooke has observed, imprisonment motifs are found across Modiano's œuvre:

> Whatever the forces that compel Modiano to write, a sense of the self arises through his compulsive repetition of the same themes, and his apparent inability to get to the heart of what he wants to say, endlessly producing narrators who cannot escape the pasts they wish to repress or who are somehow locked into repetition.[100]

In *Dora Bruder* the motifs of imprisonment reinforce the narrator's melancholy view of history, blurring the boundaries between city, text, and narrator. During his excavations, the city of Paris, and the historical figures he searches for, are incorporated into a narrator figure who encapsulates one of the central tensions of the novel via his attempts to escape while remaining necessarily constricted by the means he chooses. Parisian locations connected to the Second World War and the Occupation recur across the narrative of *Dora Bruder* and particular reference is made to former prisons and military barracks, which nuance the narrator's self-consciously melancholy perspective on the past. He observes, for example, places connected to historical atrocities which occupy the same topographical space, such as the prison camp which 'occupait les locaux d'une ancienne caserne d'infanterie coloniale' (*DB*, p. 60).[101] The impossibility of reconciliation between his present and the past, along with a sense of trepidation about attempting it, is evoked in his anxious declaration that 'la perspective de vivre une vie de caserne […] me paraissait insurmontable' (*DB*, p. 96).[102] He claims that the notion of such imprisonment is something he is quite literally unable to overcome. This is later developed when he recalls that 'un haut mur entoure l'ancienne caserne […] et cache les bâtiments. J'ai longé ce mur' (*DB*, p. 130).[103] A prison whose geographical location would connect him directly to the events of the Occupation is unreachable due to its perimeter wall, which he follows. Cautious of making too many connections between his life and that of Dora, he self-consciously traces where she went but

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[99] See, for example, *DB*, pp. 56, 60, 96, 130, and 138. Max Silverman calls attention to this particular feature of the narrative of *Dora Bruder* in *Palimpsestic Memory*, p. 122.
[100] Cooke, *Present Pasts*, pp. 44–45.
[101] 'Occupied a former colonial infantry barracks' (*DB*, p. 55).
[102] 'The prospect of barrack-life […] seemed to me unendurable' (*DB*, p. 90).
[103] 'The buildings of the former barracks are hidden behind a high perimeter wall. I followed it' (*DB*, p. 124).

does not or cannot bring together his present and her past. Through repeated references to imprisonment, the narrator's investigations in the novel effectively become a prison for him.

This textual imprisonment is most explicitly shown through references to the city of Paris itself as a prison, not least because the narrative of *Dora Bruder* is centred there. This Parisian imprisonment is also reflected by the structure of the narrative: the novel does begin and end at the flea market, but the narrator also returns at various intervals to places where he and Dora lived at different times. Furthermore, multiple references to trains and railways made over the course of the narrative pre-empt Dora's eventual transportation to and imprisonment in Auschwitz. There is a sense of both repetition and irreconcilability in these references, which also highlight the narrator's perspective on history. He pursues his line of investigation in spite of understanding that he can never fully reconcile with the past in the present, while images of Paris and of his narrative as prisons exemplify and nuance his historically and geographically determined melancholy. As he attempts to enter the archives of the local Register Office and the Palais de Justice to search for information on Dora's place and date of birth, the narrator is shuttled from place to place by officials and functionary advisors. Significantly, he describes the experiences as being 'comme à l'entrée d'une prison' (*DB*, pp. 16–17).[104] He is required to submit his belongings to a search or X-Ray of some kind: 'Je n'avais sur moi qu'un trousseau de clés. Je devais le poser sur une sorte de tapis roulant et le récupérer de l'autre côté d'une vitre, mais sur le moment je n'ai rien compris à cette manœuvre' (*DB*, p. 16).[105] This image of uncertainty and his inability to act – he later does not dare to ask the way through the building (*DB*, p. 17) – is a physical manifestation of the historical distance between his present and Dora's past, as well as the metaphorical distance between his narrative and Dora's experience. The conveyor belt is highly relevant: he previously held and could see the keys – symbolic of the means by which something may be unlocked – but he is subsequently unable to retrieve them from behind the glass. Significantly, here, the narrator may observe, but only from a clearly demarcated distance. The keys are placed on a conveyor belt, which turns in a repetitive cycle out of his reach. Just like this conveyor belt, the narrator remains trapped in a narrative investigation that at intervals comes closer and moves further away from reconciliation between the past and the present, while never quite achieving it. Although this image of the conveyor belt is merely a part of a simple bureaucratic process, the reference to imprisonment recalls the intensity of the narrator's melancholy perspective on the past. Ultimately, it suggests that,

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[104] 'As at the gates of a prison'.
[105] 'I had nothing on me except a bunch of keys. This I was supposed to place on a sort of conveyor belt for collection on the far side of a glass partition, but for a moment I couldn't think what to do' (*DB*, p. 12).

were the narrator to possesses all possible information about Dora's life and fate – were he himself to have the key to discovering everything about where she was and what she did – something of her would nonetheless still remain separated from him. Over the course of *Dora Bruder*, the narrative itself becomes a melancholy prison for its narrator, just like Paris, encapsulating one of the novel's central thematic tensions, namely that between confinement and escape. The melancholy of the narrator's approach to the past is further exemplified in the proleptic structure of novel as a whole with its frequent moments of foreshadowing and return. Speculating about Dora's evening route home to the convent where she spent the summer of 1940, the narrator frames his imaginings within the context of his own later journeys along the same route, recalling that 'la station était déserte à cette heure-là et les rames ne venaient qu'à de longs intervals' (*DB*, p. 45).[106] This emphasises the melancholy aspect of his reflections, since means of connection in the station are fewer and further between, before he imagines how Dora might have responded to going back to the convent: 'c'était comme de retourner en prison' (*DB*, p. 46).[107] His use of prison imagery as he wanders recalls how the past and the present remain unreconciled in the narrator's vision of the past. Between then and now there is still a dark gulf: "il faisait déjà nuit' (*DB*, p. 46).[108] The image of early onset twilight here encapsulates the melancholy of the narrator's outlook.

In response to the narrator's sense of imprisonment through its evocation of departure from the city, imagery of trains and railways recurs numerous times in the novel (*DB*, pp. 29, 34, 45, 123, 143, for example).Through recurrent imagery of trains and railways, potent symbols of modernity that inevitably recall Dora's ultimate fate in Auschwitz, the pathos of the unknown occurrences of Dora's *fugue* in *Dora Bruder* – as well as the overall melancholy aesthetic attitude of the novel and its constitutive tensions – is most explicitly articulated. Indeed, at one point the narrator explicitly observes that 'le mot « gare » évoque la fugue' (*DB*, p. 129).[109] Clearly foreshadowing Dora's eventual transportation to Auschwitz, these references also demonstrate both the narrator's and Dora's respective experiences of confinement and separation. She is confined to her fate, and he to his awareness of coming too late and facing the inevitable irreconcilability of his present and the past. Although the image of trains and stations might suggest a route out of his melancholy imprisonment, the narrator is always pulled back to Paris because of his awareness of the terrible fate that awaited Dora, which has already occurred. Here, the implications of his late historical

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106 'At that hour the station was deserted, and there were long intervals between trains' (*DB*, p. 40).
107 'It was like going back to prison' (*DB*, p. 41).
108 'It was already dark' (*DB*, p. 41)
109 'The word "station" evokes escape'.

position are once more apparent: even as the narrator might attempt to avoid the fact of Dora's demise, his inevitable return to it is staged alongside her (from the narrator's late perspective) inevitable death, while he remains unable to bridge the temporal distance between his present awareness of this and the moment of her *fugue* before she is captured. Although this reinforces the narrator's perspective on history and his self-consciousness in undertaking his investigations, it nevertheless also limits it, giving a further sense of pathos to the melancholy aesthetics of *Dora Bruder*. When at one point the narrator exits a metro station, this melancholy is exemplified particularly strongly, as he remarks that

> j'éprouvais une drôle sensation en longeant le mur de l'hôpital Lariboisière, puis en passant au-dessus des voies ferrées, comme si j'avais pénétré dans la zone la plus obscure de Paris. Mais c'était simplement le contraste entre les lumières trop vives du boulevard de Clichy et le mur noir, interminable, la pénombre sous les arches du métro… (*DB*, p. 29).[110]

There is unbridgeable gap – an interminable wall, to use the narrator's phrasing – between his attempted excavations and the real story of the Bruder family. His realisation that it was only the contrast of bright lights after a dark space that unsettled him appears to diffuse the gloom, but the endless wall of shadows under the repeating railway arches remains. This recalls his earlier image of a lone lighthouse casting tentative investigatory beams back into the past without ever managing to fully reconcile what he finds there with his present. Where the lighthouse image contains a trace of optimism, this moment near the Lariboisière hospital encapsulates the narrator's melancholy solitude in spite of the hopefulness his investigations might occasionally engender. He cannot escape the city that has become his prison, nor his compulsion to investigate its past, yet the present and the past remain unreconciled. The melancholy of history and of his narrative's aesthetics – the inevitable disconnect between then and now – reveals that escape is merely an illusion. He is condemned – indeed, through his melancholy aesthetics, he condemns himself – to inadvertently inherit another title of a novel mentioned earlier, this time by Jean Jausion, by remaining the man who wanders the streets of Paris: 'un homme qui marche dans la ville'.

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[110] 'Having a strange feeling as I followed the wall of Lariboisière Hospital, and again on crossing the railway tracks, as though I had penetrated the darkest part of Paris. But it was merely the contrast between the dazzling lights of the Boulevard de Clichy and the black, interminable wall, the penumbra beneath the metro arches…' (*DB*, p. 24).

COSMOPOLITANISM

If, as outlined in the introduction to this thesis, novels with self-consciously late and melancholy narrators such as *Dora Bruder* constitute a collective of cosmopolitan European literary works, then what are the implications of this for Modiano's novel? Having explored how epigonal lateness in *Dora Bruder* is expressed through the narrator's intertextual engagement with the unacknowledged legacy of Jewish modernist literature, as well as through narrative brocanterie, and how the novel's melancholy aesthetics are encapsulated through ekphrastic descriptions of photographs and motifs of imprisonment and escape, this chapter concludes by considering how notions of *Dora Bruder*'s literary cosmopolitanism are both encapsulated in and complicated by the conjunction of the figures of the cosmopolitan flâneur and the wandering Jew. A central constitutive tension ultimately emerges in the novel between French and European literature, which modifies the compromised position of privilege traditionally associated with the flâneur. Through the various configurations of the narrator who embodies the late and melancholy 'man who walks in the city', *Dora Bruder* may be read as a novel that brings together the tensions of the late and the melancholy in its engagement with figures who represent both the elite and the ostracized in a modern European literary tradition.[111] This sense of duality and tension is at the heart of *Dora Bruder*'s melancholy cosmopolitanism. However, a form of flânerie that embodies various tensions between national and cultural identities is not unique to the narrator of *Dora Bruder*. In her study of the paradoxes and ambiguities surrounding the figure of the flâneur, Mary Gluck observes that historically 'the popular flâneur had still taken it as axiomatic that Paris, or at any rate Europe, was the center of modernity and that he could not exist anywhere else in the world'.[112] Nevertheless, this Parisian figure soon became more cosmopolitan, for although, as Benjamin notes, 'Paris created the type of the flâneur', this literary figure was distinctly European, as well as particularly French.[113] Following Baudelaire's elaborations in 'Le peintre de la vie moderne' (1863), the flâneur then moved beyond the confines of

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[111] For further discussion of the figure of the Jew as both embodiment and limit case of conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism, see Cathy S. Gelbin and Sander L. Gilman, *Cosmopolitanisms and the Jews* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2017), which highlights the absence of Jewish people from the cosmopolitan philosophies of thinkers such as Kant and Herder. If their conceptions of 'world citizenship' profit from the security of the nation and the freedom to explore beyond its borders, then Jewish people without a nation implicitly constitute a threat towards this vision, which highlights, according to Gelbin and Gilman, a need for a recalibration and renegotiation of the nuances of the notion of cosmopolitanism, focusing on its ambivalences.

[112] For further discussion of this, see Mary Gluck, 'The Flâneur and the Aesthetic: Appropriation of Urban Culture in Mid-19th-century Paris', in *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20:5 (2003), pp. 53–80 (p. 78).

[113] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 416.

Western Europe, becoming 'a man of the world and […] a great traveller who felt at home in all parts of the globe'.[114] Yet, as Jacob Edmond observes,

> far from being the creation of an isolated European modernity, the figure of the flâneur […] was the product of the nineteenth-century European imperial capital; while acutely self-conscious of his place at what he perceived to be the center of modernity, his sense of European particularity was nevertheless born out of his relation to non-Europe.[115]

Such self-conscious positioning of the flâneur is intensified and nuanced by the narrator of *Dora Bruder*. If, as Pieter Vermeulen argues, 'the flâneur anticipates a literary cosmopolitan ethos that thrives on intellectual curiosity and the virtues of the aesthetic', then this figure is also unavoidably imbricated with canonical Western privilege.[116] Famously denigrated by Benjamin as a 'spy for the capitalists', the flâneur is both aesthete and profiteer: 'as a flâneur, the literary man ventures into the marketplace to sell himself'.[117] As an observer, his choice not to participate in the life of the city and engage with the people in the crowd suggests a form of surveillance, which rejects the heterogeneous potential of the metropolis in favour of a normative conception of how the city ought to be. Yet, in *Dora Bruder*, the narrator overcomes this potentially compromised privilege position by virtue of his identification with Jewishness. Recalling the figure of the wandering cosmopolitan Jew, albeit one confined to Paris, he embodies both the privileged and the outcast figures of European modernism. In that sense, to follow Edmond's wording, in *Dora Bruder* a new sense of European particularity – of European cosmopolitanism with a distinctly French element – is born out of this relation to what has long been perceived as the non-European.

While, as discussed earlier, it is by no means a kind of master category that explains modernism in its entirety, Jewishness's intersection with and influence on the modern – and modernist literature in particular – is highly significant due to its location both within and outside of national contexts. To return to Cohen's estimation of the central significance of Jewishness to modernist literature, it is imperative to note the sense of duality embodied by this Jewishness within a national context, which Lyndsey Stonebridge describes as the 'wry detachment' of the Jewish European cosmopolitan.[118] As Cohen notes in reference to the

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[114] Gluck, 'The Flâneur and the Aesthetic', p. 78. See also Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes, tome 2*, ed. by Yves-Gérard le Dantec and Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 714.
[115] Jacob Edmond, *A Common Strangeness: Contemporary Poetry, Cross-Cultural Encounter, Comparative Literature* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), p. 16.
[116] See Vermeulen, *Contemporary Literature*, p. 84.
[117] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 446.
[118] Lyndsey Stonebridge, 'Refugee style: Hannah Arendt and the perplexities of rights', in *Textual Practice*, 25:1 (2011), pp. 71–85 (p. 83).

conditions of emergence for Jewish modernist literature, 'the collapse of shared values and consequent project of reconstructing solidarity on the basis of the everyday – including the lives of those who are different from you – fit with the experiences of culturally assimilated but often still socially marginal Jewish writers'.[119] Yet there is a comparative advantage to this that takes an ambivalent and apparently contradictory form, since, as Jonathan Morse observes, 'at the beginning of the twentieth century, […] the Jew was simultaneously rich and poor, a jewelled exotic and a denizen of Western civilization's underworlds'.[120] The position of being to a certain extent separated from the norms of a national culture, while still remaining committed to it, enables a broader form of identification than that achievable by writers located within one national tradition. As Cohen notes, 'the Jewish legacy entails a less exclusive attachment to the nation in an era when national rivalries produce catastrophic results. This is the famed Jewish cosmopolitanism, to be celebrated or reviled depending on one's outlook. Jewishness offers a position in which you at once do and do not belong'.[121] If *Dora Bruder* may be considered as part of a literary cosmopolitan community of late and melancholy novels, as the present study suggests, then the embodiment by the novel's Jewish narrator of figures who are both within and without a nation necessarily complicates this, such that tensions between the national and the European in the novel come to the fore.

The Parisian particularites of the figure of the flâneur exert further influences over the narrator of *Dora Bruder* even as he modifies this with Jewish cosmopolitanism. When describing how the flâneur inhabits the streets through which he wanders, Benjamin notes that the city becomes his interior: 'the street becomes a dwelling for the flâneur'.[122] If the narrator perceives the city of Paris as 'une prison obscure' (*DB*, p.56),[123] and if, after Benjamin's flâneur, the city has become his interior, then he embodies this Parisian prison and the flâneur who wanders in it. The figure of the flâneur casts an oblique gaze on the Parisian cityscape in *Dora Bruder*, evoking Benjamin's allegory of history as a 'petrified, primordial landscape'.[124] Yet the typical charms of the flâneur's everyday observations are absent in this novel, since, as Silverman observes, if *Dora Bruder* treads the path of flânerie, then it 'reveals not the re-enchanted world of everyday life but the horrors of wasted lives'.[125] This is most clearly expressed in the sense of emptiness evoked in the narrator's descriptions

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[119] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 421.
[120] Morse, 'English Literature of the Twentieth Century', p. 207.
[121] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 421.
[122] Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays of Charles Baudelaire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 68.
[123] 'A dark prison' (*DB*, p.51).
[124] Benjamin, *The Origins of German Tragic Drama*, p. 166.
[125] Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory*, p. 113.

of his wanderings. The immovable and unchangeable past is irrecoverably temporally distant and, fittingly for the late and melancholy narrator of *Dora Bruder*, the Parisian boulevards and streets he wanders are more often than not void of life. He experiences at various intervals 'cette même sensation de vide […] il ne restait plus qu'un terrain vague […] l'impression de vide' (*DB*, pp. 132–133).[126] The streets' emptiness continues across the narrative: 'Je marche à travers les rues vides. Pour moi elles le restent, même le soir à l'heure des embouteillages, quand les gens se pressent vers les bouches du métro. Je ne peux pas m'empêcher de penser à elle et de sentir un écho de sa présence' (*DB*, p. 144).[127] Even when occasionally surrounded by people, the narrator senses the emptiness of the city; he is both within the crowd of passers-by and isolated from them. As Benjamin notes in his unfinished project *Das Passagen-Werk* (1927–1940), the allegorical gaze of the flâneur feeds on the melancholy that stems from being both within the crowd and an observer who is set apart from it.[128] Simultaneously detached from and connected to the masses in the arcades, the flâneur embodies the prevailing melancholy of modernity, much like the narrator of *Dora Bruder* embodies the sense of melancholy imprisonment in Paris.

Although he argues that in *Dora Bruder* 'the particular and the universal are held in an ambivalent state', for Silverman this is not simply repetition of the same but rather it is a 'return, both same and different, familiar and yet new'.[129] In a similar vein, the cosmopolitanism evoked in the narrative of *Dora Bruder* as the late and melancholy narrator embodies the tensions between both the Parisian flâneur and the wandering Jew sutures together their similarities and differences. While, as Marja Warehime argues, the narrator of *Dora Bruder* draws on the marginality of the figure of the Parisian flâneur, reconfiguring this literary type to contribute towards the creation of a 'sense of place' in the novel, the notion of marginality also recalls the sense of the cosmopolitan Jew who is both inside and outside of Europe, and *a fortiori* of European literary culture.[130] The difference between the two figures, however, is one of prestige. Although flânerie in *Dora Bruder* is, on the one hand, indicative of the novel's French literary roots, it is also, on the other hand, a literary device that has enduring resonance within a broader Western European tradition. The narrator as a

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126 'The same sensation of emptiness […] nothing but a wasteland […] the impression of emptiness' (*DB*, pp. 126 - 127).
127 'I walk through empty streets. For me, they are always empty, even at dusk, during the rush-hour, when the crowds are hurrying towards the mouth of the metro. I can't help myself thinking of her and sensing an echo of her presence' (*DB*, p. 137).
128 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 21.
129 Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory*, p. 123.
130 Marja Warehime, 'Paris and the Autobiography of a flâneur: Patrick Modiano and Annie Ernaux', in *French Forum*, 25:1 (2000), pp. 97–113 (p. 111).

Parisian flâneur in *Dora Bruder*, therefore, encapsulates this European cultural prestige and literary aestheticism. Indeed, since the narrative of *Dora Bruder* is largely confined to one city, the narrator's flânerie within this Parisian context demonstrates the specifically French iteration of the novel's melancholy cosmopolitanism. While Paris is not the only significant European cultural capital to be referenced in *Dora Bruder*, it is undoubtedly the city to which the narrator is continually drawn back and which frames his narrative.

References to another European capital of modernist culture, namely Vienna, serve to demonstrate just how strong the pull of the French capital is for the narrator. While he may gesture to contexts beyond his home city, he and the focus of his investigations invariably return to his Parisian prison. Following his elaboration of the discovery of the military record of Ernest Bruder, Dora's father, for example, the narrator speculates about the life the Bruders had when they first arrived in Paris from Vienna, a city that the narrator has also frequented (*DB*, p. 21). In his recollections of Vienna, the city is deserted, just like his constructions of Paris. In his account of his time in Austria, the narrator also imbues the text with a sense of emptiness and loneliness. There is a particular wistfulness in his declaration that 'un jour, je retournerai à Vienne que je n'ai pas revue depuis plus de trente ans' (*DB*, p. 22).[131] Although he has not physically been present in this city for a long time, he returns in his descriptions of it to those deserted streets to brood over the lives of Dora's parents. If he were to return there in reality, as he acknowledges, he would likely be able to discover concrete information about their lives there and their extended family. Instead, the narrator prefers to insist on returning only in the text he writes, constructing a melancholy cityscape that facilitates his engagement with the past. As the narrator goes on to present Ernest's military record from his time in the Foreign Legion during the French Algerian War, there is an instance of potential expansion for the narrative beyond its Western confines in the European capitals of Paris and Vienna. The narrator lists the many battles and skirmishes in which Ernest Bruder took part, along with corresponding dates and information about each event. However, this account reveals itself to in fact be merely a gesture towards a context beyond Western Europe, since the narrator eventually returns to wondering whether 'la nuit, dans ce paysage de sable et de caillasses, rêvait-il à Vienne, sa ville natale […]?' (*DB*, p. 25).[132] In speculating as to whether Ernest dreamt of Vienna, the narrator returns the focus of his narrative to the Austrian capital, before tightening his focus further on the French context once more in his later assertion that, at the age of twenty-five, Ernest 's'est retrouvé

[131] 'Some day, I shall go back to Vienna, a city I have not seen for over thirty years' (*DB*, p. 18).
[132] 'At night, in this landscape of stone-strewn sand, did he dream of Vienna, the city of his birth […]?' (*DB*, p. 20).

sur le pavé de Paris' (*DB*, p. 25).[133] Not only has Ernest returned to the streets of Paris, but so has the narrator. He comes back again to the places he wanders in the narrative of *Dora Bruder*. In further confirmation of this, he proceeds to elaborate Ernest's lack of a pension from the Foreign Legion and his lack of French citizenship, which parallels the narrator's own confinement in Paris during his investigation. He firmly locates his narrative and his historical investigations in the Parisian literary stomping ground of the flâneur, which is refracted through the narrator's insistence on his own perception: 'je suppose […] La seule fois où j'ai vu […]' (*DB*, p. 25).[134] While the sustained engagement with flânerie in *Dora Bruder* is indicative of a certain literary prestige, which colours the text's aesthetic attitude with European privilege, a new cosmopolitan figure emerges in the narrative in the reconfigurations of the Parisian flâneur and the cosmopolitan Jew through an aesthetic attitude of lateness and melancholy. Through the tensions that emerge in the conjunction of Jewishness and the cosmopolitan figure of the flâneur, the narrator comes as close as he can in the novel to creating something new, confined as he is within these literary contexts. As such, his European and French particularities are imbricated with a relation to Jewishness, which fundamentally complicates and determines the melancholy cosmopolitan aesthetic attitude of *Dora Bruder*.

With reference to the notion of imagined communities conceptualized by Benedict Anderson, Cohen notes that 'Jewish literature does not arise on the geographical periphery. It thus violates the one feature common to all other members of the group. But because Jews are not Christians, they can be experienced as not quite European. The Jew is the insider as outsider, the European as Oriental'.[135] As the narrative of *Dora Bruder* shows, from a culturally and historically late position, the aesthetic, formal and stylistic techniques that emerge from the Jewish perspective of being simultaneously both inside and outside – in the centre and on the margins – of a national literature afford an outlook that is privileged, given its perspective from multiple vantage points, yet also precarious, given the marginalized and victimized status of the Jewish people in Europe historically.[136] Twentieth-century Jewish writers are, as Cohen notes, 'at once more internal and more external than any writers on the

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133 'Was on the streets of Paris' (*DB*, p. 21).
134 'I'm virtually certain […] I've seen […]' (*DB*, p. 21).
135 Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 441.
136 The notion of Jewish cosmopolitanism is one which has been employed many times historically as an anti-Semitic trope, such as in the case of the widely-used pejorative Soviet euphemism of 'rootless cosmopolitanism' to denote Jewish intellectuals' lack of patriotic allegiance to the USSR. This study wholeheartedly distances itself from such views. For further discussion of this, see Michael L. Miller and Scott Ury, 'Cosmopolitanism: the End of Jewishness?, in *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 17:3 (2010), pp. 337–359 and Michael L. Miller and Scott Ury, eds., *Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and the Jews of East Central Europe* (Oxford: Routledge, 2015).

geographical fringes'.[137] As such, having initially tested the limits of the cultural capaciousness of Europe in the early twentieth century, the inclusion of Jewishness in European culture is then subjected to near-eradication and subsequent ostracisation. As discussed above, from the historical position of the narrator of *Dora Bruder*, looking back at the events of the twentieth century, Jewishness is no longer recognized for its intellectual prestige in European culture. However, by folding together the ostracized cosmopolitan figure of the Jew and the elite figure of the Parisian flâneur, the self-consciously late and melancholy narrator of *Dora Bruder* complicates the novel's form of melancholy cosmopolitanism by reworking the privileged apparatus of the European cultural tradition that has long eschewed acknowledging Jewishness as one of its constitutive aspects. In the novel, a narrator emerges whose cosmopolitanism is modified and complicated by his duality, emphasizing constitutive tensions between national and European contexts in melancholy cosmopolitan novels.

The particular melancholy cosmopolitanism of Patrick Modiano's novel emerges principally through the suturing together of apparent contradictions in the effort to create something new, be it through bricolage and palimpsest, the flâneur and the Jew, presence and absence, or imprisonment and escape. The novel's aesthetic attitude is exemplified in the narrator's attempts to overcome his sense of epigonality by relying on the late historical position from which he is writing, as well as articulating the irreconcilable gulf between past and present that he nevertheless hopes to bridge by locating himself as the epicentre of the narrative along with Dora Bruder. His ekphrastic descriptions of found photographs are a testimony to the paradoxically absent presence or present absence of the Bruders, while the narrator himself is caught between a desire to escape and a reliance on the imprisonment of his narrative and his city in order to undertake his investigations. Trapped in the melancholy streets of Paris, the narrator embodies both the figures of the cosmopolitan Jew and the Parisian flâneur, such that he is simultaneously both inside and outside of the European literary tradition of the twentieth century. Although these aesthetic features of the narrative may suggest a sense of irreconcilable contradiction in *Dora Bruder*, as this chapter has shown, these tensions are constitutive elements of the novel's particular form of melancholy cosmopolitanism.

Having examined a novel whose melancholy cosmopolitanism plays out within a French literary context – 'sur le terrain de la prose française', as the narrator remarks (*DB*, p. 71)[138] – this study now turns its attention in the following chapter to a novel that also

[137] Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, p. 441.
[138] 'On the field of French prose' (*DB*, p. 65).

embodies foundational tensions between a national and a European context, but this time within the realm of modern and Romantic German literature.

CHAPTER 2

Austerlitz by W. G. Sebald

'Late, now to see at all,
Lines, colours, shapes grown familiar,
Yet, looking, see those lost.
Listening, hear absent voices
And acknowledge the new
Lest they merge in the old, remembered,
Lost before they are found
In the indifference that comes of knowing'.

~ Michael Hamburger, *Late* (1997)

The previous chapter revealed a self-consciously late and melancholy narrator who comes to the fore to such an extent in *Dora Bruder* that the novel is just as much his story as that of the woman whose name it bears. In W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, the narrator is more reticent, revealing less of his personal life and circumstances, and his retreat during the narrative in order to allow the eponymous protagonist's voice to come to the fore suggests, even more so than in *Dora Bruder*, a case of narratorial epigonality with regard to telling the stories of others. However, in *Austerlitz* the narrator does not merely act as a frame for the novel's principal story. He is conspicuously self-conscious of his epigonal lateness and of the melancholy perspective that emerges from this, perceiving himself as an historical and cultural latecomer, such that his concerns regarding creative and literary inadequacy are evident at distinct moments in the novel. These are clearly expressed during the narrator's accounts of his travels, his meetings with Jacques Austerlitz, and Austerlitz's effect on him, as well as during the narrator's recounting of Austerlitz's own words, through various reworkings of German Romantic literary conventions.

Building on prior readings of Sebald's work as late modernist literature, this chapter shows how engagements with and enactments of lateness in *Austerlitz*, the last of Sebald's works to be published in his lifetime, also owe a significant debt to the German Romantic tradition. As such, this chapter argues, *Austerlitz* may be read as a late Romantic work as

much as a late modernist one.[1] Delineating the lines of connection between the narrator's reworkings of the figure of the suffering Romantic artist and his sense of lateness, this chapter argues that that his millennial melancholy has roots in various refashionings of the form of the Romantic literary fairy tale – the *Kunstmärchen*. Since, as this study proposes, the narrator's self-conscious lateness and melancholy signifies *Austerlitz*'s inclusion in a literary mode of writing emerging in European fiction at the turn of the millennium that may be construed as cosmopolitan, this chapter concludes by investigating how this is complicated by what has traditionally been viewed as the avowedly nationalist legacy of German Romanticism. Drawing on readings of futurity in Sebald's work, this chapter shows that, while tensions between a German national literature and European literature are not brought to a resolution in *Austerlitz*, the possibility of their reconciliation is present yet deferred. By paying attention to the vestigially Romantic elements of Sebald's novel, these constitutive tensions are revealed. While it is possible to come to conclusions regarding lateness and melancholy in *Austerlitz* without recourse to the Romantic and to the *Kunstmärchen* form, as this chapter will discuss, they nonetheless provide an enhanced understanding of the novel's aesthetic attitude, such that, in Michael Hamburger's words, shapes grown familiar may yet reveal new and previously absent voices.[2] Narratorial self-conscious awareness of the forms of lateness and melancholy in *Austerlitz*, especially when read alongside the other novels examined in this study, suggests a clearer picture of the historical and geographical contingency of the novel's aesthetics and how this may indicate a latent potential for artistic renewal in a German and a European cultural context. Vestigial traces of the Romantic in *Austerlitz*, this chapter proposes, most clearly articulate this tension between national literature and European literature, which is so fundamental to melancholy cosmopolitan novels.

Sebald himself did not care to use the term 'novel' to describe his creative writing, preferring instead to refer to his works as 'Prosa' or 'Fiktion', as opposed to 'Romane'.[3] Nevertheless, *Austerlitz* is generally understood as the author's most novel-like work. Given that it de-emphasizes the confusion between fiction and (auto)biographical memoir, which

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[1] The term 'late Romantic' is understood here in the sense that the narrator is historically located after the German Romantic movement, rather than as anachronistically positioned towards the end of that period in the first decades of the 1800s. Nonetheless the late German Romantics' concerns with the tenuous nature of cultural unity, as well as their emphasis on the tension between the world of the everyday and irrational, supernatural projections of otherworldliness by a creative artist loom large in the narrator's manner in *Austerlitz*, as this chapter will show.

[2] The poet and literary critic Michael Hamburger (1924–2007) was not only a friend of Sebald's, he also translated two of Sebald's collections of poetry and appeared as a character in *Die Ringe des Saturn* (1995).

[3] See, for example, W. G. Sebald, 'Wildes Denken', in *Auf ungeheuer dünnem Eis: Gespräche 1971–2001*, ed. by Torsten Hoffman (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2011), p. 85.

characterizes his earlier prose works, *Austerlitz* is more like a 'real novel', as John Zilcosky argues, than *Schwindel. Gefühle* (1990), *Die Ausgewanderten* (1992), or *Die Ringe des Saturn* (1995).[4] Several posthumous reviews and accounts of Sebald have attempted to ascribe a certain mystical quality to the author and his work, variously alluding to his emergence onto the literary scene 'as if out of nowhere' as well as to his 'belonging, mysteriously, nowhere'.[5] If this is the case, at least in part, then it is the contention of this chapter that this is redolent of the mystical non-places and alternative fantastical realms of Romantic fairy tales, which ground *Austerlitz*, however subtly, in both a Germanic and a European context. Romantic forms in Sebald's final novel are reworked and subverted, refusing or unable to offer an immediate sense of resolution, redemption, or restitution, yet not entirely erasing the possibility of their future instantiation.[6]

Sebald and his œuvre may be – and, indeed, have been – construed in a variety of ways as late. In both his prose fiction and his critical works Sebald consistently understands and critiques European modernity as a late aftereffect of the Enlightenment notion of progress.[7] Stylistically, moreover, his work may be regarded as an example of late modernism, emerging historically at a late millennial moment, while also embodying a sense of second-generation (and thus late) postwar guilt.[8] Finally, given his untimely demise at the age of fifty-seven in December 2001, Sebald himself is late in a posthumous sense. Since his death, Sebald's personal library has been held at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach. Materials made available from this reveal that Sebald was aware of and engaging with the entangled ideas of lateness, melancholy, and their potential for articulating the cosmopolitan that this thesis adopts as its principal methodology. By unpacking Sebald's library, to paraphrase Benjamin, and by briefly examining the annotations and marginalia of the author's personal collection of books, a suggestive picture of the artist and intellectual at work may be gleaned, as well as new insights into Sebaldian lateness and the relevance of this study's approach and argument to Sebald's final novel. It should go without saying, and thus ought to be said, that archival discoveries such as these are not intended to establish vast generalities about the author and

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[4] See John Zilcosky, 'Lost and Found: Disorientation, Nostalgia and Holocaust Melodrama in Sebald's *Austerlitz*', in *Modern Language Notes*, 121 (2006), pp. 679–698 (pp. 685–687).

[5] See Schwartz, *The Emergence of Memory*, p. 18 and James Wood, 'W. G. Sebald: Reveries of a Solitary Walker', in *The Guardian*, 20 April 2013, respectfully.

[6] For a summary of the discourse around Sebald's writing as a form of restitution for language with particular reference to Benjaminian philosophy, see Nikolas Jan Preuschoff, 'Schreiben als Restitution der Sprache', in *Mit Walter Benjamin. Melancholie, Geschichte und Erzählen bei W. G. Sebald* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2015), pp. 307–336.

[7] See, for example, Long, *Image, Archive, Modernity*.

[8] For further discussion of this, see, for example, Crownshaw, *The Afterlives of Holocaust Memory*, pp. 41–116 especially.

works to which they refer. Indeed, it is not possible to be fully certain whether the markings or notations in these volumes were made by Sebald himself or inscribed by another hand altogether. However, these discoveries do offer granular novelties regarding the author's production of literary texts, alongside his engagement with other fictional, theoretical, and philosophical works. It certainly suggests Sebald as a European writer engaging with European forms and perspectives, while simultaneously remaining deeply-rooted in a German literary and philosophical tradition. Three volumes key to this study and its methodological approach that may be found in Sebald's *Nachlass* are Friedrich Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* (1874), Walter Benjamin's *Illuminationen* (1961), and Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (1967). The copies of the three volumes owned by Sebald are to varying degrees highlighted and marked by notes made over the years, dating back to Sebald's early university days. Significantly, in his 1964 edition of the Nietzsche text, the corners of two of the most heavily annotated pages of Nietzsche's 'Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben' are folded down, indicating that Sebald may have returned to these extracts and engaged with their content repeatedly. One marked-up passage in particular deals with the overwhelming burden of history and lateness, which is so relevant to Sebald's literary work and to this study:

> Jetzt regiert nicht mehr allein das Leben und bändigt das Wissen um die Vergangenheit: sondern alle Grenzpfähle sind umgerissen und alles was einmal war, stürzt auf den Menschen zu. So weit zurück es ein Werden gab, soweit zurück, ins Unendliche hinein sind auch alle Perspektiven verschoben. Ein solches unüberschaubares Schauspiel sah noch kein Geschlecht, wie es jetzt die Wissenschaft des universalen Werdens, die Historie, zeigt: freilich aber zeigt sie es mit der gefährlichen Kühnheit ihres Wahlspruches: fiat veritas pereat vita.[9]

Yet of even greater relevance to the present study are the three words written in the margin next to this particular highlighted passage: 'apokal. Historie. Angelus'. The abbreviation 'apokal.' in this annotation explicitly connects formulations of lateness from Kermode's work on modern modes of apocalyptic thought in his *The Sense of an Ending* with Nietzsche's theorisations of the overwhelming burden of prior literary works and Benjamin's melancholy

[9] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1964), p. 127. 'Now the demands of life alone no longer reign and exercise constraint on knowledge of the past: now all the frontiers have been torn down and all that has ever been rushes upon mankind. All perspectives have been shifted back to the beginning of all becoming, back into infinity. Such an immense spectacle as the science of universal becoming, history, now displays has never before been seen by any generation; though it displays it, to be sure, with the perilous daring of its motto: fiat veritas, pereat vita' [let truth prevail though life perish]. Translation taken from *Untimely Meditations*, pp. 77–78.

Angelus Novus, recalling Nietzsche's suggestion that backward-looking epigonal latecomers might achieve future artistic renewal and innovation via self-consciousness.[10]

Such discoveries in Sebald's annotations that suggestively connect with his novelistic praxis not only validate in part the methodological approach in this study; they also complicate the picture. This sustained Sebaldian elusiveness encapsulates what Lynn Wolff refers to in the recently published German-language handbook to Sebald's life and works as 'Sebalds Doppelperspektive als Beobachter der Literatur (Literaturwissenschaftler) […] und als productiver Teilnehmer an der Literatur (Schriftsteller)'.[11] As Wolff remarks, 'das Besondere an Sebalds Werken liegt darin, wie er solche meta-literarischen Fragen im literarischen Diskurs selbst (dar-)stellt'.[12] What follows in this chapter bears in mind such questions with respect to the kinds of expressions of and engagements with lateness that are present in Sebald's final novel, while examining what forms of melancholy emerge from this and considering the (meta-)literary questions posed and embodied by the self-consciously late and melancholy narrator of *Austerlitz*. Exhibiting a self-consciously late re-enactment of conceptions of the Romantic suffering artist, the narrative of *Austerlitz* also constitutes a reworking of Romantic *Kunstmärchen* conventions. Furthermore, if this may be construed as being exemplary of a literary aesthetic attitude emerging in European fiction at the turn of the millennium, as this study suggests, then *Austerlitz*'s late Romanticism and refashioning of the *Kunstmärchen* reveal how the particular Sebaldian form of melancholy cosmopolitanism expresses complications between Romantic nationalism on the one hand and a broader European context on the other. The aesthetic attitude of *Austerlitz* thereby engages with the troubled legacies of both the Romantic and the modern, while suggesting a latent future possibility for renewal.

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[10] It is worth noting that even only a few years after Sebald's untimely death, theorisations of his work in relation to Benjamin's were already being perceived as tired reformulations in some quarters. In an early piece of scholarship on Sebald, for example, Julia Hell takes the Angel of History as evoked by Sebald in his lectures on *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (1999) as a point of departure but prefaces her essay by warning that she is 'not proposing another reading of Sebald through the lens of Benjamin; on the contrary, I would like to find out what this cultural icon of the (academic) left – by now so worn out, so terribly fatigued – might be glossing over, if not concealing'. In the wake of the reams of subsequent Sebald scholarship engaging with these very notions (which, of course, includes this thesis), this statement has acquired a wry ambiguity: is the Angel of History, Benjamin, or Sebald himself the fatigued cultural icon? Interestingly, given this chapter's focus on the Romantic in Sebald's work, Hell also observes that 'Sebald claims the Romantic persona of an author who lives both in the present and in the past'. See Julia Hell, 'The Angel's Enigmatic Eyes, or The Gothic Beauty of Catastrophic History in W. G. Sebald's *Airwar and Literature*', in *Criticism*, 46:3 (2004), pp. 361–392 (pp. 361 and 380).

[11] 'Sebald's double perspective as observer of literature (literary scholar) […] and as a productive participant in literature (author)'. Lynn Wolff, 'Zur Sebald-Forschung', in *W. G. Sebald – Handbuch: Leben, Werk, Wirkung*, ed. by Claudia Öhlschläger and Michael Niehaus (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2017), pp. 312–318 (p. 316).

[12] 'The particular thing about Sebald's work is how, within the literary discourse, he both poses and embodies such meta-literary questions'. Lynn Wolff, 'Zur Sebald-Forschung', p. 316.

LATENESS

Several recent volumes of German and European literary history have concluded with Sebald, including Ben Hutchinson's work on *Lateness in Modern European Literature* (2016), which explicitly draws attention to this fact.[13] Especially given Sebald's international success, as Hutchinson remarks, he is regularly identified as 'something close to the *telos* of modern German – and, indeed, giving his wide-ranging concerns – European literature' in the twentieth century.[14] Michael Minden also argues, for example, that as that century comes to its end, Sebald's work stands as an attempt to 'redeem both the false meaningfulness that attaches to information in the computer age and the false authenticity that attaches to the representations of the world mediated through technology'.[15] By looking back to earlier times, Sebald's work offers, Minden argues, 'the possibility that the *Erlebnis* of existing in the fallen world might indeed again become, if treated with the appropriate aesthetic and cultural respect, the kind of *Erfahrung* that makes survival in it valuable'.[16] *Erlebnis* here is understood as the more immediate impact of external events upon the mind and memory in the creation of internal events, whereas *Erfahrung* is understood as lessons later learned, shared, and communicated, based on prior experience.[17] As such, Sebald's œuvre acknowledges the true nature of late modernity via its aesthetic and thematic preoccupations, as well as via its late historical perspective. Yet it also suggests a means of existing within it, living through it, and even existing beyond it.

The question of whether this constitutes a form of redemption, as Minden has it, or restitution, as other scholars have argued, is a pertinent one to the present study.[18] On a

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[13] See, for example, Andreas Huyssen, 'Grey Zones of Remembrance', in *A New History of German Literature*, ed. by David E. Wellbery, Judith Ryan, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, Anton Kaes, Joseph Leo Koerner, and Dorothea E. von Mücke (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 970–976; Nicholas Boyle, *A Very Short Introduction to German Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 157–159; and Michael Minden, *Modern German Literature* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), p. 231. Cited in Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 340, n. 23.
[14] Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 334.
[15] Minden, *Modern German Literature*, p. 231.
[16] Minden, *Modern German Literature*, p. 231.
[17] For further discussion of this with particular reference to Benjaminian thought, see Minden, *Modern German Literature*, pp. 183–189. Similarly to Hans-Georg Gadamer's later understanding in *Truth and Method* (1960) of experience as a dialectical process of learning over time, which synthesises negative unpleasantnesses and positive affirmations to produce wisdom that may be transmitted through tradition across generations, Benjamin suggests that the immediate inner experience of *Erlebnis* was fragmented and isolated, in contrast to the accretion of truth and transferrable wisdom that constitutes *Erfahrung*. Gadamer also credits Hegel with testifying to this distinction, since 'with him the element of historicity comes into its own. He conceives experience as scepticism in action'. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 348.
[18] See, for example, Baxter, Henitiuk, and Hutchinson, eds., *A Literature of Restitution*, as well as Sebald's own thoughts on 'Ein Versuch der Restitution' in literature presented at the opening of the *Literaturhaus* in Stuttgart: W. G. Sebald, 'Zerstreute Reminiszenzen: Gedanken zur Eröffnung eines Stuttgarter Hauses', in *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 18 November 2001.

moral or ethical level, as Russell Kilbourn argues, Sebald's literary work constitutes a form of restitution as a secular alternative to notions of redemption, given its restoration of agency to the historically marginalized, while refusing to intervene in a manner that would compromise their otherness.[19] However, as far as literary aesthetics are concerned, this study contends that it may be possible to attain a 'post-memorial' form of a literature of restitution, which is complemented by the redemption of damaged literary forms, or at least gestures towards the possibility of this. Whereas, when read in isolation *Austerlitz* articulates an apocalyptic and vertiginous sense of lateness, a reading of the novel as part of a collective of melancholy cosmopolitan works opens up the more optimistic possibility of the kind of aesthetic redemption suggested by Minden. By paying attention to the late and epigonal Romantic aesthetics in *Austerlitz*, such as parallels with the suffering Romantic artist exhibited by the narrator and by his accounts of Austerlitz's experiences, as well as reworkings and subversions of Romantic engagement with the natural world and with ruins in the narrative, this may be glimpsed more clearly in Sebald's final novel.

First, however, it will be useful to establish the ways in which Sebald's literary works may be understood as late, as well as the various implications of this. Echoing Minden's evaluation of the subjectivity of the Romantic attitude in terms of seeing oneself as of a melancholy disposition, or even a tragic victim of history, Sebald's work is suspended between this world and the next – historically located, yet simultaneously out of time and place.[20] This results in is a pervasive sense in Sebald's work of historical rupture due to his late temporal position of hovering ambiguously over the ending of modernity, as Hutchinson describes it.[21] Drawing on the theorisations of Edward Said and Theodor Adorno, Hutchinson observes that, while Sebald himself did not have the chance to develop a particular late style in the works he produced towards the untimely end of his life and literary career, his œuvre in its entirety can in fact be understood as encapsulating the phenomenon of late style. That is to say, the style of Sebald's work can be understood as one which is always late.[22] Just as for Said, 'lateness is being at the end, fully conscious, full of memory, and very (even preternaturally) aware of the present', such a conscious awareness of the author's historical position – and by extension that of his ambiguously autobiographical

[19] See Kilbourn, 'The Question of Genre', p. 261.
[20] See Minden, *Modern German Literature*, p. 33.
[21] See Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 335.
[22] See Hutchinson, *Die dialektische Imagination*, p. 170: 'Damit sei nicht behauptet, dass Sebald einen Spätstil *hatte* – dass etwa eine klare Linie zwischen seinem Frühwerk und seinem Spätwerk zu ziehen wäre –, sondern dass seine Prosa gleichsam ein Spätstil *ist*.' [Emphasis in original]. 'That is not to claim that Sebald *had* a late style – that some clear line may be drawn between his early work and his late work – but rather that his prose *is* a late style, so to speak'.

narrators – is present across Sebald's œuvre.[23] This manifests itself principally as *Fortschrittskritik*, a critical position towards the Enlightenment notion of progress. From Sebald's millennial perspective, modernity is viewed as a poorly conceived and catastrophic excrescence of the Enlightenment; historically speaking, the period of modernity itself is thus construed as late. Sebald himself may furthermore be understood as a writer who is out-of-time, so to speak, in that he was producing work which is aesthetically modernist but located historically after modernism. In much the same way that lateness in *Dora Bruder* and *Sefarad* is not only historically inflected but also aesthetic, 'his [Sebald's] engagement *with* lateness is also an enactment *of* lateness', as Hutchinson remarks.[24] For Hutchinson, positioning Sebald as a millennial modernist both enables and requires reflection on the postmodern historical perspective afforded by the imminent close of the twentieth century and on the sustained *longue durée* of lateness in European literature. That Sebald's prose is not only about lateness, but is also an act of writing as lateness itself, is the chief cause of its characteristic sense of vertigo, Hutchinson argues, such that Sebald's texts are cut off from the past they thematise, while simultaneously being determined by it:

> The uncanny, vertiginous feeling afforded by Sebald's prose is predicated both on the narrator's distance from the events and individuals he describes and on the collapsing of this distance, where the past returns to haunt the present […] Rendered dizzy and passive by the burden of modernity before him, the 'late modern' writer can only become busy and active though his own sleight of hand, through making his lateness the precondition – and thus in some sense also the subject – of his literature.[25]

The vertigo of Sebald's millennial moment, as well as the double sense of lateness whereby he views modernity as late from a simultaneously late historical position, confers a sense of gravity and pathos on his œuvre. The pessimistic conclusion that may be drawn from this is, as Hutchinson observes, a reconceptualisation of 'literature as condemned by its own machinery, by its own accumulated weight of experience. In short: literature itself, not just its exponent, emerges as always already late'.[26] By building on these observations and pursuing a reading of *Austerlitz*'s Romantic inflections, this chapter aims to uncover further insights into how these forms of lateness and epigonality might suggest a future of 'busy and active' literary production, since, as Hutchinson points out, 'literary modernity emerges in

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[23] Said, *On Late Style*, p. 14. Cited in Hutchinson, *Die dialektische Imagination*, p. 170
[24] Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 336.
[25] Hutchinson, *Lateness*, pp. 337–338.
[26] Hutchinson, *Lateness*, pp. 338.

the wake of romanticism'.[27] Thus, if melancholy cosmopolitanism emerges from lateness, then to fully appreciate the Sebaldian form of melancholy cosmopolitanism in *Austerlitz*, attention must be paid not only to the narrator's late modernist tendencies, but also to his late reworkings of tropes and conventions of that great precursor to the modern, the Romantic. If lateness is indeed the precondition for the narrator's literature in *Austerlitz*, then his aesthetic legerdemain is inflected by the Romantic just as much as it is by the modern.

Modernism in Western European literature emerges crucially after the Romantic period, such that, as Gordon McMullan contends, 'if German Romanticism was responsible for the invention of late style, then German modernism was in a sense responsible for its reinvention'.[28] This is suggestive of an intimate, if not fundamental, connection between the two periods and literary movements, which resonates back and forth across the centuries, in spite of the discrete categorisations of the Romantic and the modern. Modern lateness, it implies, may contain vestigial Romantic lateness. As Nicholas Saul remarks, 'twentieth-century writers turn to Romanticism partly because they are self-consciously modernist writers, and the modernist's first move is creatively to experiment with received literary forms'.[29] As a self-consciously late modernist at the close of the twentieth century, then, Sebald looks back at what has come before him, enacting a form of late modernism in his writing. Yet, following McMullan and Saul, might not the sense of epigonal lateness in *Austerlitz* also have roots in a German Romantic tradition, with the narrator's – and, indeed, Sebald's – view of modernity finding its counterpart in the Romantics' dissatisfaction with the world of the everyday, as well as in their shared scepticism and repudiation of Enlightenment values? If so, then what are the implications for Sebaldian lateness in *Austerlitz* in particular, and for this novel's particular form of melancholy cosmopolitanism? How do such Romantic lateness and melancholy manifest themselves in the novel? And what implications do the entangled legacies of Enlightenment cosmopolitan thought and Romantic nationalist tendencies have for the novel if it is understood as part of a literary cosmopolitan collective? Given the fragmented subjectivity prevalent in an historically postmodern age, Sebald's refashioning of the Romantic from a late modern perspective appears not only appropriate but inevitable, especially since the narrator of *Austerlitz* draws on the figure of the Romantic artist, out of whose reliance on and emphasis of metaphorical

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[27] Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 41.
[28] Gordon McMullan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 277.
[29] Nicolas Saul, 'The Reception of German Romanticism in the Twentieth Century', in *The Literature of German Romanticism*, ed. by Dennis F. Mahoney (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2009), pp. 327–359 (p. 334).

representations of the natural world, ageing, and decay, the notion of late style itself originally grew.[30]

Although Sebald's millennial moment and the subsequent lateness-induced vertigo of his perspective on the past are clearly relevant to his engagement with the legacy of the Holocaust as a second generation postwar German writer, David Kleinberg-Levin suggests there is also a relationship between the promise of redemption in Sebald's aesthetics of resistance and the idealism of early German Romanticism. Kleinberg-Levin claims that 'in Sebald's post-Holocaust inheritance of that cast of mind, the tragic dimension of that dream – the scepticism and despair already felt by his illustrious predecessors, Hölderlin, Novalis, Schelling – has turned much darker'.[31] This is already suggestive of the Romantic aesthetics of epigonal gloom in *Austerlitz*, which this chapter takes as the subject of its investigations. Referring to the sense of Sebald's moral compulsion as a writer as 'the particular guilty conscience of the latecomer', Kleinberg-Levin also describes Sebald's work in its totality as 'writing in belatedness'.[32] While this study distances it from the implied sense of chronological normativity in the term 'belated', Kleinberg-Levin is correct to characterize Sebald's work as inflected by lateness. For Kleinberg-Levin, this is stimulated by the feeling of an intimate connection to events which neither Sebald nor his narrators directly experienced. As Sebald notes in his lectures on *Luftkrieg und Literatur*: '[Es ist] mir bis heute, wenn ich Fotographien oder dokumentarische Filme aus dem Krieg sehe, als stammte ich, sozusagen, von ihm ab und als fiele von dorther, von diesen von mir gar nicht erlebten Schrecknissen, ein Schatten auf mich, unter dem ich nie ganz herauskommen werde'.[33] This affirms the notion that Sebald's œuvre is separated from yet unavoidably determined by earlier events in the twentieth century, which, as is the case with all of the novels examined in this thesis, constitutes a fundamental component of their melancholy aesthetics. Sebald's writing is motivated moreover by an attention to the potential for redemption in the work of remembrance. However, given the late vertigo of Sebald's historical position, as Kleinberg-Levin suggests, the hope and promise of the German Romantics have retreated into allegory and any promise of redemption in his work remains difficult to discern under the long shadow of melancholy. Yet, by understanding these Romantic inflections as part of

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[30] For further discussion of this, see Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 6.
[31] David Kleinberg-Levin, *Redeeming Words: Language and the Promise of Happiness in the Stories of Döblin and Sebald* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2013), p. 9
[32] Kleinberg-Levin, *Redeeming Words*, p. 94.
[33] W. G. Sebald, *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999), p. 77. 'Yet to this day, when I see photographs or documentary films dating from the war, I feel as if I were its child, as if these horrors I did not experience cast a shadow over me' W. G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, trans. by Anthea Bell (London: Vintage, 2011), p. 71.

a self-consciously late and melancholy collection of literary works that collectively constitute a form of literary cosmopolitanism in European literature, the present study as a whole argues that the potential for future aesthetic renewal is discernible.

Before examining in detail the Romantic forms and conventions in *Austerlitz*, however, it will be helpful to briefly contextualize Romanticism in relation to German and to European culture, since this is highly relevant to the novel's form of melancholy cosmopolitanism. Though far from unique to the German context, Romanticism nonetheless acquired a particular character within German literature, becoming a more politically charged and longer lasting movement than in other national cultural contexts. Its rise alongside the rapid expansion of a reading public within Europe coincided with a flourishing of Germanic literature in the second half of the eighteenth century. Occurring alongside the modernisation of the publishing industry, these events combined to demarcate the emergence of what Minden terms 'a self-consciously aspirational literary culture'.[34] Romanticism, however, is not only an historical period or literary movement, it is also a literary typology. Laying out foundational principles for understanding the Romantic, Rüdiger Safranski emphasises both the importance of being aware of when the movement emerged historically, while simultaneously not confining it solely to one specific temporal context. He epigrammatically declares that 'Romanticism is an epoch; the Romantic is a disposition of mind that is not limited to an epoch. It found its most complete expression in the Romantic period, but it is not confined there: the Romantic is still with us today'.[35] While Friedrich Schlegel is generally credited with first using the term Romantic to broadly describe literature that depicted the emotional as an imaginative form,[36] Safranski draws in particular on Novalis's 1798 definition of the Romantic to ground his claims: 'Indem ich dem Gemeinen einen hohen Sinn, dem Gewöhnlichen ein geheimnissvolles Ansehn, dem Bekannten die Würde des Unbekannten, dem Endlichen einen Unendlichen Schein gebe, so romantisiere ich'.[37] Romanticism as an aesthetic practice continued well beyond the 1850s, informing the literary work of artists centuries later, such as Sebald.[38] Indeed, as suggested

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[34] Minden, *Modern German Literature*, p. 5.

[35] Rüdiger Safranski, *Romanticism: A German Affair*, trans. by Robert E . Goodwin (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2014), p. xiii.

[36] See Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften*, ed. by Wolfdietrich Rasch (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1958), pp. 37–38.

[37] Novalis, 'Vorarbeiten zu verschiedenen Fragmentsammlungen 1798', in *Novalis: Werke, Tagebücher und Briefe von Friedrich von Hardenberg Vol. 2.*, ed. by Hans-Joachim Mähl (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1987) pp. 311–424 (p. 334). 'By endowing the commonplace with a higher meaning, the ordinary with a mysterious respect, the known with the dignity of the unknown, the finite with the appearance of the infinite, I make it Romantic'.

[38] For other recent introductions to broadly European as well as specifically German Romanticism, see Charles Larmore, *The Romantic Legacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Richard Eldridge, *The Persistence of Romanticism: Essays in Philosophy and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and George S.

above, the dissatisfaction with reality expressed in Novalis's explication of Romanticism is not too dissimilar to Sebald's view of modernity and its aftermath. This is further indicative of the resonances between Romanticism and the concerns of late modern writers, recalling their mutual distrust of and dissatisfaction with Enlightenment notions of progress.

Azade Seyhan further underscores such connections by noting that 'the trials of our modernity still carry the not so distant echoes of German Romanticism's anxiety for a world in which individuals, communities and nations struggle for freedom and agency, as they face the seemingly insurmountable challenges of consumerism, intolerance, lack of ethical vision, religious fanaticism and the twilight of creative reason and empowering art'.[39] Implying a sense of cultural lateness with this idea of the twilight of art and reason, Seyhan further solidifies points of resonance between Romanticism and modernism at the turn of the millennium. Engagement with the Romantic, this suggests, therefore acknowledges similarities and continuities between it and the modern, while also avoiding the trap of reading Romanticism as merely anti-modern, conservative, or reactionary. Modernism emerges, after all, in Romanticism's wake, while both constitute in their own discrete ways responses to the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, it must also be acknowledged that much of the bogus grandeur of the National Socialist movement derived its significance and sense of legitimacy from the German Romantic tradition via its folkloric focus and insistence on a mystical, almost spiritual connection between the German people and the land as an organic nation state. Recent scholarship, however, emphatically situates German Romanticism as a contributing factor in modern European life and culture. 'German Romanticism was a modern movement engaged in a modern critique of modernity', as Margarete Kohlenbach emphatically affirms.[40] While modernism is ultimately founded on a utopian idea of universal truths, one of the basic tenets of the Romantic is what Minden describes as 'a notion of ineffable truth touched by feeling but not accessible to reason or even words in any direct sense'.[41] This fundamental unknowability of universal truths is often expressed in Romantic literature through a fascination with the emotional and the irrational. In a post-Romantic world lying in the wake of the cataclysm of European modernity, and in particular the

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Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[39] Azade Seyhan, 'What is Romanticism, and where did it come from?', in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, ed. by Nicholas Saul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1–20 (p. 19). For further discussion of these ideas, see also: Azade Seyhan, *Representation and its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

[40] Margarete Kohlenbach, 'Transformations of German Romanticism, 1830–2000', in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, ed. by Nicholas Saul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 257–280 (p. 260).

[41] Minden, *Modern German Literature*, p. 33.

Holocaust, this sense of unknowability persists in Sebald's work and in the *Fortschrittskritik* evinced within it. The Romantic search for expression of the self through symbols in landscape and the aestheticisation of nature, as well as the Romantic prestige of grief and death, are at once preserved, repurposed, and subverted in Sebald's prose. In the imagery that emerges across his œuvre of cut-down trees and bleak bodies of water, desolate towns and derelict industry, washed-up sea life and captive animals, it is clear that the natural world for Sebald belongs to history. As such, the Sebaldian Romantic, just as much as the modern, is located 'after nature', with landscape and nature serving as inspiration and metaphorical interlocutor in Sebald's attempt to create a literature of restitution.[42]

It must be noted, however, that Saul cautions against the tendency on the part of later writers, scholars, and thinkers 'to exploit German Romanticism according to selective and partial understandings of the movement in the service of contemporary agendas, which relate to crises of some kind for which an answer is sought in the Romantic Heritage'.[43] While this study's conceptualisation of melancholy cosmopolitanism in European fiction might, in its attempt to imagine future potentialities for European culture and its national traditions, arguably constitute just such a contemporary agenda, this chapter's approach of examining the late and melancholy reworkings of German Romanticism in *Austerlitz* are justified, not least because, as Saul himself later acknowledges, 'the Romantic crisis is merely the beginning of the still unsolved modern crisis'.[44] This suggests not only that repeated returns to the past by later writers are indicative of a profound affinity between the Romantic and the modern, but also that lateness in modernism – and, perhaps, *a fortiori* lateness in late modernism – has its origins, at least in part, in Romanticism. The Romantic is inherent to Sebald's aesthetics in *Austerlitz* and, rather than eschewing the complications between the legacy of German Romantic nationalism and a broader European context, this chapter will show that this is a fundamental element to the novel's melancholy cosmopolitan aesthetics. To recognize Sebald's late Romanticism, then, is not only to better understand the cultural and historical connections and constitutive tensions within German and European literature, but also to realise that *Austerlitz* may be understood as exemplary of a particular mode of writing in European fiction thanks to its melancholy *Kunstmärchen* echoes narrated by a self-consciously late and epigonal incarnation of figure of the suffering Romantic artist.

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[42] The phrase 'after nature' is lifted directly from Sebald's first notable publication, the extended poem 'Nach der Natur', which clearly expresses his understanding of modernity as a catastrophic result of Enlightenment progress. See W. G. Sebald, *Nach der Natur* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989).
[43] Nicholas Saul, 'The Reception of German Romanticism', pp. 327–328.
[44] Nicholas Saul, 'The Reception of German Romanticism', p. 358.

One of Sebald's English translators, Anthea Bell, has explicitly noted the author's great debt to the poetry and style of the Romantics, who themselves sought to evoke the art and beauty of a pre-Enlightenment age.[45] In a sense, then, Bell's observation already points towards the narrator of *Austerlitz*'s epigonal sense of coming late, since it suggests imitation of those artists who already saw themselves as imitators and latecomers.[46] Several scholars have also noted Romantic tendencies in Sebald's work, although none has yet explicitly connected this to an engagement with literary lateness in European literature. Drawing on analyses of Sebald's *Fortschittskritik*, for example, Gabriele Eckart affirms that 'Sebald's literary work, with its efforts to dissolve binary oppositions and its attack on instrumental reason, must be read in the tradition of literature that attempted to break down the enlightenment discourse of instrumental rationality. Therefore, Sebald's aesthetic is […] Romantic'.[47] Such a reading is indicative of how the Romantic may be understood as an intrinsic component of Sebald's lateness, while also highlighting the connections between Sebald's late modernist critique of the Enlightenment and that of the German Romantics. His intimate affiliations with conventions of German Romanticism, such as the figure of the solitary wanderer, the tragic dignity of metaphysical angst, and an appreciation of (often deliberately unfinished) literary fragments as a conscious creative endeavour, are further evidence of this.[48] Aesthetic connections are often evoked between Sebald's work and the Romantic tradition, which is exemplified by the proliferation in most of the secondary literature on Sebald of 'terms such as *eerie*, *sublime*, *ghostly*, *spectral*, and above all *haunting*', as James Chandler notes.[49] Sebald's work and reception are indeed haunted by many ghosts, some of which are Romantic. As Manfred Jurgensen notes, 'much of Sebald's fictional prose does retain overtones of Romantic folktales and traditional stories associated with home,

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[45] See Anthea Bell, 'On Translating W. G. Sebald', in *The Anatomist of Melancholy: Essays in Memory of W. G. Sebald*, ed by Rüdiger Görner (Munich: Iudicium, 2003), pp. 11–18 (p. 12).

[46] As Heinrich Heine observed in 1833, 'Was war aber die romantische Schule in Deutschland? Sie war nichts anders als die Wiedererweckung der Poesie des Mittelalters'. See Heinrich Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, ed. by Karl-Maria Guth (Berlin: Hofenberg, 2017), p. 8.

[47] Gabriele Eckart, 'Against "Cartesian Rigidity" in W. G. Sebald's Reception of Borges', in *W. G. Sebald: Schreiben Ex Patria / Expatriate Writing*, ed. by Gerhard Fischer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 509–521 (p. 519). Eckart adds the caveat that such an understanding of Sebald's aesthetics entails a need to 'define Romanticism not as the desire for a restorative utopia identified with the Middle Ages, but in the sense of the early Romantic poets as a "program that allows the members of society to free themselves at least momentarily from the repressive alienating intellectual pressures of modernity"'. This quotation is taken from Jochen Schulte-Sasse, 'The Concept of Literary Criticism in German Romanticism' in *A History of German Literary Criticism: 1730–1980*, ed. by Peter Uwe Hohendahl (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 99–178 (p. 114).

[48] For further discussion of these particular constitutive aspects of Romanticism, see *Romantic Prose Fiction*, ed. by Gerald Gillespie, Manfred Engel, and Bernard Dieterle (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008), pp 41–52, 122–138, and 452–475.

[49] See James Chandler, 'About Loss: W.G. Sebald's Romantic Art of Memory', in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:1 (2003), pp. 235–262 (p. 243). Emphasis in original.

school, childhood and adolescence', while also acknowledging that on a deeper level 'much of his fictional and critical writing is strongly reminiscent of German Romanticism'.[50] Reaffirming a sense of literary works as existing in a fluid and resonant literary continuum, instead of in separate and strictly delineated epochs, Karin Bauer suggests aesthetic connections between the Romantic and the modern in *Austerlitz*, noting that 'the novel's rich texture derives from the myriad allusions to literature and cultural history, and, more concretely, from the multifarious references to Baroque, Romantic, and modern literary tropes, traditions, and figures'.[51]

Some scholars are, however, more critical of Sebald's reliance on the Romantic. Gerhard Fischer, for example, acknowledges 'Sebald's firm commitment to the Romantic tradition', but suggests that this may be seen as an ideological aberration by some and as an inauthentic emotionally self-styled kitsch by others.[52] Yet, for Peter Morgan, Sebald's melancholy reflections derive much of their seriousness and their legitimacy precisely from their sustained engagement with the Romantic. Morgan claims that Sebald's 'particular linguistic register draws on a Romantic nihilism which was much stronger in the German tradition and powerfully influenced later currents of German cultural pessimism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.[53] Such is the extent to which this Romantic influence is articulated in Sebald's œuvre, that, as Morgan goes on to suggest, 'Sebald takes the melancholic self-stylisation of his Romantic forebears to an extreme; his pessimism […] repeats established German cultural patterns of frustrated destructiveness and espousal of myth', while his texts also 'evince an *Endzeitstimmung* and a pervasive imagery of apocalypse which situates them clearly in a particular German literary cultural continuum'.[54] Through such established cultural patterns and images, Sebald's literary works encapsulate a highly literary malaise that emerges out of his affiliation with German culture, rather than through

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[50] Manfred Jurgensen, 'Creative Reflection: W. G. Sebald's Critical Essays and Literary Fiction', in *W. G. Sebald: Schreiben Ex Patria / Expatriate Writing*, ed. by Gerhard Fischer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 413–446 (pp. 418 and 419).

[51] Karin Bauer, 'The Dystopian Entwinements of Histories and Identities in W. G. Sebald's Austerlitz', in *W. G. Sebald: History, Memory, Trauma*, ed. by Scott Denham and Mark McCulloh (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), pp. 233–250 (p. 234).

[52] Gerhard Fischer, 'Introduction: W. G. Sebald's Expatriate Experience and His Literary Beginnings', in *W. G. Sebald: Schreiben Ex Patria / Expatriate Writing*, ed. by Gerhard Fischer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 15–24 (p. 23)

[53] Peter Morgan, 'Literature and National redemption in W. G. Sebald's On the Natural History of Destruction', in *W. G. Sebald: Schreiben Ex Patria / Expatriate Writing*, ed. by Gerhard Fischer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 213–229 (p. 217).

[54] Morgan, 'Literature and National redemption', p. 217. See also, Peter Morgan, 'The Sign of Saturn: Melancholy, Homelessness and Apocalypse in W.G. Sebald's Prose Narratives', in *German Life and Letters*, 58:1 (2005), pp. 75–92, in which Morgan also significantly identifies Sebald as the latest in a long line of 'Romantic nihilists' who exhibited a 'cultural pessimism in which everything is interpreted under the sign of destruction and disorder' (pp. 86–87).

a form of retrospective identification with Holocaust victims. On both a linguistic and a thematic level, this gestures towards a clear connection between Sebald's reworkings of the Romantic and the sense of ending – the *Endzeitstimmung* noted by Morgan – articulated in his work through his vertiginous millennial lateness. Sebald not only positions himself in a German literary and cultural continuum, but self-consciously positions himself at what is perceived to be this tradition's *Endzeit*, given his late historical position at the end of the twentieth century. As such, Sebald's engagement with the Romantic – in particular through resonances in his work with the figure of the suffering Romantic artist – intensifies the sense of lateness and melancholy loss in his works.

Sebald's prose works frequently feature artists or scholars, such as Max Aurach in *Die Ausgewanderten* and Austerlitz himself, who fulfil the role of the narrator or are occasionally the subject of the narration. These Sebaldian narrator figures frequently mirror a Romantic model of an artist who values displacement or wandering, as well as suffering, in the production of their creative works. Indeed, several scholars have noted how the narrator figures in Sebald's work establish themselves as Romantic artists.[55] As Mary Cosgrove observes, Sebald draws on a strain of Romantic melancholy in constructing his narrators as 'a man of sensibility or *Weltschmerzler* who is able to negotiate his affective existence between introversion, sentimentalism, and a more worldly perspective that enables, through imaginative projection, humanitarian empathy with the sufferings of others'.[56] These narrators and characters draw on the Romantic notion that suffering or madness is instrumental in the blossoming of creativity and imagination, as well as recalling the wanderings and journeys recounted in the earlier German Romantic works of writers such as Ludwig Tieck and Novalis, for example, in which a journey's destination is deemed to be of less significance than the road travelled and experiences made along the way.[57] For Peter Fritzsche, the suffering and itinerancy of the artist in Romantic literature constitutes a response to a perceived historical rupture, which recalls Sebald's late historical position, from which his narrators look to the past, remaining separated from it and yet beholden to it. Sebald's reconfiguration of the German Romantic artist who wanders and suffers in

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[55] See, for example, Richard Sheppard, 'Dexter-Sinister: Some observations on Decrypting the Mors Code in the work of W. G. Sebald', in *Journal of European Studies*, 35:4 (2005), pp. 419–463; Lynn Wolff, 'W. G. Sebald: A "Grenzgänger" of the 20th/21st Century', in *Eurostudia – Revue Transatlantique de Recherche sur L'Europe*, 7:1-2 (2011), pp. 191–198; and Fridolin Schley, *Kataloge der Wahrheit: Zur Inszenierung von Autorschaft bei W. G. Sebald* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012).

[56] Cosgrove, *Born under Auschwitz*, p. 153.

[57] In Novalis's unfinished fragment novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1800), for example, the eponymous protagonist, a young medieval poet, undertakes a journey, during which he is instructed in the poetic arts, and falls in love. See Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987).

Austerlitz, and his subsequent melancholy regarding an irrecoverably distant past, emerge out of an just such an appreciation of historical lateness. Indeed, as Fritzsche argues, the qualities exhibited by the suffering itinerant Romantic manifest themselves in 'a deepening sense of melancholy, a feeling of disconnection with the past, a growing sense of dread of the future, and uncertainty over the capacity to act'.[58] While redemptive visions or sensations of optimism are only suggested in the most oblique fashion in Sebald's work, and while the Romantic artist is envisioned as one who must suffer and remain condemned to endless displacement, itinerancy, and exile, it is nevertheless the contention of this chapter that late reworkings of Romantic conventions most clearly indicate *Austerlitz*'s latent potential for futurity and renewal.

The Romantic notion of redemption or return through wandering and suffering are taken up and nuanced in *Austerlitz* through the construction of the novel's protagonist, as well as its narrator, as narrative figures reminiscent of the Romantic artist. The parallels between the two figures are clear: the narrator's remediation of Austerlitz's account of his investigation into his family's past mirrors Austerlitz's interminable research on architectural history, his tragic never-to-be-completed project.[59] The narrator's status as a wandering and suffering Romantic artist is prefigured towards the beginning of the novel and then most clearly implied towards its close, as if he has inherited the mantle of Romanticism from Austerlitz as he begins to write the narrative of *Austerlitz* following the protagonist's departure. In the opening sentence of the novel, the narrator frames the journeys he makes across Europe in the narrative that follows in a distinctly mysterious Romantic manner, claiming that he travels 'teilweise zu Studienzwecken, teilweise aus anderen, mir selber nicht recht erfindlichen Gründen' (*A*. p. 1)[60]. Following their initial encounter in Antwerp and a period of twenty years where the two men fall out of touch, Austerlitz and the narrator unexpectedly cross paths once more in the saloon bar of the Great Eastern Hotel in London.

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[58] Peter Fritzsche, 'Spectres of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity', in *The American Historical Review*, 106:5 (2001), pp. 1587–1618 (p. 1592).

[59] It is worth noting here that, aside from observing the much-fêted elusively autobiographical narration in his novels, it is necessary to clarify the nature of the narrator's remediation of Austerlitz's story and confront the question of the appropriation of Jewish victims' stories in Sebald's work. There is a potential tendency towards an identification of the German with the figure of the Jewish other that emerges over the course of *Austerlitz* in particular. However, as Anne Fuchs has noted, the self-conscious and self-reflexive style of Sebald's narrative prevents this identification between the German narrator and the Jewish victim from occurring. See, Anne Fuchs, *Die Schmerzenspuren der Geschichte*, pp. 28–32. Specifically, for further discussion of German – Jewish relations in *Austerlitz*, see Taberner, 'German Nostalgia?'; Brad Prager, 'The Good German as Narrator', in *New German Critique*, 96 (2005), pp. 75–102; and Mary Cosgrove, 'The Anxiety of German Influence: Affiliation, Rejection, and Jewish Identity in W. G. Sebald's Work', in *German Memory Contests: The Quest for Identity in Literature, Film, and Discourse since 1990*, ed. by Anne Fuchs, Mary Cosgrove, and Georg Grote (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2006), pp. 229–252.

[60] 'Partly for study purposes, partly for other reasons which were never entirely clear to me' (*A*. p.9).

The narrator's reason for travelling to London in the first place, however, is actually to visit an ophthalmologist following the temporary loss of sight in his right eye. He is both worried at his loss of sight, but also imagines a 'Vision der Erlösung, in der ich mich, befreit von dem ewigen Schreiben- und Lesenmüssen, in einem Korbsessel in einem Garten sitzen sah, umgeben von einer konturlosen, nur an ihren schwachen Farben noch zu erkennenden Welt' (*A*, p. 56).[61] Evoking the image of an operatic diva given a tincture of belladonna to make her eyes shine on stage, but which renders her unable to see, the narrator compares himself to an artist suffering for their art, while also suggesting a sense of imminent ending and artistic inadequacy in his own work through '[die] Falschheit des schönen Scheins und [die] Gefahr des vorzeitigen Erlöschens' (*A*. p. 56).[62] With a sense of relief, he imagines the satisfying conclusion he will arrive at following the end of his creative toils: a comfortable chair in a garden, surrounded by nature in all its blurred glory, faded echoes of Romantic wildness, which he is unable to properly experience. If suffering may lead to a sense of fulfilment or reconciliation for the narrator, then it is only in a vague and domesticated natural setting. This is suggestive of a self-conception as an epigonal latecomer unable to attain the ecstatic heights reached, or at least striven for, by earlier Romantics. For the narrator, nature represents freedom from work, from the artistry to which he is bound, but its wildness is lost and any sense of freedom remains faded and unachieved. Though the Romantic is gestured towards here, sublime respite or reconciliation is muted and unachievable. The eye specialist the narrator later visits diagnoses him, not with a degenerative eye condition as he first feared, but with a temporary disability caused by a bubble of clear liquid formed on the macula of his eye. All the doctor is able to tell him of this apparently mysterious ailment is 'daß sie fast ausschließlich auftrete bei Männern mittleren Alters, die zuviel mit Schreiben und Lesen beschäftigt seien' (*A*, p. 59).[63] It is difficult to discern whether this suffering may lead to any transcendent understandings on the narrator's part, but as a reader and a writer, he is certainly constructed here in a Romantic vein as one who suffers for his work and his creative pursuits. It is this, moreover, which inadvertently brings him back into contact with Austerlitz.

It is not only the unnamed narrator of the novel, but also Austerlitz himself, who is constructed as a figure who echoes the suffering and wandering Romantic artist, distinctly expressing a sense of lateness and epigonality in the narrator's account of events. From their

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[61] 'Vision of release in which I saw myself, free of the constant compulsion to read and write, sitting in a wicker chair in a garden, surrounded by a world of indistinct shapes' (*A*, p. 48).
[62] 'The falseness of beautiful appearance and the danger of its premature extinction'.
[63] 'That it occurred almost exclusively in middle-aged men who spent too much time reading and writing' (*A*, pp. 51–2).

initial encounter in the waiting room of the central station in Antwerp, Austerlitz with his rucksack and boots, and later his insomnia, his recollections of meandering around Europe, and his inhospitable house on Alderney Street in London, is marked out as an uprooted figure. The self-dramatizing pathos of Austerlitz's perception of creativity as a painful process endows him with traits redolent of the figure of a Romantic wanderer and a suffering artist. Upon encountering difficulties with his research and writing – occupations which he previously enjoyed – Austerlitz announces the physical and mental suffering and anguish he experienced in response to the work he produces as an architectural historian: 'je größer die Mühe, die ich über Monate hinweg an dieses Vorhaben wandte, desto kläglicher dünkten mich die Ergebnisse […] als drängte eine seit langem in mir bereits fortwirkende Krankheit zum Ausbruch […] Wäre damals einer gekommen, mich wegzuführen auf eine Hinrichtungsstätte, ich hätte alles ruhig mit mir geschehen lassen, ohne ein Wort zu sagen' (*A*, pp. 179, 182).[64] As Chandler notes, Austerlitz is 'vaguely suicidal, labouring away at an unfinished project, driven by passions created by historical conditions with which he eventually and obliquely manages to come to terms'.[65] Austerlitz is constructed by the narrator as a *Dichter* figure, not unlike a wandering poet with tragic symptoms that mark him out as a *Sonderling* whose physical suffering metaphorically evoked through his nomadic lifestyle, which hints that traumatic exile and dislocation have been the primary causes of his unhappiness for the majority of his life.[66]

After returning to London following his discoveries concerning his and his parents' pasts in Prague, Austerlitz experiences physical suffering as the immensity of his anguish overwhelms him, eventually causing him to experience both emotional and physical collapse. While walking with him through the Tower Hamlets cemetery in London at twilight, the narrator recalls how Austerlitz has been obsessively visiting the graves of the dead who lie buried there: 'er habe hier in den ersten Wochen nach seiner Rückkehr aus Böhmen, so setzte Austerlitz nun um Gehen seine Erzählung fort, die Namen und die Geburts- und Todesdaten der Verstorbenen auswendig gelernt, habe Kieselsteine und Efeublätter nach Hause

[64] 'The more I laboured on this project over several months, the more pitiful did the results seem […] as if an illness that had been latent in me for a long time were now threatening to erupt […] If someone had come then to lead me away to a place of execution I would have gone meekly, without a word' (*A*, pp. 171, 173–174).
[65] Chandler, 'About Loss', p. 253.
[66] For further discussion of this, see Taberner, 'German Nostalgia?', pp. 194–195. For Taberner, 'the narrator's rendition of Austerlitz's metaphysical reading of the vagaries of human existence points to the Jewish survivor's desire to allay the traumas of his own biography. By situating his personal experience of dislocation and exile within the relentless catastrophe of modernity, he invests his suffering with higher meaning'.

getragen, auch eine Steinrose einmal und eine abgeschlagene Engelshand' (*A*, p. 330).[67] The text here is interspersed with photographs of the overgrown graveyard, showing broken and crumbling gravestones strewn with dead leaves and unkempt foliage. Austerlitz, the narrator indicates, is familiar with the place and has spent much time there, returning frequently enough to know the inscriptions of the graves and even to have taken away with him pieces of the ruins along with leaves and stones. His engagement and affiliation with decay and dereliction in nature in this scene firmly imbues the narrative with a Romantic sense of coming late or lingering too long after what is acceptable.

Austerlitz's contemplation of ruins in particular calls to mind a significant aesthetic trait of German Romanticism through its symbolic associations that acknowledge the passing of time and the cycle of life and death, as in many works, such as August Wilhelm Schlegel's 1805 elegy 'Rom', to take just one notable example.[68] Even outside the realm of literature, landscape paintings by German Romantic artists like Caspar David Friedrich such as *Abtei im Eichenwald* (1809/10), *Klosterruine Eldena bei Greifswald* (1824/25) or *Ruine Elden am Riesengebirge* (1830/34) feature the contemplation of ruins as a means of meditating of personal subjectivity and human transience.[69] For the German Romantics, as Theodore Ziolkowski notes, ruined buildings specifically encapsulated 'the struggles of the German historical past, rather than a general cultural tradition, together with a growing sense of national pride as Germans dreamed of the unification of their independent states and duchies'.[70] Given *Austerlitz*'s historical position after the wreckage of twentieth-century modernity and its lingering aftereffects, however, the ruins contemplated in Sebald's final novel are not only implicitly anti-nationalist; they are also no longer able to be turned to an aesthetically beautiful or comforting advantage.[71] This implies an almost muted and regretful

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[67] 'In the first few weeks after his return from Bohemia, Austerlitz continued his tale as we walked on, he had learned by heart the names and dates of birth and death of those buried here, he had taken home pebbles and ivy leaves and on one occasion a stone rose, and the stone hand broken off one of the statues'. (*A*, p. 322).

[68] See August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Poetische Werke: Band 2* (Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer, 1811), pp. 41–66 ('Zwar es umlächelt die Erde von Latium heiterer Himmel, / Rein am entwölkten Azur bildet sich Roms Horizont, / Wie es die Ebne beherrscht mit den siebengehügelten Zinnen / Bis zu dem Meer jenseits, dort vom Sabinergebirg / Aber den Wanderer leitet ein Geist tiefsinniger Schwermuth / Mit oft weilendem Gang durch des Ruins Labyrinth'.)

[69] For further discussion of the significance of ruins and nature for Romanticism see Catherine Wilkins, 'Revolutionary Romantic Landscapes', in *Landscape, Imagery, Politics, and Identity in a Divided Germany: 1968–1989*, pp. 31–50 (London: Routledge, 2013). For a broader expanded history of the artistic appreciation of architectural decay, see Rose Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* (New York: Walker, 1953).

[70] Theodore Ziolkowski, 'Ruminations on Ruins: Classical versus Romantic', in *The German Quarterly*, 89:3 (2016), pp. 265–281 (p. 278).

[71] This recalls Sebald's commentary on the ruin of the Herz-Schloss in the ruined town of Sonthofen in *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (1999). As Anne Fuchs observes, 'in this image of the romantically wild yet still eerie war ruin, the sentimental, nostalgic, and critical discourse on *Heimat* is brought together'. While the ruin gestures towards the utopian possibility that humanity might leave behind its destructive history for a more ethical relationship with the natural world, as Fuchs claims, Sebald is unclear as to whether he necessarily advocates this. In any

characterisation of Austerlitz and the narrator as epigonal latecomers who are no longer able to exult optimistically in the beauty of the ruins and contemplate the graveyard to the same higher ends as their Romantic literary forebears once may have done.

An awareness of the cycle of life and death is intensified by Austerlitz's attachment to the fallen leaves surrounding him, which furthermore recalls a Romantic desire to find expression for the self in the natural world. However, this induces a further sense of his appreciation of such things as being a form of epigonal imitation. While Austerlitz's emotional and intellectual breakdown recalls the figure of the Romantic suffering artist, in his case the experience does not lead to any sense of transcendent understanding or artistic fulfilment. For Austerlitz, the desire to find meaningfulness and self-expression in nature only leads to further despair as his interaction with the ruined graveyard and its wild flora acts as the catalyst for his recollection of his subsequent collapse and illness:

> Die Vernunft kam nicht an gegen das seit jeher von mir unterdrückte und jetzt gewaltsam aus mir hervorbrechende Gefühl des Verstoßen- und Ausgelöschtseins […] In kürzester Frist trocknete die Zunge und der Gaumen mir aus, so als läge ich seit Tagen schon in der Wüste, mußte ich schneller und schneller um Atem ringen, begann mein Herz zu flattern und zu klopfen bis unter den Hals, brach mir der kalte Schweiß aus am ganzen Leib, sogar auf dem Rücken meiner zitternden Hand, und war alles, was ich anblickte, verschleiert von einer schwarzen Schraffur (*A*, pp. 330–331).[72]

Unable to move and unable to speak, Austerlitz's crisis ends in his physical and mental collapse that 'sämtliche Denkvorgänge und Gefühlsregungen lahmgelegt hatte' (*A*, p. 332).[73] Austerlitz's reason – that bastion of Enlightenment understanding – gives way to feeling and emotion when prompted to self-reflection stimulated by the contemplation of ruins and nature. Yet, rather than physical suffering acting as a path to transcendence, as the traditional Romantic view would have it, the ordeal provides no such satisfying conclusion for Austerlitz. When he wakes up from his ordeal in hospital three later weeks later, his Romantic activity has assumed a diminished and epigonal cast: '[Ich spazierte] die ganze Winterszeit in

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case *Luftkrieg und Literatur* certainly suggests that 'the idea of human autonomy and the attendant separation of human history from nature have had disastrous consequences'. See Anne Fuchs, 'A *Heimat* in Ruins and the Ruins as *Heimat*: W. G. Sebald's *Luftkrieg und Literatur*', in *German Memory Contests: The Quest for Identity in Literature, Film, and Discourse Since 1990*, ed. by Anne Fuchs, Mary Cosgrove, Georg Grote (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2006), pp. 287–302 (p. 299).

[72] 'Reason was powerless against the sense of rejection and annihilation which I had always supressed, and which was now breaking through the walls of its confinement. […] All of a sudden my tongue and palate would be as dry as if I had been lying in the desert for days, I had to fight harder and harder for breath, my heart began to flutter and palpitate in my throat, cold sweat broke out over my body, even on the back of my trembling hand, and everything I looked at was veiled by a black mist'. (*A*, p 322–323).

[73] 'Paralysed all thought processes and emotions' (*A*, p. 323).

den Gängen herum, blickte stundenlang durch eines der trüben Fenster in den Friedhof, in welchem wir jetzt stehen, hinab und spürte in meinem Kopf nichts als die vier ausgebrannten Wände meines Gehirns. […] Nur an mich selber, an meine eigene Geschichte und jetzige Verfassung war es mir unmöglich zu denken' (*A*, pp. 332–333).[74] Following the crisis of his breakdown, he is separated from the cemetery where he was able to indulge his Romantic appetites, and is only able to wander the sterile corridors of the facility, viewing the cemetery from a distance. Even returning to it with the narrator later on, Austerlitz is emotionally and physically drained. His similarities here to the notion of the Romantic as a suffering artist serve to heighten the sense of epigonal lateness in the narrative and Austerlitz is soon drawn back into uncovering the past via H. G. Adler's writing on the Theresienstadt ghetto, although before that he then achieves a temporary reprieve from this while working as an assistant gardener in Romford. While this episode might suggest that Austerlitz's Romantic disposition is salved somewhat, the only landscape he engages with there is tamed and artificial (*A*, pp. 334–335). In his echoing of Romantic traits, Austerlitz faces either a route to overwhelming confrontation with his situation, or a briefly therapeutic stint in a garden centre that eventually leads him to return to his investigations, neither of which offers the expected transcendence or fulfilment promised by Romanticism in spite of his enactment of Romantic traits. Recourse to Romanticism here constitutes a double bind: either Austerlitz is away from his investigations and his recuperative activities are epigonal imitations of his Romantic exploits, or he undertakes his investigations and his Romantic reactions to his historical separation from the past and its secrets lead him to further suffering. In both cases, reworkings of the figure of the Romantic suffering artist serve to bolster narrative constructions of epigonal latecoming.

Following Austerlitz's final departure towards the end of the novel in order to continue searching for further information regarding his father's life and fate, the narrator returns alone to the fortress of Breendonk near Mechelen in Belgium, a former Nazi prisoner camp which he first visits earlier in the narrative, prompted by his initial conversation with Austerlitz. At the novel's conclusion, it is as if he has now assumed Austerlitz's self-conception as a late Romantic wandering artist, since the narrator is soon to begin writing the novel of *Austerlitz* after the narrative ends. As the narrator arrives at the fortress on foot, carrying a rucksack much like Austerlitz's signature tote, further suggestions of Romantic

[74] 'I wandered, all through that winter, up and down the long corridors, staring out for hours through one of the dirty windows at the cemetery below, where we are standing now, feeling nothing inside my head but the four burnt-out walls of my brain. […] But I found it impossible to think of myself, my own history, or my present state of mind' (*A*, pp. 324–325).

connections between the two of them emerge. His observations are centred on the natural features surrounding the fortress as well as the building itself: 'Wie vor dreißig Jahren war es ungewöhnlich heiß geworden […] Die Festung lag unverändert auf der blaugrünen Insel' (*A*, pp. 417–418).[75] The weather at Breendonk is in fact so unseasonably hot that 'das Dach und die Wände knisterten in der Hitze, und der Gedanke streifte mich, das Haar auf meinem Kopf könnte Feuer fangen wie es des heiligen Julian auf dem Weg durch die Wüste' (*A*, p. 418).[76] Nature is thus perceived as a potentially overwhelming force and upon observing this the narrator makes comparisons between himself and St. Julian, another suffering wanderer, who achieved redemption in the desert.[77] For the Sebaldian narrator, however, there is no such redemption or closure to be found, further echoing the sense of unfulfilment and anticlimactic epigonality experienced in his Romantic wanderings. Observing the natural features surrounding the fortress – a late edifice, existing after modernity and after nature – the narrator watches a bird, which encapsulates the Romantic echoes of his narrative: ' Auf dem dunklen Wasser ruderte eine graue Gans, einmal ein Stück in die eine Richtung, dann in die andre wieder zurück' (*A*, p. 418).[78] Sitting alone, the narrator concludes the chapter of the book he is reading – *Heshel's Kingdom* (1998) by Dan Jacobson, a former colleague of Austerlitz – yet leaves the book unfinished, before he sets out on his way back to the nearby town of Mechelen, arriving 'als es Abend wurde' (*A*, p. 421).[79] Walking away into gathering darkness, the novel ends inauspiciously with a narrator haunted by an inability to reconcile with the past, with his work left unfinished and his narrative unresolved. That *Austerlitz* concludes with the image of a setting sun not only evokes the notion of the *Abendland*, of Europe as a 'land of the evening'. It also further suggests a sense of epochal lateness and of incompleteness, since the sun is still setting but has not yet set. The figure of the suffering Romantic wanderer thus offers neither a compensatory response nor a redemptive reprieve from the burden of the past in *Austerlitz*. Instead, the narrator's Romanticism serves to reinforce and complicate the lateness of his narrative, which both engenders and intensifies the melancholy aesthetics of the novel, as the following part of this chapter will show.

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[75] 'It had turned unusually hot, just as it was thirty years ago […] The fortifications lay unchanged on the blue-green island' (*A*, p. 411).
[76] 'The roof and the walls creaked in the heat, and the thought passed through my mind that the hair on my head might catch fire, as St Julian's did on his way through the desert' (*A*, p. 412)
[77] This is a reference one of Gustave Flaubert's *Trois contes*, 'Légende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier', first published in 1877 and also partly an inspiration for Herman Hesse's later novel *Siddhartha* (1922).
[78] 'A grey goose was swimming on the dark water, going a little way in one direction and then a little way back in the other' (*A*, p. 412).
[79] 'As evening began to fall' (*A*, p. 415).

Austerlitz ends by presenting a quintessentially epigonal chain of literary inheritance: the passing on of the book from Jacobson to Austerlitz to the narrator encapsulates both a sense of indefinite continuity, as well as a sense of diminished returns, especially given the narrator's solidary return to Breendonk at the novel's conclusion. This time, however, the narrator does not enter the fortress, as he does on his first visit, choosing instead to wait outside and eventually walk away into the setting sun. Rather than a process of return or repetition, then, the conclusion of *Austerlitz* is more suggestive of a sense of never quite coming full circle and not quite being able to measure up to preceding times or figures. This is sustained by a passing on of narratives as a means of attempting, but not quite managing, to bridge the gulf between the past and the present, which Jacobson refers to as 'der Abgrund, in den kein Lichtstrahl hinabreicht, […] die untergegange Vorzeit' (*A*, p. 420).[80] This reference to a chasm once more recalls the Romantic trait of drawing on natural metaphors in order to question subjective experiences of the world. By reworking and subverting traits such as this, as well as the figure of the Romantic artist, his wandering, and his contemplation of ruins, the narrator of *Austerlitz* constructs a novel that is steeped in a distinctly Romantic sense of epigonal lateness. The melancholy understanding of history that results from this, which acknowledges and engages with the irreconcilable gulf between the present and the past, emerges via further Romantic traits in *Austerlitz* through crossings back and forth into a *Märchen*-like realm, both in Austerlitz's account of his investigations and in the narrator's construction of the narrative as a whole.

MELANCHOLY

It has become something of a commonplace to talk of Sebald's melancholy and, indeed, this study is not the first to claim so.[81] Drawing on the sensation of melancholy that arises from a feeling of helplessness when confronting the past, Sebald fashions what he terms, following Peter Weiss, his own 'aesthetics of resistance'.[82] As Kaisa Kaakinen affirms, discussions of melancholy in Sebald's work have up until now taken place 'either in relation to his position

[80] 'The chasm into which no ray of light could penetrate […] the vanished past' (*A*, p. 414).
[81] See, most recently, for example, Kaisa Kaakinen, *Comparative Literature and the Historical Imaginary: Reading Conrad, Weiss, Sebald* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 214.
[82] See W. G. Sebald, 'Die Zerknirschung des Herzens. Über Erinnerung und Grausamkeit im Werk von Peter Weiss', in *Orbis litterarum*, 41 (1986), pp. 265–278. Reprinted in W. G. Sebald, *Campo Santo*, ed. by Sven Meyer (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2003), pp. 128–148. See also, Peter Weiß, *Die Ästhetik des Widerstands* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975, 1978, 1981).

as a postwar German author or in relation to discussions on ethics of alterity', simultaneously historicizing Sebald's works and situating them in an historically removed conceptualisation of ethical encounter.[83] Eric Santner notes the overwhelming gloom of Sebaldian melancholy, remarking that his work 'generates not so much profane illuminations as apocalyptic darkenings, moments where the last traces of light are, as it were, sucked back into black holes of despair and pain'.[84] In the most lucid and comprehensive account of melancholy in Sebald's œuvre, Mary Cosgrove delineates how it may be interpreted as an ethical, albeit ambivalent, vessel for memory of the Holocaust by questioning Sebald's own assertion in his critical work that melancholy constitutes a form of resistance.[85] Drawing on Dominick LaCapra's theories of trauma, Cosgrove argues that an understanding of the Holocaust as an historical caesura, which divides those who came after from those who came before, results in what J. J. Long calls the 'marooning [of] the survivors and those born after in a futureless vacuum of the present'.[86] This understanding of history looms large in Sebald's œuvre and encapsulates both Sebald's sense of historical lateness and the vertiginous separation of the past and present from which stems the melancholy aesthetic attitude of his prose fiction.

For Cosgrove, Sebald's mobilisation of melancholy's performative potential entails a 'response to the impossible path of Western history both during and preceding the twentieth century'.[87] This 'special brand of sadness' emerges over the course of Sebald's literary works as 'insightful, mnemonic, and ethically driven mourning work, cross-dressed in traditional melancholy apparel'.[88] According to Cosgrove, these trappings of melancholy draw on sources of inspiration as varied as Renaissance iconography, eighteenth-century conceptualisations of *Empfindsamkeit* (sentimentality), and even psychoanalytical theories on the condition of sadness. As Cosgrove observes, these psychoanalytical conceptualisations largely entail a reductive narrowing of the definition of melancholy to a pathological condition which causes the disintegration of an individual's conscious experience and leads to an inability to engage with and accept the legacy of preceding events. In earlier literary criticism, such an interpretation resulted in long-entrenched Manichean conceptualisations of good and bad melancholia, the former providing the literary artist with the opportunity to transcend sadness, while the latter relegates them to inertia. Following Cosgrove, the present

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[83] Kaakinen, *Comparative Literature and the Historical Imaginary*, pp. 215.
[84] Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 61.
[85] See W. G. Sebald, *Die Beschreibung des Unglücks: Zur österreichischen Literatur von Stifter bis Handke* (Salzburg: Residenz, 1985), p. 12.
[86] See J. J. Long, 'W. G. Sebald: A Biographical Essay on Current Research', in Anne Fuchs and J. J. Long, eds., *W. G. Sebald and the Writing of History* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), pp. 11–29 (p. 21).
[87] Cosgrove, *Born under Auschwitz*, p. 147.
[88] Cosgrove, *Born under Auschwitz*, p. 151.

study understands Sebaldian melancholy as existing beyond such a binary. It is both performative discourse and narrative tool, through which the conventionalized expression of subjectivity enables ethical engagement with the past. A form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Sebald's work thus occurs, according to Cosgrove, through a process of 'melancholy self-fashioning'.[89] This recalls a Romantic emphasis on subjectivity, which finds expression in *Austerlitz* via conventions and tropes reminiscent of the Romantic literary fairy tale, an aspect of Sebald's melancholy aesthetic that has heretofore remained underdiscussed. In what follows, new facets of Sebaldian melancholy in *Austerlitz* are brought to light and examined, such that principal narrative stages or conventions of *Kunstmärchen*, as well as many of their aesthetic and stylistic features, are revealed to exert great influence on constructions of melancholy in the narrative of *Austerlitz*. This occurs both on the micro level of particular episodes in the novel and on the macro level of the narrative as a whole.

This chapter makes the case for reading Sebald's final novel as the latest iteration of the Germanic literary fairy tale, a late melancholy *Kunstmärchen* for Europe at the turn of the twenty-first century, viewing its *Kunstmärchen* echoes as an essential component of *Austerlitz*'s melancholy cosmopolitanism and exploring the implications of this. In *Kunstmärchen*, for example, places and objects are described in detail, given names and background contextualisation, unlike in traditional folk tales or *Volksmärchen*. Characters have more individuality and psychological depth, but they can also be read as allegorical personifications. Fantastic, irrational, or coincidental elements are experienced as problematic and alarming, and often there is no clear moral and no 'happy end' to the story. Reworkings of *Kunstmärchen* tropes such as these in *Austerlitz* contribute towards the novel's refusal of any conventional reconciliation or satisfying conclusion, leading to a sustained melancholy perspective centred around the perceived irreconcilability between the past and the present. Reading the novel as a late and melancholy *Kunstmärchen* for the end of the twentieth century suggests that *Austerlitz*'s late Romanticism complicates the notion of false worlds in the novel. This much-discussed category of a 'falsche Welt' in *Austerlitz* might thus be read not only as a moral or ethical category, but also one that is intrinsically bound up with the aesthetics of the novel. As the falsity of Austerlitz's world is revealed during his investigations of his past and his parents' fates, so the narrator constructs an alternative reality – a false world – in his narrative. A reading of *Kunstmärchen* features in the novel enhances prior understandings of Sebaldian melancholy in *Austerlitz*, while also drawing lines of connection from the novel's lateness and melancholy to the potentialities and tensions of its literary cosmopolitanism. By reworking

[89] Cosgrove, *Born under Auschwitz*, p. 24.

Romantic *Kunstmärchen* tropes of crossing thresholds into other realities and encounters with the unfamiliar or the fantastic, he both facilitates and produces a melancholy perspective on the past, grounded in a lateness that is not only modern but also Romantic.

While it may seem initially surprising, even counter-intuitive, to suggest parallels between Sebald's deeply serious literary work and the form of the Romantic fairy tale, there are many lines of connection to be drawn between the two. One immediately striking intertextual link to Romantic *Kunstmärchen* in *Austerlitz* can be inferred from the protagonist's discovery that his mother performed the role of Olympia in a production of *Tales of Hoffmann* (*A*, p. 234) by the French Romantic composer Jacques Offenbach, to whom Austerlitz owes his first name.[90] In Hoffmann's original tale, *Der Sandmann* (1806), Olympia, the apparent daughter of the protagonist Nathaniel's professor, is revealed to be an automaton, hastening Nathaniel's descent into madness, which resonates to a certain extent with Austerlitz's breakdown in the novel.[91] In his literary criticism, Sebald also draws on the tales of the Brothers Grimm, and specifically on the figure of Rumpelstiltzchen, for his analysis of memory and cruelty in the work of Peter Weiss.[92] Moreover, in what constitutes the clearest utterance of Sebald's novelistic praxis in his literary works, expressed via words given to the character of Max Aurach in *Die Ausgewanderten*, connections between the Sebaldian and the fairy-tale are explicitly articulated.[93] For Aurach, his investigations of his mother's memoirs, as well as his engagement with memory of the past more generally, are akin to 'eines jener bösen deutschen Märchen, in denen man, einmal in den Bann geschlagen, mit einer angefangenen Arbeit, in diesem Fall also mit dem Erinnern, dem Schreiben und dem Lesen, fortfahren muß'.[94] The fairy tale here is presented not only as a distinctly German form, but also one which is evil. Yet, despite the introduction of this moral complication, it is also a revelatory form for Aurach, which insinuates itself into all aspects of the ongoing creative process. It is all pervasive, and its magic spell enables further artistry. At the conclusion of the novel examined in this chapter, Sebald's narrator also recounts Austerlitz's experience of entering a hidden Jewish cemetery in London by using the form of the fairy tale as a reference

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[90] This is suggested in Ann Pearson, '"Remembrance ... Is Nothing Other than a Quotation": The Intertextual Fictions of W. G. Sebald', in *Comparative Literature*, 60:3 (2008), pp. 261–278 (p. 269).
[91] See E. T. A Hoffmann, *Der Sandmann* (Stuttgart, Reclam, 1996). For further discussions of the implications of this for the Oedipal drama of *Austerlitz*, see Helen Finch, *Sebald's Bachelors: Queer Resistance and the Unconforming Life* (London: Legenda, 2012), pp. 127–128.
[92] See W. G. Sebald, 'Die Zerknirschung des Herzens', pp. 265–278.
[93] The character of Max Aurach was renamed Max Ferber in the English translation of *Die Ausgewanderten*, after the painter Frank Auerbach, upon whom the character of Aurach was partly based, expressed reservations about being closely identified with the book. For further discussion of this, see Jaggi, 'Recovered Memories'.
[94] Sebald, *Die Ausgewanderten*, p. 285. 'One of those evil German fairy tales in which, once you are under the spell, you have to carry on […] with whatever work you have begun, in this case, the remembering, writing, and reading'. W. G. Sebald, *The Emigrants*, trans. by Michael Hulse (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 193.

point: 'In dem hellen Frühlingslicht, das die frisch ausgeschlagenen Lindenblätter durchstrahlte, hätte man meinen können, sagte Austerlitz zu mir, man sei eingetreten in eine Märchenerzählung, die, genau wie das Leben selber, älter geworden ist mit der verflossenen Zeit' (*A*, p. 415).[95] This sentence, with its exemplification of the author's famed hypotaxis and his narrator's mediated narrative of another's story, is quintessentially Sebaldian, recalling the clearly self-conscious mode of narration in the novel. Here, the narrator suggests a heightened sense of Romantic optimism of being in nature as he recounts Austerlitz's walk under the newly-opening leaves of the trees on a bright spring day, before immediately connecting this with the idea of crossing over a threshold and entering into the world of a fairy tale. This fairy tale is not simply a fixed form, however: it is suffused with melancholy at the inexorable passing of time. This dissolves the Romantic optimism suggested a few lines earlier, while simultaneously gesturing towards a sense of ageing and ending that recalls the particular vertiginous historical and literary lateness of Sebald and his works. Here in this single sentence, then, is a microcosmic summary of Sebaldian melancholy as it emerges in *Austerlitz*. Drawing on Romantic literary forms and conventions, a melancholy perspective on history is established through *Kunstmärchen* allusions.

Romantic poetics offer a route into a clearer understanding of a metaphysical and subjective – though not superficial – engagement with the present and the past in *Austerlitz*, while also implicitly gesturing to a possible sense of futurity, as this chapter will later discuss. A sense of over-determination of individual identity by history is distinctly Romantic and Romantic notions of endless wakefulness, as well as the desire to give life to the voices of the dead, constitute a compensatory response to a reality that is viewed as being insufficient. To return to Novalis, the idea that 'die Welt muß romantisiert werden' – that the world must be made Romantic – expresses clear dissatisfaction with reality, which provides the impetus to create new fictive worlds.[96] The narrative of *Austerlitz* makes multiple references to the notion of a 'falsche Welt' or a 'falsches Leben' – a false world or a false life (see, for example, *A*, pp. 11 and 199). Such utterances are well-documented as references to Adorno's maxim that 'es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen', which is reflected in Austerlitz's growing sense of unease over the course of his investigations at the moral and ethical falsity of his own

[95] 'In the bright spring light shining through the newly opened leaves of the lime trees you might have thought, Austerlitz told me, that you had entered a fairy tale which, like life itself, had grown older with the passing of time' (*A*, p. 409).
[96] Novalis, *Novalis Werke*, ed. by Gerhard Schultz (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2001), p. 384. 'The world must be made romantic'.

life.[97] In this aphorism Adorno suggests that, following the moral catastrophe of the Holocaust as the apogee of modernity, literature and even life exists beyond what is acceptable, and thus may be construed as late.[98] Yet what if the false world or worlds in *Austerlitz* not only articulate a Sebaldian form of lateness alongside the difficulties of representing and thereby attempting to come to terms with the past in literature? The false world in *Austerlitz* may also reflect a fictional constructed reality that is grounded in artificiality and exhibits allegorical narrator and protagonist figures, problematic or uncanny coincidences and quest narratives, with no clear ending, moral, happy or otherwise. The *Kunstmärchen* is a frequently unredemptive form, and appreciation of the heretofore underdiscussed Romantic fairy tale elements of *Austerlitz* will reveal new insights into the narrator's melancholy conception of history and the novel's sense of ever-deferred resolution.

Dissatisfaction with reality and Romantic antipathy towards modernity underlie the fairy-tale constructions in *Austerlitz*. *Kunstmärchen* such as E. T. A. Hoffman's *Der goldne Topf* (1814/19), for example, often contrast the reality of the everyday with fantastical episodes of an alternative reality.[99] There are two principle evocations of figurations, motifs, and tropes from the *Kunstmärchen* in *Austerlitz*, which this chapter will explore: firstly, the key moment of self-discovery in Austerlitz's story when he crosses the threshold of the Liverpool Street Station, undergoing a physical and metaphorical journey into an underworld to recall for the first time in his life his arrival in London as a four-year-old refugee. Secondly, the narrator's initial visit to the fortress at Breendonk and his subsequent return to it at the conclusion of the novel. There are discrete instances of *Kunstmärchen* tropes and structures during the narrative of *Austerlitz*, as well as in the overarching structure of the novel as a whole, which also mirrors the conventional narrative structures of the *Kunstmärchen*. In

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[97] For further discussion of this, see, for example, Helmut Schmitz, *On Their Own Terms: The Legacy of National Socialism in Post-1990 German Fiction* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2004), pp. 296–299. For the original quotation by Adorno, see Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften: Band 4 – Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), p. 43. 'A wrong life cannot be lived rightly', or, more literally, 'there is no right life in a wrong one. See Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. by E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), p. 39.

[98] While encapsulating Sebald's view of modernity in its entirety as late, his reliance on Adorno here is also evidence of his sustained engagement throughout his life with the work of the Frankfurt School, particularly that of Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse, which had a great influence on Sebald's prose, especially on the development of his idiosyncratically dialectical syntax, his critique of Enlightenment progress, and his predilection for modernist works. For further discussion of this, see Graham Jackman, '"Gebranntes Kind"? W. G. Sebald's "Metaphysik Der Geschichte"', in *German Life and Letters*, 57:4 (2004), pp. 456–471; Ben Hutchinson, 'The Shadow of Resistance: W. G. Sebald and the Frankfurt School', in *Journal of European Studies*, 41: 3–4 (2011), pp. 267–284; and James R. Martin, 'On Misunderstanding W. G. Sebald', in *Cambridge Literary Review*, 4:7 (2013), pp. 123–138.

[99] See E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Der Goldne Topf* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1986).

keeping with these Romantic conventions, resolution and conclusion are denied both the narrator and the eponymous protagonist of the novel. Providing the structural underpinning for many German Romantic texts, the *Kunstmärchen* is at its heart an expression of dissatisfaction with the real world of the everyday, a yearning for a new world as a form of aesthetic compensation. Novalis, for example, conceived of this as a 'Traumbild […] ein *Ensemble* wunderbarer Dinge und Begebenheiten'.[100] For Tieck, meanwhile, the episodes that made up such an ensemble comprised everything that had 'eine Wirkung ohne eine Ursache'.[101] The Sebaldian reconfiguration of *Kunstmärchen* conventions and traits in *Austerlitz*, however, draws on these conceptualisations of the Romantic form, but makes the novel's historical position an intrinsic part of its aesthetics, such that *Austerlitz* may be read as a late and melancholy *Kunstmärchen* for the close of the twentieth century. Resisting Enlightenment rationalism and reason, while drawing on earlier literary forms and conventions, both heightens the pathos of the novel's historical lateness and solidifies its melancholy aesthetic attitude.

Before examining the ways in which they emerge in *Austerlitz*, however, it will be helpful to briefly outline some key aspects of the original *Kunstmärchen* form, which itself adapts many metaphors from folk tales, while also adopting similar elements, styles, and themes to give them a particularly fairy-tale quality (*das Märchenhafte*).[102] That said, *Kunstmärchen* tend to be neither so one-dimensional in their narrative form as folk tales, nor so reliant on the stereotypical abstraction of place, time, and character. They frequently provide contextualisation regarding persons or events, and characters, as well as their problems, are often psychologized so that inner alterations may be perceived to have taken place alongside external changes of fortune as typically occur in folk tales. Characters' morality, furthermore, is often composed of shades of grey as opposed to folk tales' binary black-and-white categorisation of the forces of Good and Evil. Indeed, the world of the *Kunstmärchen* is far from a cheerful place where Good always triumphs. These tales frequently devote themselves to exploring darker aspects of human nature, revelling in melancholy,

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[100] Novalis, *Novalis: Werke, Tagebücher und Briefe von Friedrich von Hardenberg Vol. 2.*, ed. by Hans-Joachim Mähl (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1987), p. 696. 'A dream vision […] an *ensemble* of wonderful things and occurrences'. Emphasis in original.

[101] Ludwig Tieck, *Kritische Schriften* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), p. 65. Tieck: 'An effect without cause'.

[102] The following summary of the German *Kunstmärchen* is synthesized from various works, which discuss the elements, styles, and themes of the *Kunstmärchen*, both in the context of the German literary tradition and in a broader European historical context. These include Friedmar Apel, *Die Zaubergärten der Phantasie: Zur Theorie und Geschichte des Kunstmärchens* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1987); Volker Klotz, *Das europäische Kunstmärchen: Fünfundzwanzig Kapitel seiner Geschichte von der Renaissance bis zur Moderne* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1987); Mathias Mayer and Jens Tismar, eds., *Kunstmärchen* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003); Paul W. Wührl, *Das deutsche Kunstmärchen: Geschichte, Botschaft und Erzählstrukturen* (Baltmannsweiler: Schneider, 2012), as well as Jack Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* (Austin: Texas University Press, 1979), pp. 62–75.

delusion, and a sense of longing for death. The plot of many *Kunstmärchen* is driven by a protagonist's inner conflict, which results from a discrepancy between the everyday world and unfulfilled yearning or desire. Though heterogenous in form and style, generally most *Kunstmärchen* narratives offer more than one perspective on events, while stressing a gap between the self and the rest of the world that is unable to be bridged. The protagonist, who is typically male and often associated with artistic or creative pursuits, is displaced and does not belong to a particular community. Isolated and lonely, his goal is to transcend his current existence and to find or even bring into being a new and better world. At the beginning of a *Kunstmärchen*, the protagonist is usually in a distressed or disoriented state, unsure of how to proceed as they are either physically lost somewhere or in an anxious state of existential uncertainty. Following this, a mentor figure is introduced to accompany the protagonist and guide them through a journey of self-discovery. At this point, the protagonist will typically cross a threshold into another world (*Schwellenüberschreitung*) where the natural laws of space and time are suspended (*Zeitaufhebung*) and, indeed, where cause and effect may no longer be entirely logical or even predictable. Following some initial shock or confusion in this new alternative world (*Gegenwelt*), as well as confrontations with fantastical characters or mythical figures, the protagonist undergoes a form of trial or challenge to test them. After this, they will typically return to their world, but not before a final farewell meeting between the protagonist and their mentor at the tale's conclusion. There is rarely a happy end to the *Kunstmärchen* and, should there be one, it typically takes place in an alternative world, heightening the protagonist's separation from his place of origin. Such narrative elements of the traditional *Kunstmärchen*, as well as aesthetic and stylistic features have their late echoes in *Austerlitz*. Through these refashionings the novel's melancholy aesthetic attitude is emphasized and compounded by divisions between the self and the world, the creation of false worlds, and journeys into new subterranean realms, both real and metaphorical. The overall structure of *Austerlitz* itself mirrors these fairy tale descents.

Occurring on both the micro level of individual episodes in Austerlitz's life story and the macro level of the narrative in its entirety, the reworkings of *Kunstmärchen* conventions are fundamentally imbricated with and, indeed, exert great influence on, the melancholy perception of the fundamental gulf between the present and the past articulated in *Austerlitz*. The narrator's journey over the course of the novel mirrors Austerlitz's own. At the opening of the novel, for example, the narrator's aforementioned remark that he is driven to travel for 'mir selber nicht recht erfindlichen Gründen' (*A*, p. 1),[103] foreshadows the similar way

[103] 'Reasons which were never entirely clear to me' (*A*, p. 1).

that Austerlitz finds himself drawn on in Liverpool Street Station by forces he cannot identify. This is reminiscent of the protagonists of many *Kunstmärchen*, such as Christian in Tieck's *Der Runenberg* (1804) or the student Anselmus in *Der goldene Topf*, who wander uncertainly, drawn on by something they feel but do not comprehend. Like Austerlitz, the narrator experiences a life-changing meeting in a station, namely his initial encounter with the novel's protagonist. Later, after a visit to the Breendonk fortress, the narrator feels unwell, just as Austerlitz does upon leaving Liverpool Street Station, which echoes the protagonist's sense of confusion or upset upon entering an alternative world in the *Kunstmärchen*. In *Austerlitz*, this metaphorical crossing of thresholds from one world to another occurs as a transition from one episode of the novel to the next, or from one character's story to another, all the while encompassed by an overarching narrative that follows a similar structure. Where Austerlitz has guides to help him navigate his way through his false world, or deeper into the depths of the underworld of the past, such as the archivist Teresa Ambrosová, or the antiquarian bookseller Penelope Peaceful, or Marie de Verneuil, a friend from his youth with whom he has an intimate yet fraught relationship, the narrator has only Austerlitz, who is absent when not recounting his investigations of his family history. As such, the structure of the novel as a whole mirrors the *Kunstmärchen* episodes in Austerlitz's life story, albeit with a melancholy inflection that yields diminishing returns, as the narrator is left without a guide. The narrator returns to his world, having been submerged in Austerlitz's story, whereas Austerlitz himself departs without a final meeting, leaving any sense of resolution unfulfilled. In this sense, the conclusion of *Austerlitz* both draws on and reworks traits and conventions of the *Kunstmärchen* in order to reinforce the novel's melancholy aesthetics.

Returning to the episode at Breendonk at the beginning of the novel, which earlier in this chapter provided insights into the narrator's construction as a Romantic suffering artist, will shed further light on instances of *das Märchenhafte* in *Austerlitz* and how the novel as a whole is structured following the form of the *Kunstmärchen*. Indeed, the *Kunstmärchen* form itself, as exemplified in tales such as Tieck's *Der blonde Eckbert* (1797) and Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* (1816), is highly structured with clear moments of anagnoresis for their protagonists. On Austerlitz's recommendation, the narrator journeys to Breendonk, the military fortification that was originally built for the Belgian army at the start of the twentieth century. Initially intended as a place of refuge, the *Festung* was used as a Nazi prison camp during the German occupation of Belgium and has since become a national memorial and public museum. Surveying the structure, the narrator declares it to be 'eine einzige

monolithische Ausgeburt der Häßlichkeit und der blinden Gewalt' (*A*, p. 35).[104] He views the building as emblematic of modern European society, while also being indicative of the final destination of the rationalist procedures of Enlightenment thinking and progress. As the narrator later summarizes when recalling a discussion with Austerlitz in the latter's office in Bloomsbury about the form of 'Ordnungszwang' (*A*, p. 52)[105] prevalent in twentieth-century Europe, and particularly expressed, according to Austerlitz, in its architecture, this leads to a 'Zug ins Monumentale, der sich manifestierte in Gerichtshöfen und Strafanstalten, in Bahnhofs- und Börsengebäude, in Opern- und Irrenhäusern und den nach rechtwinkligen Rastern angelegten Siedlungen für die Arbeiterschaft' (*A*, p. 52).[106] The unspoken end point of this chain of modern edifices is the concentration camp – or perhaps, subsequently, the tourist attraction – where the narrator, and previously Austerlitz, stand in Breendonk. The narrator's description of Breendonk fortress – 'umgeben von einem Erdwall, einem Stacheldrahtzaun und einem breiten Wassergraben […] fast wie eine Insel im Meer' (*A*, p. 33)[107] is replete with references to its being shut off from the everyday reality the narrator usually occupies, as if the structure were located in an alternative world. Not only does the narrator perceive the building as monstrous, resulting from violence and ideas of progress, he also struggles to comprehend its form as he draws closer: 'was ich jetzt vor mir hatte, das war eine niedrige, an den Außenflanken überall abgerundete, auf eine grauenvolle Weise bucklig und verbacken wirkende Masse Beton, der breite Rücken, so dachte ich mir, eines Ungetüms, das sich hier wie ein Walfisch aus den Wellen, herausgehoben hatte aus dem flandrischen Boden' (*A*, p. 33).[108] The structure is monstrous and misshapen, and does not conform to the orderly image of a star-shaped bastion that the narrator has imagined following an earlier conversation with Austerlitz. It seems unworldly to him, incomprehensible, as if it had emerged from a subterranean other place. The conventions of the *Kunstmärchen* are inverted here, because rather than returning to his previous reality, having been submerged in Austerlitz's story, the narrator's reality is now forever altered. Having drawn on *Kunstmärchen* traits in order to refuse resolution and emphasize the

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104 'A monolithic, monstrous incarnation of ugliness and blind violence' (*A*, p. 26).
105 'Compulsive sense of order' (*A*, p. 44).
106 'Tendency towards monumentalism evident in lawcourts and penal institutions, railway stations and stock exchanges, opera houses and lunatic asylums, and dwellings built to rectangular grid patterns for the labour force (*A*, p. 44).
107 'Rather like an island in the sea and surrounded by an embankment, a barbed-wire fence and a wide moat' (*A*, p. 25).
108 'What I now saw before me was a low-built concrete mass, rounded at all its outer edges and giving the impression of something hunched and misshapen: the broad back of a monster, I thought, risen up from this Flemish soil like a whale from the deep' (*A*, p. 25).

melancholy perspective in the narrative, while responding to the legacy of twentieth-century modernity, the narrator reveals again the vestigially Romantic within the modern.

Breendonk is continually presented as an unnatural place that does not belong in the world. As the narrator later admits, the place is so far beyond his understanding, 'daß ich sie zuletzt mit keiner mir bekannten Ausformung der menschlichen Zivilisation, nicht einmal mit den stummen Relikten unserer Vor- und Frühgeschichte in irgendeinen Zusammenhang bringen konnte' (*A*, p. 34).[109] This sensation of being in an unnatural or distorted world continues to grow: 'je länger ich meinen Blick auf sie gerichtet hielt und je öfter sie mich, wie ich spürte, zwang, ihn vor ihr zu senken, desto unbegreiflicher wurde sie mir' (*A*, p. 34).[110] The creeping sense of otherworldliness at Breendonk is not only confined to the narrator's perception of the building itself; it is also intensified by the weather which is 'ungewöhnlich heiß' (*A*, p. 33).[111] The narrator is furthermore perturbed by 'das unnatürlich tiefgrüne, fast blaufarbene Gras, das auf der Insel wuchs' (*A*, p. 33).[112] Its location on an island further emphasises the separation of the fortress from the realm of the everyday and, surrounded by what he perceives as the otherworldly strangeness of the local landscape, the narrator confesses that 'ich scheute mich, durch das schwarze Tor in die Festung selber zu treten' (*A*, p. 33).[113] Unlike in traditional *Kunstmärchen*, the narrator of *Austerlitz* is without a guide or mentor figure to lead him across the threshold to a state of enlightenment or resolution as he moves into this otherworldly fortress. As he walks through the corridors of Breendonk the narrator makes connections to the lives of prisoners, before ending this episode with the recollection of the letter 'A' drawn repeatedly by Gastone Novelli upon his return to his home country after being interned in the concentration camp at Dachau (*A*, pp. 40–44). The narrator likens this to 'ein lang anhaltender Schrei' (*A*, p. 44),[114] prefiguring Austerlitz's inability to make a sound during the physical and mental collapse he later recounts. In an enactment of the gulf between past and present, the narration subsequently jumps to the narrator's next meeting with Austerlitz, leaving his account of his excursion in Breendonk unfinished, in much the same way as Austerlitz later remarks, following his epiphany in the Ladies' Waiting Room of Liverpool Street Station: 'Ich habe keinerlei Begriff davon, wie lange ich in dem Wartesaal gestanden bin, […] noch weiß ich, auf welche Weise ich wieder

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[109] 'That in the end I found myself unable to connect it with anything shaped by human civilization, or even with the silent relics of our prehistory and early history' (*A*, p. 26).
[110] 'The longer I looked at it, the more often it forced me, as I felt, to lower my eyes, the less comprehensible it seemed to become' (*A*, p. 26).
[111] 'Unusually hot' (*A*, p. 25).
[112] 'The unnaturally deep-green, almost blue-tinged grass growing on the island' (*A*, p. 25).
[113] 'I felt reluctant to pass through the black gateway into the fortress itself' (*A*, p. 25).
[114] 'A long drawn-out scream' (*A*, p. 36).

nach draußen gelangte' (*A*, p. 203).[115] For Austerlitz and for the narrator, these excursions into alternative realities are reworked instantiations of the traditional *Kunstmärchen* features, which lack resolution. Moreover, the instance of threshold crossing at Breendonk at the opening of the novel has a double significance: it is both a moment of discovery for the narrator and a mark of the beginning of his own journey as he crosses over into the alternative world of Austerlitz's investigation into his past.

The narrator in *Austerlitz* is distanced from his reality, from the world of the everyday, and this is also inflected by his late historical position. His descent into the dungeon chambers of the fortress are likened to crossing a threshold into a separate world, and his perspective on these events, as he recounts them from a future date, emphasises this separation. Once inside the fortress, 'zwischen Portal und Ausgang' (*A*, p. 38),[116] it becomes even clearer that the narrator feels as if he has crossed from one world into another:

> 'Die Erinnerung […] hat sich in mir verdunkelt im Laufe der Zeit, oder vielmehr verdunklete sie sich, wenn man so sagen kann, schon an dem Tag, an welchem ich in der Festung war, sei es, weil ich nicht wirklich sehen wollte, was man dort sah, sei es, weil in dieser nur vom schwachen Schein weniger Lampen erhellten und für immer vom Licht der Natur getrennten Welt die Konturen der Dinge zu zerfließen schienen'.[117]

There is a sense of dread evoked at the unknown horrors that await him in this new place in which he finds himself and, indeed, the darkness below ground acts as a metaphor for the inhumane events that occurred in the fortress in the past. The hypotaxis of the narrator's sentences, his accumulation of clauses, and his use of the subjunctive mood all contribute towards the growing sense of distance and separation, of entering a different reality or an unnatural world which, as the narrator declares, is cut off from the light and where the clear outlines of the everyday world are blurred and unclear. Even when the narrator returns to Breendonk thirty years later at the end of the novel, there is a sense of irresolution encapsulated by the narrator's unfinished book, Austerlitz's unfinished history, and the inauspicious sense that, given their distanced and late historical positions, the narrator and Austerlitz are condemned to walk towards a setting sun that keeps sinking but never quite sets. In contradistinction to the 'strahlende[r] Frühsommertag' (*A*, p. 9) on which *Austerlitz*

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[115] 'I have no idea how long I stood in the waiting room […], nor how I got out again' (*A*, p. 195).
[116] 'Between portal and exit'.
[117] 'My memory […] has clouded over in the course of time, or perhaps I could say it was clouding over even on the day when I was in the fort, whether because I did not really want to see what it had to show or because all the outlines seemed to merge in a world illuminated only by a few dim electric bulbs, and cut off forever from the light of nature' (*A*, pp. 29–30).

begins, the novel's close is decidedly crepuscular.[118] However, the various journeys undertaken over the course of *Austerlitz*, as well as the narrative's structure as a descent into the underworld of Austerlitz's story of his past, are prefigured on the very first page of the novel with the narrator's remark that 'als der Zug […] in die dunkle Bahnhofshalle hineinrollte, war ich ergriffen worden von einem Gefühl des Unwohlseins' (*A*. p. 9).[119] The melancholy of the novel's lack of resolution, and the sustained gulf between present and past, are fully imbricated with Romantic elements.

For Minden, the specifically Romantic form of the *Kunstmärchen* is singled out as a form that 'blurred the boundary between philological exactitude and modern Romantic creativity'.[120] Such works bring German national literature into a modern consciousness through a co-operation of both the natural and artificial, the naïve and the self-conscious. For Romantic literature such a modern affirmation of self-consciousness is a guarantee of authenticity, which draws on the notion of Romantic irony. Said irony involves a perpetual awareness of artificiality understood as being a natural property of the human mind. As a result, any authenticity in the Romantic sense is guaranteed since self-conscious awareness of literary artificiality and invention precludes any naïve sense of closure. Sebald's final novel resists closure, conjecture replaces certainty, and playful Romantic irony becomes weighed down by the burden of the past and an elegiac melancholy. Historical difference and contingency thus emerge as essential components of *Austerlitz*'s reworked Romantic elements, re-enforcing the narrative's lateness and enhancing the melancholy view of history in the novel. Both the narrator's and the protagonist's metaphorical crossings into other worlds demonstrate how the sense of melancholy disconnection in the novel between the narrator's millennial present and the past stems from a sense of historical and literary lateness. Through this emerges an outlook on the traumatic and complex events of twentieth-century European history that is fundamentally imbricated with a Romantic sensibility. Via its self-reflective transformations and reconfigurations throughout German literary history, the *Kunstmärchen* form offers moral and political critiques of society. As Jack Zipes remarks, the German obsession with the fairy tale over the centuries is at its core 'vital and dynamic', offering writers and readers 'a means to participate in a dialogue and discourse about specific social conditions', which 'express a German proclivity to seek resolutions of social conflicts within art'.[121] *Austerlitz*, with its protagonist's quest to uncover the past and its narrator's

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[118] 'Glorious summer's day' (*A*, p. 1)
[119] 'As the train rolled into the dark station concourse, I had begun to feel unwell' (*A*, p. 1)
[120] Minden, *Modern German Literature*, pp. 38–39.
[121] Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forest to the Modern World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 85.

respectful mediation of Austerlitz's story, falls into the category of such works. Indeed, the assemblage of stories and information in *Austerlitz* has artistic and methodological parallels with the purported approach of the Brothers Grimm towards gathering folk tales. As Minden summarizes, 'not only did they edit and prepare the "found" materials they collected for publication, but these materials themselves were by definition examples of spontaneous artifice: inscrutable blends of individual and collective expression'.[122] While the narrator's meticulous artifice in *Austerlitz* can hardly be called spontaneous, exhibiting as it does something rather more akin to an artificial spontaneity in its staged coincidental encounters, a closer examination of the *Kunstmärchen* form and of its echoes in the novel reveals how Austerlitz's growing awareness of living in a false reality is compounded and nuanced by reworkings of *das Märchenhafte*.

In spite of this growing awareness, narratorial ambiguity, even confusion, still remain essential elements in the traditional Romantic *Kunstmärchen*. It may never become clear, for example, whether protagonists are to be trusted, since they may be either in some way *verirrt* or under the influence of a form of enchantment. In *Austerlitz*, however, metaphorical crossings from one 'world' to another offer less a sense of a complete loss of reality and heightened delusion than another way of perceiving the reality occupied by the narrator and the protagonist, which is tinged with lateness and melancholy. In a key episode of Austerlitz's story in the centre of the novel, aspects of the *Kunstmärchen* are reconfigured in the establishment of an alternative world or 'falsches Universum' (*A*, p. 199) where time and space are altered or undone, in order to attempt a reconciliation with history. Plagued by insomnia and distanced from society, Austerlitz has fallen into the habit of wandering London during the night and claims to be irresistibly drawn back to Liverpool Street Station. Later, he recalls for the first time in his life his arrival at this station having been on a *Kindertransport* from Europe, waiting for his new foster parents. This catalytic revelation gives him the impulse to travel to the city of Prague where he was born, and hunt for further clues as to his family's lives and fates, but instead of resolution this leads only to his physical collapse and further melancholy separation from the events of the past. Entering the Liverpool Street Station underground, Austerlitz describes it as 'einer der finstersten und unheimlichsten Orte von London, eine Art Eingang zur Unterwelt' (*A*, p. 188).[123] Crossing the threshold into this station leads to a strange other world and in his recollection of this hellish place, Austerlitz draws particularly on the convention of katabasis, a journey down

[122] Minden, *Modern German Literature*, p. 39.
[123] 'One of the darkest and most sinister places in London, a kind of entrance to the underworld' (*A*, p. 180).

into an underworld. Although this convention has its origins in Antiquity, it also finds itself reworked in literary fairy tales, such as in Christian's disappearance into a mountain in *Der Runenberg*.[124] Alan Itkin argues that Sebald repurposes katabasis not just as a classical trope for engaging with the relationship between the past and the present, but also as a means of conceptualizing history as destiny.[125] Sebald's mobilisation of katabasis posits a continuity for Itkin between the era of Western expansionism, colonialism, and the Holocaust. Furthermore, Sebald's 'epic technique manages to bridge the gap and give new relevance to the classical tradition in the wake of the Holocaust', as Itkin outlines intertextual connections between *Austerlitz* and Homer's *Odyssey*.[126] In this chapter, however, Austerlitz's katabatic entry into the alternative world in Liverpool Street Station is understood as resonating with the Germanic tradition of the *Kunstmärchen*, as well as with Adorno's aforementioned theorisation of a false world.

This reading of a Romantic threshold crossing is borne out by how the laws of time and space appear altered in *Austerlitz*. Such distortions of space, and of Austerlitz's own perspective, suggest a transition into an alternative world as the moment of katabasis occurs in the novel.[127] Consistent with the form of the *Kunstmärchen*, the protagonist undertakes this journey into what appears to be another realm, following his unconscious desire, which will lead to a transformative confrontation with the fantastical. In the case of *Austerlitz*, this is the protagonist's shocking and epiphanic moment of self-knowledge through the sudden recollection of himself as a young boy with his foster parents that he later experiences upon coming back to the Ladies Waiting Room which is no longer in use (*A*, pp. 200–203). Having entered the underworld of the station, Austerlitz's katabasis has already begun, but this sense of otherworldliness intensifies as he draws closer to the Ladies' Waiting Room where his as-yet-unremembered past awaits him. Having followed the enigmatic figure of a station cleaner

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124 For further discussion of the notion of katabasis in literature, particularly in terms of a descent into an underworld, see John J. Collins and Michael Fishbanel, eds., *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1995)*;* Radcliffe G. Edmonds III, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Rachael Falconer, *Hell in Contemporary Literature: Western Descent Narratives Since 1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).

125 Alan Itkin, '"Eine Art Eingang zur Unterwelt": *Katabasis* in Austerlitz', in *The Undiscover'd Country: W. G. Sebald's Poetics of Travel*, ed. by Markus Zisselsberger (2010), pp. 161–185. See also Alan Itkin, *Underworlds of Memory: W. G. Sebald's Epic Journeys through the Past* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017), pp. 23–76 especially. Itkin argues that encounters with the past in Sebald's work are based on several central tropes of classical epics: the journey to the underworld, the encounter with a work of art, and the return to the homeland.

126 See Itkin, 'Eine Art Eingang zur Unterwelt', p. 181.

127 For further discussion of the distortions of time in *Austerlitz*, see Amir Eshel, 'Against the Power of Time: The Poetics of Suspension in W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*', in *New German Critique*, 88 (2003), pp. 71–96, later reworked and expanded as 'Arresting Time: W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*', in *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 183–194.

(*A*, p. 196), he stands before the door and remarks, 'Ich zögerte, an die Schwingtür heranzutreten, aber kaum hatte ich meine Hand auf den Messinggriff gelegt, da trat ich schon, durch einen im Inneren gegen die Zugluft auf gehängten Filzvorgang, in den offenbar vor Jahren bereits außer Gebrauch geratenen Saal' (*A*, p. 197).[128] Drawing on the convention of *Schwellenüberschreitung* to articulate his exploration of the past, Austerlitz not only evokes the idea of crossing into another world, but also recalls the narrative's sense of historical lateness, since the room beyond the curtain has fallen into disuse. Time, indeed, in this waiting room seems to no longer function as in the everyday world, as Austerlitz observes: 'es mögen Minuten oder Stunden vergangen sein, während derer ich, ohne mich von der Stelle rühren zu können, in dem, wie es mir schien, ungeheuer weit hinaufgehenden Saal gestanden bin' (*A*, p. 197).[129] The vertiginous height of the ceiling further emphasizes the sense of lateness of the narrative here, since it metaphorically recalls the distant historical position from which the novel is written at the end of the twentieth century. Not only is the ceiling dizzyingly high, it is 'ungeheuer' – monstrously so – as if of another world. The space he has entered appears disorienting for Austerlitz, and it appears to him as if the reality in which he has now found himself is becoming increasingly unreal. He recalls 'das eisgraue, mondscheinartige Licht, das durch einen unter der Deckenwölbung verlaufenden Gaden drag und einem Netz oder einem schütteren, stellenweise ausgefransten Gewebe gleich über mir hing' (*A*, pp. 197–198),[130] which adds to the mystical otherworldly atmosphere of the waiting room. When Austerlitz's moment of epiphany finally arrives, he not only seems to stand outside of everyday reality, but also outside of history:

> Tatsächlich hatte ich das Gefühl, sagte Austerlitz, als enthalte der Wartesaal, in dessen Mitte ich wie ein Geblendeter stand, alle Stunden meiner Vergangenheit, all meine von jeher unterdrückten, ausgelöschten Ängste und Wünsche, als sei das schwarzweiße Rautenmuster der Steinplatten zu meinen Füßen das Feld für das Endspiel meines Lebens, als erstreckte es sich über die gesamte Ebene der Zeit (*A*, pp. 200–201).[131]

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[128] 'I hesitated to approach the swing doors, but as soon as I had taken hold of the brass handle I stepped past a heavy curtain hung on the inside to keep out draughts, and entered the large room, which had obviously been disused for years' (*A*, p. 189).

[129] 'Minutes or even hours may have passed while I stood in that empty space beneath a ceiling which seemed to float at a vertiginous height, unable to move from the spot' (*A*, p. 189).

[130] 'The grey icy light, like moonshine, which came through the windows in a gallery beneath the vaulted roof, and hung above me like a tight-meshed net or a piece of thin, fraying fabric (*A*, pp. 189–190).

[131] 'In fact I felt, said Austerlitz, that the waiting room where I stood as if dazzled contained all the hours of my past life, all the suppressed and extinguished fears and wishes I had ever entertained, as if the black and white diamond pattern of the stone slabs beneath my feet were the board on which the endgame would be played, and it covered the entire plane of time' (*A*, pp. 192–193).

In the narrator's account, Austerlitz, dazzled by his otherworldly environs, imagines himself in a form of endgame, the last confrontation of his life. This is to be played out in the station waiting room, the site of his shocking epiphanic realisation, which he continues to perceive in unworldly terms.

In this episode of Austerlitz's story, the reworking of the *Kunstmärchen* trope of crossing out of one world and into another embellishes the novel's sense of melancholy not only via the protagonist's entry into a perceived alternative reality, along with his growing understanding of the falsity of his own. His interactions with the fantastical denizens of the underground *Gegenwelt* in which he finds himself add to the melancholy and the pathos of his katabatic journey. Crossings from one world into another occur not only in one direction in Liverpool Street Station, however. As Austerlitz is drawn into the underworld of the station concourse, the passengers milling around him are imagined as ghosts of the dead from the past rising up towards him. He describes how 'in dieser ewigen Düsternis, die erfüllt war von einem erstickten Stimmengewirr, einem leise Gescharre und Getrappel, bewegten sich die […] ungezählten Menschen in Strömen' (*A*, p. 189).[132] Connecting these milling crowds of passers-by with a feeling of being unreconciled with the passing of time, he remarks how he felt 'dieses andauernde Ziehen in mir, eine Art Herzweh, das, wie ich zu ahnen began, verursacht wurde von dem Sog der verflossenen Zeit' (*A*, p. 190).[133] These crowds of people are brought together as one anonymous mass, gathering at the entrance to this other world as Austerlitz enters, ascending as he descends, attempting to acquire some secret knowledge just as he is. It is not just the protagonist of this *Kunstmärchen* who is seeking resolution, however. This becomes clearer as Austerlitz progresses on his journey, observing 'Stege und Zugbrücken, die die tiefsten Abgründe überquerten und auf denen winzige Figuren sich drängten, Gefangene, so dachte ich mir, sagte Austerlitz, die einen Ausweg suchten aus diesem Verlies' (*A*, p. 198).[134] Yet there is no escape for these ghosts of the past, and no reconciliation with his own story for Austerlitz, only the shock discovery of the buried memory of his arrival in London and his resultant collapse. It is not possible, Austerlitz comes to realise, for him or for the ghosts of the dead to bridge the gulf of time and reconcile with one another. Although threshold crossing is attempted in both directions here, the *Kunstmärchen* form is reworked and no resolution is reached for either party.

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[132] 'In this eternal dusk, which was full of a muffled babble of voices, a quiet scraping and tramping of feet, innumerable passed in great tides' (*A*, p. 181)

[133] 'That constant wrenching inside me, a kind of heartache which, as I was beginning to sense, was caused by the vortex of past time' (*A*, p. 182).

[134] 'Jetties and drawbridges crossing the deepest chasms that thronged with tiny figures who looked to me, said Austerlitz, like prisoners in search of some way of escape from their dungeon'.

The moment of anagnoresis in the Ladies Waiting Room of Liverpool Street station is a key turning point in Austerlitz's life, a critical discovery at the centre of the novel which acts as confirmation of Austerlitz's growing awareness of living in a false world. Indeed, as he states earlier when entering the station, he feels 'wie ein Schauspieler […], der auf die Bühne hinaustritt und im Augenblick des Hinaustretens das von ihm auswendig Gelernte mitsamt der Rolle, die er so oft gespielt hat, unwiderruflich und restloß vergißt (*A*, p. 197).[135] It is only by crossing the threshold into the alternative reality, or false world, of the waiting room that he is able to realise that his everyday life is one in which he simply plays a role. As he steps onto the metaphorical stage within this new *Gegenwelt* in Liverpool Street Station, he recognizes the performative artificiality of his wanderings. The new revelations and perspectives he has on his life occur, he now realises, 'wie das nur in einem derartigen falschen Universum möglich war' (*A*, p. 199).[136] Crucially, it is through the reconfiguration of the *Kunstmärchen* in the narrative and in particular the convention of crossing out of the everyday world into an alternative reality, that Austerlitz's own reality is revealed to be false. He is able to undergo a sense of coming to consciousness about the falseness of his reality through a reworking of the *Kunstmärchen* convention of entering another universe, an imagined false world. For Austerlitz, encountering the dead only leads to a sense of melancholy dispossession and lack of reconciliation with the past as opposed to any reconciliation with or ownership of the ghosts of history. Although his journey brings him some insights into the circumstances of his flight from Europe as a child, along with a sense of commonality with the ghosts of the dead, he is nevertheless left with a sense of melancholy incompleteness.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the station building in which this metaphorical crossing into another world takes place is itself a monument to Enlightenment progress, a relic of the era of European colonialism and imperialism. The industrialisation required to construct what Austerlitz perceives as a hellish underworld of modernity entailed massive destruction of human habitation, the remains of whose victims lie beneath the station's foundations, as Austerlitz recounts (*A*, p. 192–195). The skeletons of the corpses of Bedlam patients that have been unearthed in the course of an archaeological dig in the station undermine the myth of historical progress represented by the station, signifying those left behind by the project of modernity. Furthermore, this instance of anagnoresis in the station proves not to be the endgame for Austerlitz, since he continues to exist beyond it, which

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135 'Like an actor who, upon making his entrance, has completely and irrevocably forgotten not only the lines he knew by heart but the very part he has so often played' (*A*, p. 189).
136 'In such a way that was only possible in such a wrong universe'.

reinforces his sense of melancholy lateness. In response to this imagined endgame, however, the narrative draws implicit links to Romantic sensibilities. The station's archaeological strata reveal the ravages of modernity, encapsulating the negative dialectic of the Enlightenment, whereby the notion of progress contains already within it the seeds of destruction and devastation.[137] Arriving in Prague later in the novel, Austerlitz's perception of living in a false world has grown, and the crossing of borders between worlds appears to occur everywhere he goes, 'als gäbe es überhaupt keine Zeit, sondern nur verschiedene, nach einer höheren Stereometrie ineinander verschachtelte Räume, zwischen denen die Lebendigen und die Toten, je nachdem es ihnen zumute ist, hin und her gehen können' (*A*, p. 269).[138] Even when, after further investigation, he discovers the identity of his parents, their ultimate fates remain unknown. Narrative melancholy is never resolved, only extended, with the past and the present remaining separated and reworkings of elements of the Romantic *Kunstmärchen* playing a crucial role in the denial of closure or reconciliation in the novel. The narrator's account of his and Austerlitz's experiences is saturated with Romantic echoes – not only the contemplation of ruins, but also the situating of himself within a *Kunstmärchen* false world in order to recount and attempt to work through his personal reality. This subtly suggests the latent possibility of redemption or restitution not only for Austerlitz, but also for the historical and artistic forms with which he engages.

COSMOPOLITANISM

Having seen how the self-conscious sense of lateness in the narrative of *Austerlitz* is conditioned by reworkings of the Romantic suffering artist, as well as how the narrator's melancholy perspective on history may be read as a refashioned form of the Romantic *Kunstmärchen*, then the nationalist legacy or, perhaps better, the orientation of German fairy tales and German Romanticism around a national literary tradition must be reckoned with, if such a self-consciously late and melancholy novel as *Austerlitz* is to be understood as exemplary of a cosmopolitan mode of writing, as this study contends.

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[137] This is a very brief and rather crude rehearsal of Adorno and Horkheimer's argument in their work on the dialectic of Enlightenment. For the original argument, see Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, 'Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente', in Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften: Band 5 – 'Dialektik der Aufklärung' und Schriften 1940-1950*, ed. by Alfred Schmidt and Gunzelin Schmidt Noerr (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987).

[138] 'As if time did not exist at all, only various spaces interlocking according to the rules of a higher form of stereometry, between which the living and the dead can move back and forth as they like' (*A*, p. 261).

Fairy tales as a form are both plastic and resilient. 'At their best', as Zipes proclaims, 'fairy tales constitute the most profound articulation of the human struggle to form and maintain a civilizing process'.[139] For Marina Warner, the fairy tale has a long and fluid history of crossing national and linguistic borders, and the recurrence of their thematic and structural features in contemporary fiction across the ages acts as 'connective tissue between a mythological past and the present realities'.[140] In the German literary tradition, and particularly after the works of the Brothers Grimm were published, the fairy tale became a national institution, even a 'German obsession', as Zipes terms it.[141] Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786–1859) perceived their work as a social intervention in fostering a national sense of pride in a German folk tradition, even while Germany was yet to emerge as a united nation. Through the collection and dissemination of folk tales from across the German *Staatenkonglomerat* of the eighteenth century, the Brothers Grimm aimed to provide the nascent national bourgeoisie – who responded positively given the household setting of many tales, as well as their democratic ideals and their protestant ethics – with what Zipes calls 'a German cultural spirit [as] part of an effort to contribute to a united German front against the French'.[142] Despite 'an intense seriousness bordering on the religious, and nationalist overtones [that] have often smothered the philosophical and humanitarian essence of the tales', Zipes observes that Germans have 'repeatedly used fairy tales to explain the world to themselves'.[143] In German literary history since the eighteenth century, the fairy tale has been 'Germany's most democratic literary institution',[144] taken seriously by cultural critics and creative writers alike, who have used it as a reference point to consider German society. Take Walter Benjamin, for example, who remarks in 'Der Erzähler' (1936) that 'der erste wahre Erzähler ist und bleibt der von Märchen. Wo guter Rat teuer war, wußte das Märchen ihn, und wo die Not am höchsten war, da war seine Hilfe am nächsten'.[145]

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[139] Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-tale Films* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 1. See also, Jack Zipes, 'The Cultural Evolution of Storytelling and Fairy Tales: Human Communication and Mimetics', in *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 1–20.

[140] Marina Warner, *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. xvi.

[141] See Jack Zipes, 'Chapter 5: The German Obsession with Fairy Tales', in *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forest to the Modern World*, pp. 75–95.

[142] Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm*, p. 78.

[143] Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm*, p. 75.

[144] Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm*, p. 79.

[145] Walter Benjamin, 'Der Erzähler: Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows', in *Erzählen Schriften zur Theorie der Narration und zur literarischen Prosa*, ed. by Alexander Honold (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007), pp. 103–128, p. 121. 'The first true storyteller is, and will continue to be, the teller of fairy tales. Whenever good counsel was at a premium, the fairy tale had it, and where the need was greatest, its aid was nearest'. Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), pp. 83–109 (p. 102).

Understanding the German literary fairy tale as such an institution, however, does not render it static. On the contrary, it enables a view of literature as it transforms itself historically, as well as taking into account the contingent historical and cultural forces at work outside of literature that affect its production. It should not be forgotten, however, that the Grimms' tales were 'much more permeated with literary French influence than the Romantic brothers wished', as Warner indicates.[146] While the Germanic fairy tale may thus originally have been conceived as nationalist, albeit with more positive connotations than those the term carries today, it nonetheless remains inconspicuously transnational. Indeed, as Minden notes, the publication of the Grimms' tales marked the key moment when 'modern German letters seemed naturally to settle into the vanguard of European literature'.[147] As such, if *Austerlitz* is read as a self-consciously late and melancholy *Kunstmärchen* emerging at the turn of the millennium, its Romantic inflections embody a tension between a German and a broader European context.

For Lynn Wolff, Sebald himself is 'an author [who] represents a cosmopolitan consciousness that does not reject the specificity of the nation'.[148] Cosmopolitanism, however, is not commonly associated with German Romanticism. In contrast to the effusively cosmopolitan attitudes displayed by key figures of the earlier period of German Classicism, such as Herder and Kant, the Romantic movement in Germany is often characterized as essentially nationalist, in part because of its later appropriation and corruption by the National Socialist regime, but also due to the Romantics' critique of the Enlightenment and its emphasis on reason, universalism, and abstract principles.[149] Nevertheless many Romantics, while admittedly motivated on patriotic grounds, remained wedded to internationalist ideals propagated by their classicist antecedents, such that any nationalist tendencies evinced by German Romanticism necessarily encompass residual traces of various cosmopolitan attitudes.[150] As Joseph Twist notes, key features of German Romantic cosmopolitanism include an open idea of community along with an absence of a single particular shared identity.[151] Indeed, as Pauline Kleingeld argues, rather than being

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146 See Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: Of Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 193
147 Minden, *Modern German Literature*, p. 39.
148 Lynn Wolff, *W. G. Sebald's Hybrid Poetics: Literature as Historiography* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), p. 5.
149 For further discussion of this, see, for example, Hans Kohn, 'Romanticism and the Rise of German Nationalism', in *Review of Politics*, 12:4 (1950), pp. 443–472 and Carl Niekerk, 'Romanticism and Other Cultures', in *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism*, ed. by Nicholas Saul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 158–177.
150 For further discussion of this, see, for example, Wolfdietrich Rasch, 'Zum Verhältnis der Romantik zur Aufklärung', in *Romantik: Ein literaturwissenschaftliches Studienbuch*, ed. by Ernst Ribbat (Königstein: Athenäum, 1979), pp. 7–21.
151 See Joseph Twist, *Mystical Islam and Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary German Literature* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2018), p. 99.

antithetical to cosmopolitan attitudes, German Romanticism exhibits its own distinct form of cosmopolitanism, which centres on ideas of connections felt and experienced between individuals and communities through a common capacity in part for aesthetic creativity.[152] While Romantic cosmopolitanism differed radically from Enlightenment understandings of the term, as Kleingeld later observes, the Romantics nevertheless 'saw themselves as salvaging the core of Enlightenment ideals while transforming them by bringing out their deeper meanings'.[153] It is precisely because of the rich variety of understandings of cosmopolitanism during Romanticism that Kleingeld advocates their reappraisal. Since the fairy tale may arguably constitute a cosmopolitan literary form itself, existing as it does above and beyond national borders, *Austerlitz*'s aesthetic attitude inflected by Romantic lateness and melancholy points beyond itself, suggesting that a latent possibility of future cultural renewal may be salvaged through reworkings of damaged or compromised literary forms. When understood solely as a late modernist novel, *Austerlitz* may indeed exemplify a form of literature condemned by its own machinery. Yet an appreciation of the reworkings of Romantic literary conventions in *Austerlitz* may indicate a potential for the future restitution and renewal of modern European literature, which is already contained within its condemned form at the turn of the millennium, when the novel is read as an example of a collective of self-consciously late and melancholy cosmopolitan novels.

In its intimation of future cultural renewal and re-enchantment, the narrative of *Austerlitz* resonates keenly with the sense of futurity suggested by Nietzsche's theorisation of *Spätlinge* and *Erstlinge*. As outlined in the introduction to this study, melancholy latecomers suggest the possibility of future aesthetic renewal – whereby *Spätlinge* might become *Erstlinge* – precisely through self-consciousness of their melancholy lateness. This is the kernel of

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152 See Pauline Kleingeld, 'Romantic Cosmopolitanism: Novalis's "Christianity or Europe"', in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 46, Number 2, April 2008, pp. 269–284 (p. 283). Kleingeld draws in particular on conceptualisations by Novalis and Schlegel of a vision of humanity united without the need for coercive laws, such as that articulated by Schlegel in his review-essay of Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795). See Friedrich Schlegel, 'Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus (1796)', *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe*, Vol. 7, ed. by Ernst Behler, Jean-Jacques Anstett, and Hans Eichner (Paderborn: Schönigh, 1958), pp. 11–25. For further discussion of the development of a cosmopolitan community with particular focus on the works of Kant and Novalis, see Pauline Kleingeld, 'Romantic Cosmopolitanism', in *Kant and Cosmopolitanism: The Philosophical Ideal of World Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 151–154 especially.

153 See Pauline Kleingeld, 'Six Varieties of Cosmopolitanism in Late Eighteenth-Century Germany', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60 (1999), pp. 505–524 (p. 521). Here Kleingeld argues that cosmopolitanism in late eighteenth-century Germany 'came in at least six different varieties: moral cosmopolitanism; proposals for reform of the international political and legal order; cultural cosmopolitanism, which emphasizes the value of global cultural pluralism; economic cosmopolitanism, which aims at establishing a global free market where all humans are equal potential trading partners; and the romantic cosmopolitan ideal of humanity as united by faith and love. These six kinds of cosmopolitanism are by no means mutually exclusive.' (p. 506). Kleingeld's work echoes the principle outlined in the introduction to the present study that cosmopolitanism is not reducible to one single universal category or all-encompassing idea.

futurity embedded in backwards-facing late and melancholy aesthetics. In his work on the concept of 'futurity' – which is to say, how the quest for uncovering and representing the past in contemporary literature is simultaneously both retrospective and prospective – Amir Eshel argues for the possibility for literature to 'affect our future condition' by looking beyond the text towards the potential futures it gestures towards.[154] Eshel's hermeneutics of the future attempts to avert the seemingly inevitable end of mankind, which entails a readjustment of priorities and focus within literary scholarship and production. Eshel argues that novels such as *Austerlitz* have enabled the emergence and evolution of a more democratic representational literary discourse. The German writers he examines – including not only Sebald, but also Günter Grass, Alexander Kluge, and Martin Walser, among others – are positioned not only as 'authors who seek to move beyond exhausted language', but ones who in doing so articulate an offer of beginning anew.[155] As such, it is pertinent to this chapter to note Taberner's observation of a notable increase of Romantic motifs in German literature of the 1990s.[156] For Eshel, the 'significance of Sebald's prose fiction lies in its formal characteristics, not just in the scope of its thematic and semantic domains' and any Sebaldian sense of futurity is principally determined by his novel's engagement with time, which Eshel describes as its poetics of suspension.

Austerlitz becomes, in essence, an exercise of an ever-deferred future-perfect. That is to say, the sense of time's passing and of the narrator's attempt to forestall his narration and stave off the moment when time will have passed suspends chronology and closure'.[157] For Eshel, 'Sebald's antiquarian manner, his uncompromised conscious slowness, halt the rapid pace of time and set limits to modernity's obliviousness, even if only in the realm of the text, even if only for the brief moment of reading'.[158] In *Austerlitz*, therefore, time is delayed and put off, such that a sense of futurity emerges, in 'the melancholic tone of Sebald's prose, by its insistence on keeping the tension between the historical event and its poetic figuration unresolved and by its unique temporality'.[159] As such, the novel both thematises time and creates its own understanding of it, which has at its core a sense of slowing down and thereby resisting the accelerations of modernity in a manner similar to Fuchs's aforementioned

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154 Eshel, *Futurity*, p. 10.
155 Eshel, *Futurity*, p. 37.
156 See Stuart Taberner, 'Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism: Literary World-Building in the Twenty-First Century', in *Transnationalism in Contemporary German-Language Literature*, ed. by Elisabeth Herrmann, Carrie Smith-Prei and Stuart Taberner (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2015), pp. 43–64 (p. 53).
157 Eshel, 'Against the Power of Time', p. 74.
158 Amir Eshel, 'Against the Power of Time', p. 96.
159 Eshel, 'Against the Power of Time', p. 96.

concept of lateness as 'desynchronisation'.[160] This is indicative of key tensions within *Austerlitz*, not only between the past and the present, but also between the notions of *Spätlinge* and *Erstlinge*, between the vestigially Romantic and the condemned modern.

Sebald's final novel is a work that is not able to reconcile the past and the present, and moreover one that even resists doing so to a certain extent.[161] It is from the lack of consequence in the connections established in the narrative, from its lack of resolution, as well as its formal and stylistic aspects, and from its ever-diminishing returns, that *Austerlitz* derives its aesthetic force. Even if *Austerlitz* is weighed down by the history and experience that precedes it, and even if it is a late and melancholy example of literature condemned by its own machinery, then the denial of reconciliation, the lack of resolution, and any promise of future renewal articulated within the novel is merely deferred, neither fully actualized nor erased. However, as this chapter has shown, in *Austerlitz* the aesthetics of self-conscious lateness and melancholy, which this study considers as indicative of a form of literary cosmopolitanism, are inflected by vestigial Romantic elements that are thus imbricated with the novel's thematic concerns. Not only does this self-consciously late and melancholy Romanticism reveal a constitutive tension between a national literary tradition and broader European literary context in the novel. It also suggests the possibility that, following Romantic understandings of the cosmopolitan, compromised literary forms and aesthetics might be salvaged from a past condemned by the Enlightenment and its legacy, such that a potential for cultural renewal is not yet exhausted. To recall Minden's characterisation of Sebald's œuvre, it is through Sebald's looking back to earlier times in *Austerlitz* – and, by extension, looking back to earlier literary forms – that 'the possibility that the *Erlebnis* of existing in the fallen world might indeed again become, if treated with the appropriate aesthetic and cultural respect, the kind of *Erfahrung* that makes survival in it valuable'.[162] The means of existing within late modernity, of living through it, and even of existing beyond it are gestured towards in the Romantic inflections of *Austerlitz*'s self-consciously late and melancholy aesthetics. Ultimately, to paraphrase Minden, the *Erlebnis* of Romantic lateness and melancholy in *Austerlitz* may promise the *Erfahrung* of a cosmopolitan future.

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[160] See Fuchs, 'Temporal Ambivalence', pp. 21–28. In this study, see also, 'Introduction', p. 14. It should be noted that elsewhere Fuchs admonishes the Sebaldian narrator for his self-conceptualisation as a melancholy collector who joins together the broken pieces of history into a study of destruction, which she reads as a self-interested or even self-indulgent performance, given his frequent turnings towards the metaphysical. Yet, as discussed in the introduction to this study, the adoption of a self-conscious pose – even one inflected by lateness and melancholy – is arguably key to literary cosmopolitanism. For further discussion of this, see Fuchs, *Die Schmerzensspuren der Geschichte*, pp. 19–20, especially.

[161] For further discussion of this, see Timothy Bewes, 'Against Exemplarity: W. G. Sebald and the Problem of Connection', in *Contemporary Literature*, 55:1 (2014), pp. 1–31.

[162] Minden, *Modern German Literature*, p. 231.

CHAPTER 3

Sefarad by Antonio Muñoz Molina

'Yo sé quién soy – respondió don Quijote – y sé que puedo ser, no solo los que he dicho, […] pues a todas las hazañas que ellos todos juntos y cada uno por sí hicieron se aventajarán las mías'.

~ Miguel de Cervantes, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605)

Having explored in the previous two chapters examples of melancholy cosmopolitan novels from French and German literature, this study now turns its attention to the Spanish literary tradition. This final chapter is both useful and necessary insofar as it serves not only to introduce a Peninsular perspective but also to verify the European paradigm of melancholy cosmopolitanism. Within Europe, Spain's perceived later development, as well as the question of its relative cultural and economic (in)dependence, offer a distinct background against which to test the flexibility and viability of this study's ideas, while exploring further instantiations of the melancholy cosmopolitan novel in a different yet related cultural milieu.

In *Sefarad* by Antonio Muñoz Molina, the narrator sets out to construct a pan-European narrative by bringing together various histories of twentieth-century exile, persecution, and suffering over the course of the novel to suggest a commonality of experience. As he remarks directly to the reader, 'no eres una sola persona y no tienes una sola historia' (*S*. p. 596).[1] In attempting to write the novel into a broader European literary context from which Spanish literature has long been excluded, the narrator of *Sefarad* effectively stages an encounter between European and Spanish literary and cultural traditions. On the one hand, *Sefarad* confronts the long-established European construction of Spain as an outsider – an anachronistic relic – in Western culture and history, which, as this chapter will show, is misconceived. Yet, on the other hand, the narrator's sense of himself as a epigonal latecomer nevertheless results in a reverential focus on European culture within the narrative. As such, the late and melancholy aesthetics of *Sefarad* emerge in a curious double-bind, which replicates the European conception of Spain as

[1] 'You are not an isolated person and do not have an isolated story' (*S*, p. 288).

un(der)developed, even as the narrator simultaneously tries to address this by writing his Spanish novel into a European literary tradition. The narrator's sense of lateness thus articulates a sense of Spanish alterity within or, indeed, exclusion from the category of the European, although the narrative purportedly attempts to overcome these divisions. In light of this, the narrator's resultant melancholy outlook on the past is complicated by potentially violent forms of nostalgia for lost places and moments in time, which overdetermine the narrative, suggesting that there is a hollowness and artificiality in *Sefarad*'s melancholy aesthetics. However, this chapter argues, the novel's problematic imperfections, limitations, and overdeterminations are ultimately the very qualities which ensure its exemplification of the cosmopolitan mode of writing that this study identifies and explores. Just as Spain's non-modern difference might, in fact, lead to its inclusion within the broader paradigm of European modernity, as this chapter will discuss, so *Sefarad*'s literary and cultural difference may yet suggest it as exemplary of a melancholy cosmopolitan mode of writing emergent in European literature around the turn of the millennium. The novel's distinct forms of self-consciously late and melancholy aesthetics, this chapter contends, are redolent of Quixotic contradictions and echo ambiguous narratorial elements in Cervantes's masterpiece. Encapsulating key tensions between Spanish and European literature, these draw on the legacy of the Spanish Golden Age and indicate a potential possibility of future cultural longevity amid tensions and contradictory narrative impulses.

Sefarad's chapters explore various geographical locations and historical periods in order to elaborate a broad transnational history of European exile and totalitarian victimhood. Yet, despite initial appearances, the novel's seventeen chapters are not seventeen separate stories narrated by seventeen separate figures.[2] Through what Nicola Gilmour terms 'empathetic identification', the narrator-figure of *Sefarad* 'serves as a filter or mediator for all these other stories, but he is also their creator in that he transforms them as he transmits them to the reader'.[3] As such, the narrator is able to reconstruct accounts of others' lives and experiences while remaining at a remove, even almost entirely unnoticed at points. This recalls the periscopic forms of narration common to the novels examined in this study, which

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[2] The names of the seventeen chapters in *Sefarad* are as follows: 'Sacristán' ('sacristan'); 'Copenhague' ('copenhagen'); 'Quien espera' ('those who wait'); 'Tan callando' ('silencing everything'); 'Valdemún' ('Valdemún'); 'Oh tú que lo sabías' ('oh you, who knew so well'); 'Münzenberg' ('münzenberg'); 'Olympia' ('olympia'); 'Berghof' ('berghof'); 'Cerbère' ('cerbère'); 'Doquiera que el hombre va' ('wherever the man goes'); 'Sherezade' ('sheherazade'); 'América' ('america'); 'Eres' ('you are…'); 'Narva' ('narva'); 'Dime tu nombre' ('tell me your name'); and, lastly, 'Sefarad' ('Sepharad'). These English titles are taken from the 2003 translation by Margaret Seyers Peden, which inexplicably renders them entirely in lowercase letters as here. Throughout this chapter these chapters will be referenced in Spanish in parentheses in the main body of text.

[3] Nicola Gilmour, 'The Afterlife of Traumatic Memories: The Workings and Uses of Empathy in Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Sefarad*', in *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 88: 6 (2011), pp. 839–862 (pp. 840 and 842).

in various ways mediate the events they recount through multiple narrative layers, maintaining a distance between their narrators and their subjects, while also highlighting the self-conscious nature of the novel's narration. Although in *Sefarad*, these narrative layers are less immediately conspicuous than in *Dora Bruder* or *Austerlitz*, the novel has one discernible principal narrator figure. This narrator composes the seventeen-chaptered text in its entirety, but only occupies the foreground of the novel in the first and the final chapter. Nonetheless, he also surfaces in other chapters to explicitly comment on the writing and construction of the text itself, as well as to give his reflections on his empathetic imaginings of the experiences undergone by those characters who are the focus of the chapters he writes.

In the chapter 'Münzenberg' (*S*, pp. 355–400), for example, the narrator interrupts the tales he is telling and refocuses his narrative on himself. Abandoning his reconstruction of the life of Willi Münzenberg, the German communist activist, and the story of a doctor tending to a man suddenly taken ill, who turns out to have been a supporter of the Third Reich, the narrator reflects on the process of constructing his narrative. He remarks that as his eyes close during his reading, 'el libro casi se me desliza entre las manos, mientras Willi Münzenberg camina perdido entre la multidud' (*S*, p. 356),[4] before later observing that 'en noches en las que he aguardado vanamente el sueño en la oscuridad he imaginado los insomnios de ese hombre, Willi Münzenberg' (*S*, p. 362).[5] Not only does his imagined physical proximity to Münzenberg suggest a certain intimacy of experience, but the narrator also suggests that his own insomnia from trying to write his narrative is similar to that experienced by Münzenberg in the days leading up to his murder. The narrator's anxiety about his writing are likened in the narrative to Münzenberg's fears of his impending demise, and, by extension, to the other tales of persecution and exile included in *Sefarad*. Nevertheless, the narrator's inability to sleep suggests that he is disturbed not only by his research into Münzenberg's life and fate, but also by how he ought to tell this story. He thereby demonstrates a self-conscious awareness of and distance from the stories he is recounting. When it comes to recounting Münzenberg's death by hanging at the hands of persons unknown in a forest after having escaped from prison, the narrator further distances himself from the event. In a similar fashion to how the narrator of *Dora Bruder* maintains a respectful distance from Dora's *fugue* and from her ultimate fate, the narrator of *Sefarad* remarks that 'hay una parte final de la historia […] que no puede contra nadie' (*S*, p. 399).[6] Having

[4] 'The book nearly slips from my hands, as Münzenberg walks on among the throngs' (*S*, p. 124).
[5] 'During nights when I lay in the darkness, waiting in vain to fall asleep, I have imagined the sleepless hours of Willi Münzenberg' (*S*, p. 128).
[6] 'There is a final part of the story […] that no one can ever tell' (*S*, p. 151).

mediated the past in such a way that suggests an awareness of the necessity for such a periscopic mode of narration, the narrator thus allows himself distance from his empathetic imaginings, ensuring that his late and melancholy narrative's engagement with the past remains self-consciously constructed.

Much scholarship on *Sefarad* since its first publication has read the novel as an example of trauma fiction or Holocaust fiction.[7] As Samuel O'Donoghue observes, 'it is widely accepted that the novel achieves its power through the multiplicity of the voices of the dead, a chorus that reiterates the need to remember the victims of totalitarian repression'.[8] Even the cover images of both the Spanish and English language editions of *Sefarad* gesture towards this, having variously depicted a Jewish man wearing a yellow star, shadowy figures on a train platform, and (most explicitly in the latest Spanish critical edition) a black and white image of the railway tracks leading to the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau.[9] *Sefarad*, this suggests, is a Spanish Holocaust novel *par excellence*. Nevertheless, a third of the novel's chapters in fact contain no reference to the Holocaust or to the broader Jewish diaspora alluded to by the novel's title.[10] While not invalid, then, such exclusively trauma- or Holocaust-focused readings are nonetheless apt to miss other nuances and complexities of the novel's narrator and the aesthetics of the narrative he constructs. *Sefarad* does indeed bring together various reconstructions of historical memories and experiences of trauma, persecution, and exile from both a Spanish and a broader European context. Nevertheless, it does not follow that a reading of the novel should only focus on extracts that directly deal with events and experiences such as train journeys to concentration camps during the Holocaust ('Copenhague'), imprisonment in a Gulag ('Quien espera'), post-war Jewish exile in Tangier (Oh tú que lo sabías), Russian emigrants in Spain ('Sherezade'), and destitute outcasts in Madrid ('Doquiera que el hombre va'). As Adolfo Campoy Cubillo intimates, to concentrate solely on the aspects of *Sefarad* that fall within the realm of Holocaust literature

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[7] See, for example, David K. Herzberger, 'Representing the Holocaust: Story and Experience in Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Sefarad*', in *Romance Quarterly*, 51: 2 (2004), pp.85–96; Gabriele Eckart, 'The Rereading of Willy Münzenberg's and Margarete Buber Neumann's Lives in Antonio Muñoz Molina's Novel *Sefarad* (2001)', in *Romance Notes*, 48:1 (2007), pp. 59–66; and Nicola Gilmour, 'The Afterlife of Traumatic Memories'; and Marije Hristova, *Reimagining Spain: Transnational Entanglements and Remembrance of the Spanish Civil War since 1989* (Maastricht: Universitaire pers Maastricht, 2016), pp. 213–225.

[8] Samuel O'Donoghue, 'Errancy and alterity: Antonio Muñoz Molina's search for lost time', in *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 19: 3 (2013), pp. 211–232.

[9] See the various editions and translations of the novel, including Antonio Muñoz Molina, *Sefarad* (Madrid: Alfagura, 2001); *Sefarad* (Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2002); *Sefarad*, ed. by Pablo Valdivia (Cátedra: Madrid, 2013); *Sefarad* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2014); and *Sepharad* trans. by Margaret Sayers Peden (London: Harcourt Press, 2003).

[10] These chapters include 'Sacristán' (pp. 159–197), 'Valdemún' (pp. 282–309), 'Olympia' (pp. 401–436), 'Doquiera que el hombre vaya' (pp. 500–523), and 'América' (pp. 551–p95).

necessitates ignoring significant extracts that escape or exceed the events of twentieth-century European totalitarianism.[11]

While the present chapter's analysis of the novel neither seeks to undo nor to undermine readings of *Sefarad* that are oriented especially around questions of memory or of Holocaust representation, it is nevertheless the case that more of the novel's aesthetic workings are revealed by examining not just the narrator's empathetic imaginings of events, such as those mentioned above, but also his moments of self-conscious introspection and reflection during the writing of the text. What follows in this chapter therefore attempts to take into account the construction of *Sefarad*'s narrative in its entirety. The novel's original subtitle of 'una novela de novelas' invites such a reading, not least because this phrase might be understood to mean both 'a novel of novels' and 'a novel about novels'. While gesturing towards *Sefarad*'s fragmented state, as well as to its structural, grammatical, and syntactical ambiguities, this subtitle also helpfully recalls the fictional status of the novel itself. Several readings of *Sefarad* confuse and conflate the figure of the narrator with the author himself, drawing reductive lines of comparison between Muñoz Molina's hometown of Úbeda and the hometown described by the narrator in *Sefarad*, to give just one example. Yet the fictional pact between the narrator and the reader is fundamental to this work, as Muñoz Molina himself has articulated.[12] Rather than debating whether extracts or aspects of the text are based on actual events and persons, or whether the narrator is identical to the author himself, this study understands Muñoz Molina's novel as a highly constructed work of fiction, as is the case with the other works examined over the course of this study.

Lasse Emil-Paulsen, among many others, describes *Sefarad*'s narrative as a 'paradigmatic example of a transnational memory discourse' thanks to the novel's empathetic imagining of experiences of persecution and exile beyond national boundaries, in spite of the fact that Holocaust memory in Spain has long been a fraught discourse.[13] Not only has there been a significant absence of Spanish memory of the Holocaust until relatively recently given the country's isolation from the rest of Europe under Franco, along with its limited role in the Second World War. There is also in Spain a relative lack of historical and cultural memory

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[11] For further discussion of this, see Adolfo Campoy Cubillo, *Memories of the Maghreb: Transnational Identities in Spanish Cultural Production* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 103–4.

[12] See Antonio Muñoz Molina, 'El miedo de los niños', in *El País*, 30th July 2011.

[13] See Lasse-Emil Paulsen, '"The great night of Europe is shot through with long, sinister trains": Transnational memory and European identity in Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Sepharad*', in *Forum*, 1: 4 (2015), pp. 1–12 (p. 1), as well as Alexis Grohmann, 'Errant Text: *Sefarad*, by Antonio Muñoz Molina', in *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 12: 2–3 (2006), pp. 233–246; Dagmar Vanderbosch, 'Transnational Memories in Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Sepharad*', in *European Review*, 22: 4 (2014), pp. 613–622; and Janneke Adma and Marije Hristova, 'The Exile Condition: Space – Time Dissociation in Historical Experience – A Reading of *Sefarad*', in *Krisis: Journal for contemporary philosophy*, 1 (2010), pp. 62–76.

– the so-called 'pacto de olvido', or 'pact of forgetting' – in relation to the nation's own traumatic dictatorial history in the twentieth century.[14] To take just one literary example, while the Spanish author and politician Jorge Semprún (1923–2011) has written extensively about his experiences in concentration camps, he has done so in French and is better known as a literary figure in France than in Spain.[15] Negotiating a Spanish memory discourse surrounding the often-equated Civil War and Holocaust is not infrequently complicated by an latent conception of Spanish culture as not completely European.[16] This has influenced the development of a literary discourse, which propagates a Spanish culture of victimhood via an obsession with interconnected traumatic pasts and a concurrent lack of engagement with the political fallout of the events of the twentieth century in the contemporary moment. The desire of Spanish writers at the turn of the millennium to prove their democratic affiliations and sensibilities by returning to the past articulates a particular cultural need, given the relative absence of democracy in Spanish political and cultural discourse until recently. As Jo Labanyi observes, 'Muñoz Molina has taken seriously the ethical duty to remember'.[17] This is compounded by O'Donoghue's suggestion that *Sefarad* has been 'instrumental in breaking down the national borders that appear to have isolated Spain from the wider narratives of twentieth-century history'.[18] Yet contained within this Spanish memory boom is the potential for exclusionary narratives regarding Spain's position in Europe to be – however inadvertently – perpetuated via the adoption of European literary conventions and aesthetics, which presuppose and uphold a longer history of perceived Spanish cultural lateness in Europe. One of the principal aims of this chapter is to interrogate the implications of this.

Reflecting on how Muñoz Molina aims to address, recuperate, and revise the post-Enlightenment project of European modernity in his work, Richard Sperber observes that

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[14] For further discussion of this, see Jo Labanyi, 'The languages of silence: historical memory, generational transmission and witnessing in contemporary Spain', in *Journal of Romance Studies*, 9 (2009), pp. 23–35; Alejandro Baer, 'The Voices of Sepharad: The Memory of the Holocaust in Spain', in *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 12 (2011), pp. 95–120; and Salvador Orti Camallonga, 'A "European memory of Jewish Extermination"? Spain as a Methodological Challenge', in *European Review*, 20 (2012), pp. 475–91.

[15] See, for example, Jorge Semprún, *Le grand voyage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), *L'écriture ou la vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), and *Le mort qu'il faut* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001). For further discussion of representations of the Holocaust in Semprún's work with particular reference to that of Muñoz Molina, see Samuel O'Donoghue, 'Negotiating Space in Literary Representations of Holocaust Trauma: Jorge Semprún's *Le grand voyage* and Antonio Muñoz Molina's *Sefarad*', in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 93: 1 (2016), pp. 45–61 and 'The "Truth" of the Past: Fiction as an Alternative to History in Contemporary Spanish Narratives of the Civil War and the Holocaust', in *Hispanic Research Journal*, 17:4 (2016), pp. 322–338.

[16] See, for example, Antonio Gómez López-Quiñones and Susanne Zepp, eds., *The Holocaust in Spanish Memory: Historical perceptions and Cultural Discourses* (Berlin: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2010) and Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London: Harper, 2012).

[17] Jo Labanyi, *A Very Short Introduction to Spanish Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 73.

[18] O'Donoghue, 'The "Truth" of the Past', p. 324.

'terms like late, post, or supermodernity indicate the contemporary distance from an Enlightenment concept of modernity anchored in scientific, technological, social, political, and moral progress. Muñoz Molina's texts express this distance in terms of their return to older literary forms', drawing on Spanish and European works from the past.[19] Addressing the legacies of post-Enlightenment Europe and post-modernity Spain from a perspective at the turn of the millennium, *Sefarad* is a late modern Spanish novel, which attempts to write itself into a canon of European literature. However, as this chapter will show, the novel's particular strain of historical and cultural lateness ensures that this European scope and focus is achieved at the expense of the prestige of Spanish literature, history, and culture. With the approach of the millennium, several authors and works attempted to reimagine Spain's past, present, and future in a new iteration of Spanish literary lateness. This occurred through an initial rejection of Spain's historical and cultural exceptionalism, and even of the notion of a Spanish national literature itself, in a reaction to an externally-imposed, and later internally-reinforced, sense of inferiority within Spanish literature. As Vilarós observes, Spain 'disposed of its national history as a form of repudiation of the grand meta-narratives. At the end of history, […] the Spanish novel beyond modernity performed as a spectacular site for such reimagining'.[20] Rejecting the notion of a national narrative of literary development constituted an attempt to write Spanish literature out of its past restrictions and into a broader modern European literary context. With the end of Francoism, as Gonzalo Navajas notes, 'for the first time in modern history, the country had undertaken a successful process of overcoming its perennial international cultural deficit'.[21] By writing literary works into a European context, Spanish literature was thus able to consider itself 'fully integrated in the global discourse through the double path of a consolidated Europe and the vast and increasingly influential Hispanic world'.[22] In spite of this desired end to Spanish and European difference, however, the long history of Spanish literary lateness is not simply erased or stopped with the arrival of the second millennium. In reimagining Spanish literature's historiography from a millennial vantage point, new novels of this period – including *Sefarad* – exhibit a certain liminality. Situated on a threshold, neither entirely one

[19] See Richard Sperber, *The Discourse of Flanerie in Antonio Muñoz Molina's Texts* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2015), p. 26.
[20] Teresa M. Vilarós, 'The Novel Beyond Modernity', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel: From 1600 to the Present*, ed. by Harriet Turner and Adelaida López de Martínez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 251–262 (p. 262).
[21] Gonzalo Navajas, 'The Curse of the Nation: Institutionalized History and Literature in Global Spain', in *New Spain, New Literatures*, ed. by Luis Martín-Estudillo and Nicholas Spadaccini (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2010), pp. 165–182 (p. 169).
[22] Navajas, 'The Curse of the Nation', p. 179.

thing nor another, such liminal fiction is fundamentally imbricated with Spanish literary lateness, just as Spanish cultural lateness is key to European constructions of modernity. Yet the European perspective reinforces the construction of Spanish literature as inferior to European 'high' culture, even as novels like *Sefarad* attempt to articulate a rapprochement. As this chapter will show, what the narrator describes as his 'melancholía de un largo destierro' (*S*, p. 746) in *Sefarad* has just as much to do with Spanish exile from a European cultural context as it does with the experiences of the subjects of the narrator's imaginings.[23] The melancholy of a long exile is thus not only a key thematic element of Muñoz Molina's novel, but also deeply embedded in its aesthetics of lateness and melancholy, as well as its historical and geographical contexts.

LATENESS

Perhaps not inappropriately, it will be helpful to begin by examining forms of lateness in *Sefarad* that emerge at the end of the novel, particularly in the *nota de lecturas* that concludes the text. The misleading translation in the English-language edition of the *nota de lecturas* as an 'Author's note' (instead of a 'note on reading') does not acknowledge that this note is a key part of the narrative. The *nota de lecturas* establishes key perspectives on narrative constructions of historical and cultural lateness in the novel, as well as the narrator's sense of epigonality in relation to writers who precede him. It encapsulates *Sefarad*'s late perspective as a whole and also highlights the narrator's reliance on canonical European modernist authors.[24] Moreover, it mirrors the European perspective on Spanish culture which the narrator embraces, hoping to bring the Spanish literary tradition into the fold. The *nota* outlines the many literary and cultural figures whose work the narrator has drawn on to complete *Sefarad*, including Franz Kafka, Margarete Buber Neumann, Eugenia Ginzburg, Tzvetan Todorov, Victor Klemperer, Jean Améry, and Primo Levi (see *S*. pp. 749–753). This list of sources is a means of narrative mediation of the past, adding a partly testimonial

[23] 'The melancholy of a long exile' (*S*, p. 381).

[24] It should be noted that there is a clear distinction to be made between modernism (and all of its various guises and incarnations) and the distinctly Spanish movement of *el modernismo*. Towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, *modernismo* emerged predominantly in Spanish poetry and (somewhat crudely summarized) comprised a blending together of key elements of Romanticism and Symbolism. For further discussion of this, see Cathy L. Jrade, *Modernismo, Modernity, and the Development of Spanish American Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991) and Richard A. Cardwell, 'The Poetry of *Modernismo* in Spain', in *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature*, ed. by David T. Gies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 500–512.

dimension to the text, while imbuing the narrative with a sense of historical coherence and a trajectory towards a European literary context.[25] It also reinforces the narrator's own historical position and his resultant narrative perspective. Coming at the close of the twentieth century, he looks back not only to those who came before him and suffered under twentieth-century European totalitarianism, but also to those writers without whose work his own could not exist, since he draws on theirs so explicitly. As he remarks, these are writers 'sin los cuales es muy probable que ni este libro se me hubiera ocurrido ni habría encontrado el estado de espíritu necesario para escribirlo' (*S*, p. 751).[26] The narrator articulates his indebted sense of epigonality here, since he is writing after the terrible events he addresses in his narrative and after prior literary figures who lived through them and wrote about them. Concluding the novel with the *nota de lecturas* provides a final late perspective on the narrative in its entirety, which constitutes an intriguing point of departure for further examination of the engagement with constructions of lateness and epigonality in the preceding narrative. The narrator casts himself as an historical latecomer in his attempt to write a transnational European account of twentieth-century persecution and exile, in which Spain is included. As this chapter argues, *Sefarad*'s narrative replicates a hierarchy of literary significance through what O'Donoghue refers to as its 'search for a common European identity steeped in the comprehension of the suffering of others'.[27] That the novel embraces a broader normative teleology of European modernity, history, and culture, wherein Spain is perceived as having been left by the wayside, reflects the narrator's conception of his own epigonal lateness. However, *Sefarad* also encapsulates a particular moment in Spanish letters at the end of the twentieth century, which was inflected by a long-established preoccupation with literary, cultural, and historical lateness.

Staging an encounter between Spanish literature and a Western European literary tradition after a long history of Spanish difference, exceptionalism, and exclusion, the narrative of *Sefarad* perpetuates a European perspective in which Spanish literature and Spain itself has been repeatedly constructed as late. With the end of the Renaissance and the Spanish Golden Age, that period of flourishing in Spanish arts and literature between the end of the 1400s and the mid-1600s, a tendency to romanticize Spain became common in other European nations, such as France, Germany, and Great Britain. This coincided with collapse of the Spanish imperial project in the mid-seventeenth century. Having replaced

[25] For further discussion of this, see Herzberger, 'Representing the Holocaust', p. 95.
[26] 'Without whom it is likely that this book would not have occurred to me, nor would I have reached the state of mind necessary to write it'.
[27] Samuel O'Donoghue, 'Negotiating Space', p. 56.

Spain as a dominant political and cultural entity in Western Europe, the populations of Britain, France, and Germany considered the Spanish nation to be wild, backward, and rural, a primitive, folkloric, and tragic land, which could not be considered fully European.[28] Such a perception of Spain came about and was sustained beyond and within the nation's borders due to the very historical events which demarcate this change in attitude.[29] With the loss of its colonies, and thereby its status as an imperial power, Spain fell off the map of modernity described by other ascendant European nations, despite having previously occupied its centre during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[30] Most Western European literary activities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were linked to the emergence of the nation state and nation-building practices, such as the emergence of German nationalism under the threat of Napoleon and the rise of a national literature in the early 1800s.[31] However, the uncertainty of Spain's status as a nation due to an earlier lack of political and linguistic unity was a further contributing factor to the later emergence of its national literature in the nineteenth century.

Material and historical difficulties in Spain delayed the emergence of a conception of Spanish literature, such that during the period of European modernity, an incipient Spanish national literature is likewise fraught with a sense of lateness and inadequacy in comparison to other European nations. Teresa Vilarós further suggests that 'when we look back at Spanish modern literary historiography it soon becomes evident that Spain's literary corpus as a whole was often and overly conceptualised as "different" in relation to the Western European canon'.[32] Both Spanish lateness and cultural difference thus emerge as

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[28] See, for example, the extensive bibliography of the Carmen myth in European literature, as well as the long history of literary exoticism of Spain as the Orient of Europe. For further discussion of this, see, for example, Barbara Fuchs, *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009) and Diego Saglia, *Poetic Castles in Spain: British Romanticism and Figurations of Iberia* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000). Lastly, in the interest of noting the widening gap between Spain and the ascendant colonial powers of Europe and the United States in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it may be helpful to recall the pervasive peripheralizing and derogatory aphorism often falsely attributed to Alexandre Dumas that 'Africa begins at the Pyrenees'.

[29] For further discussion of this, see, for example, Barbara Fuchs, *The Poetics of Piracy: Emulating Spain in English Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), in which Fuchs understands Spain as both political rival to the English nation, as well as a literary resource for English writers of the Early Modern period. Fuchs argues that appropriations from Spain were reimagined as heroic looting, which complicated contemporaneous Spanish texts by turning them to anti-Spanish purposes amid European imperial competition.

[30] For further discussion of this, see Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, pp. 239–308, as well as Labanyi, *Spanish Literature*, pp. 2–9 and 42–74. For further discussion of what is termed the problem of Spain and the cultural map of Europe, especially in regard to modernist literary history, see Gayle Roberts, *Modernism and the New Spain: Britain, Cosmopolitan Europe, and Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 3–12 especially.

[31] For further discussion of this, see Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Role of Literature in the Making of the Nations of Europe: A Socio-Semiotic Study', in *Applied Semiotics/Sémiotique appliquée*, 1:1 (1996), pp. 39–59.

[32] Vilarós, 'The Novel Beyond Modernity', p. 251.

concomitant results of uneven modernisation, which is itself due to earlier historical upheaval, including the legacy and loss of imperial power within Europe. In *Sefarad*, as this chapter will show, issues of lateness and epigonality are bound up with questions of difference and being construed as an outsider. Other European nations filling the vacuum left by the collapse of Spanish imperialism, thus play a significant role in determining the perception of Spanish literature within Europe during modernity, and since. As Ríos-Font remarks, 'the first practical foundational myths of Spanish literary history are those imagined by foreigners during a period of considerable instability. Predictably, all of them point to fragmentation and unfeasibility as main features of a precarious, and decidedly un-modern, Spanish nation'.[33] Over subsequent decades, a European construction of Spain as late remains intrinsic to the development of a Spanish literary tradition from the Renaissance to modernity. In comparison with other European nations, such as France and Germany, then, the concept of a national literature in Spain may be understood as a late arrival. As Labanyi remarks, 'although the notion that a nation's literature is the expression of its people (the *Volk*) dates back to the Romantic period, it is [only] from the late nineteenth century that one can talk of "Spanish literature" as an established corpus'.[34] For Spanish literature both within Spain and Europe at large, this has long-lasting consequences, such that, to quote Labanyi, 'the northern European construction of Spain as "unmodern" has produced an anxiety about "belatedness", which dogs the whole history of Spanish literary criticism'.[35] It is this particular form of sustained Spanish literary lateness to which *Sefarad* responds at the turn of the millennium, the implications of which this chapter investigates.

The epigraph of *Sefarad*, as well as the editorial choices behind it, draw on this perceived Spanish exclusion from a European cultural and literary context, clearly demonstrating how the novel brings together Spanish and European literatures, while ultimately preferring to adopt and to reinforce a European perspective on the Spanish literary tradition. First published in 2013, the annotated critical edition of *Sefarad* reveals that the original epigraph for the novel was not the current quotation in the final published version. In the context of Spanish literary lateness and difference within Europe, however, this fact acquires a far greater significance than simply an editorial change. The epigraph in the published novel is from Kafka's *Der Process* (1925) and hints at solidarity among those unjustly accused of crimes: "'Si", dijo el ujier, "son acusados, todos los que ve aquí son acusados."

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[33] Wadda C. Ríos-Font, 'National Literature in the Protean Nation: The Question of Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literary History', in *Spain Beyond Spain: Modernity, Literary History, and National Identity*, ed. by Brad Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), pp. 127–147 (pp. 131–132).
[34] Labanyi, *Spanish Literature*, p. 27.
[35] Labanyi, *Spanish Literature*, p. 44.

"¿De veras?" dijo K. "Entonces son compañeros míos'" (*S*, p. 157).[36] This reinforces a desire to elaborate a pan-European account of suffering and persecution in the novel via reference to a wide range of literary touchstones. Yet, intriguingly, as the critical edition reveals, the novel's original epigraph was to be a quotation from Benito Pérez Gáldos's novel *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1886–87): '… porque doquiera que el hombre va lleva consigo su novela'.[37] This phrase from Galdós does in fact appear several times in *Sefarad* almost like a mantra in order to explain and emphasize the narrator's act of empathetically imagining others' experiences, with a fragment of it even appearing in the name of one of the novel's chapters (see *S*, pp. 242 and 500, for example). However, its removal as the novel's epigraph at the final editorial stages suggests an implicit rejection of wanting to carry the burden, so to speak, of a Spanish novel. The substitution of a quotation from a classic work of nineteenth-century Spanish realism for a quotation from a key figure of twentieth-century European modernism lays the foundations at the outset of the narrative's construction for bringing together these two literary contexts, before ultimately preferring a European perspective.

Galdós is an author who has long been downgraded within the canon of European literature or, indeed, entirely left out of it. As Fredric Jameson thunders, 'the absence of Galdós from the conventional nineteenth-century list of the "great realists" – even one limited to Europe – is more than a crime, it is an error which seriously limits and deforms our picture of this discourse and its possibilities'.[38] George J. Becker's influential 1963 anthology of literary realism encapsulates this, hailing Galdós as 'the leading Spanish realist, though he left no work to rank with the major achievements of the movement or to become part of the broad body of European literature'.[39] This a clear indication of the long-established European construction of Spanish literature as late and unworthy of inclusion within the canon of European literature. As such, the removal of the Galdós epigraph in *Sefarad*, and its replacement with a citation from the work of a canonical European modernist, demonstrates even on a paratextual level the ways in which the novel perpetuates the construction of Spanish literature as late in spite of its attempts to write it into a broader

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[36] "'Yes", said the usher, "they are accused, everyone you see here is accused." "Really?" asked K. "Then they are my comrades'" (*S*, p. xi). The German original reads as follows: "'Ja", sagte der Gerichtsdiener, "es sind Angeklagte, all die Sie hier sehn, sind Angeklagte". "Wirklich?" sagte K. "Dann sind es ja meine Kollegen". See Franz Kafka, *Der Process* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2017), p. 66.

[37] '… wherever a man may go he carries his novel with him'.

[38] Fredric Jameson, 'Perez Galdós, or, the Waning of Protagonicity', in *The Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2013), pp. 95–113 (p. 95).

[39] George J. Becker, ed., *Documents of Modern Literary Realism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). Cited in James Mandrell, 'Realism in Spain: Galdós, Pardo Bazán, Clarín and the European Context', in *Spanish Literature from 1700 to the Present*, ed. by David William Foster, Daniel Altamiranda, and Carmen Urioste-Azcorra (London: Garland, 2001), pp. 99–128.

European context. Given Galdós's removal as the epigraph to *Sefarad*, it is ironic that Jameson remarks how Galdós himself profited aesthetically and stylistically from his late historical location, 'not only arriving at the moment when everything remained to be said about the belatedly bourgeois world of nineteenth-century Spain and of Madrid as the last great European metropolis; he also inherited fully developed all those novelistic innovations and instruments of representation which, since Balzac, a century of novelists had worked to perfection'.[40] If this is mirrored in Muñoz Molina's novel by the narrator's self-conception as a latecomer, then his outlook is distinctly less optimistic than that ascribed to Galdós by Jameson.[41] For the narrator of *Sefarad*, his coming late, both historically and culturally, is unavoidably tied to feelings of epigonality, which further underscores the construction of Spanish literary lateness in the novel.

As the novel opens, the narrator himself is, in fact, already presented as being distanced from its action. The novel beings with the return of the narrator as an adult to his childhood hometown where an old shoemaker does not recall him, even when prompted by the nickname he gave to the narrator as a boy, which gives this first chapter its title: 'Sacristán' (*S*. pp. 196–197).[42] Subsequent constructions of the narrator's lateness and epigonality are complicated with intertextual references to canonical European modernist literature, which further highlights Spanish and European literary difference and separation in the text. *Sefarad*'s opening paragraph recalls the beginning of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–1927), for example, as O'Donoghue notes. Claiming that the novel 'uses the Proustian model for the recovery of the self through fiction and puts this model at the service of the community', O'Donoghue argues that Proustian allusions and inflections in *Sefarad*'s narrative allow the narrator's vocal errancy to explore questions of otherness and alterity as he imagines others' pasts and experiences.[43] Yet, for this study's purposes, the most significant alterity articulated here is that between Spanish and European literature. The use of rapturous allusions to food from the narrator's infancy as a catalyst for memory –

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[40] Jameson, 'Perez Galdós', p. 95.

[41] For further discussion of the ways in which Galdós's particular variety of the nineteenth-century novel may be read not as a late form of realist fiction, but rather as a newer form that erases the generic frontier between the real and the fictional, see Stephen Gilman, *Galdós and the Art of the European Novel: 1867–1887* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[42] This nickname itself carries (albeit slightly heavy-handed) symbolic and metaphorical significance: a sacristan is a member of the church charged with the care of the sacristy where valuables and important records are kept, much like the narrator envisions his novel will prove to be. As such, even when unrecalled by other characters, this nickname endows the narrator with a form of symbolic investiture in telling the stories he recounts in *Sefarad* similar to the narrators of *Dora Bruder* and *Austerlitz*.

[43] For further discussion of Proustian allusions in *Sefarad* and their implications, see Samuel O'Donoghue, 'Errancy and alterity'.

'disfrutamos de los alimentos y de las recetas de nuestra tierra' (*S*, p. 161)[44] – recalls the famous madeleine episode from the opening of Proust's *Recherche* and the narrator's shifting tenses and hypotactic sentence structure contain further Proustian resonances. The entire narrative project of *Sefarad* therefore achieves its impetus from an intertextual template of the magnum opus of a canonical work of European modernism. However, while the thematic focus here is on the community to which the narrator once belonged, the aesthetic focus is on the narrator's obsolescence and lateness, since he has been forgotten. At the beginning of *Sefarad*, a narrator who has left the rural Spanish region of his childhood (*S*, p. 159) employs references to Proust's *magnum opus* and thereby establishes an historically late narrative perspective of looking back on the past, while he remains unremembered. This emphasizes his epigonal self-understanding. While bringing Spanish literature into close contact with a broader European literary tradition in his narrative, he nevertheless situates himself as an epigonal latecomer from the outset. The narrator's perspective in this text is so late that even in the first chapter he is already figuratively erased from the narrative. He appears so long after these events that he no longer has a place in them and is also relegated to the background of the subsequent stories included in *Sefarad* as an assembler and custodian of the narrative. This reading of epigonal lateness lends more pathos to the narrator's subsequent remark that 'se me hacía muy tarde para una cita que ya quizás estaba fracasada de antemano' (*S*, p. 196).[45] It reinforces his self-perception as a latecomer, whose efforts are futile and who cannot measure up to the literary works of those writers who came before him. As the chapter closes, the narrator pulls away from the shoemaker, who remains motionless (*S*, p. 197). This again indicates not only the narrator's distance from the people and events he recounts, but also underscores his sense of lateness in regard to them. It hints firstly at a sense of futility in constructing this narrative, which will return towards the end of the novel, and secondly reinforces the narrator's feelings of epigonality, which will be later more fully articulated in the *nota de lecturas* at the novel's close, but which are prefigured here in the novel's opening pages and grow over the course of the narrative.

Later chapters, which take the form of the narrator's empathetic imaginings of others' experiences, to use Gilmour's helpful phrase, crystallise both the narrator's self-conceptualisation as an epigonal latecomer and his preoccupation with the European construction of Spanish literature as late. In the fourth chapter 'Tan callando', which is told from the imagined perspective of a former Spanish soldier in the *División Azul*, this

[44] 'We enjoy the food and recipes of our homeland' (*S*, p.1).
[45] 'I was very late for an appointment that was probably futile in the first place' (*S*, p. 20).

preoccupation is articulated through an imagined sequence of dreaming and awakening. The 'Blue Division' was the unit of Spanish volunteers who served in the German army on the Eastern Front between 1941 and 1944, and in this chapter the narrator imagines a soldier dreaming about an occasion when he hid from Russian soldiers during the Second World War. Upon waking, he finds himself at home and much older at the end of the twentieth century. The imagined former soldier then declares himself to be experiencing 'pánico […] a encontrarse extraviado en la memoria insegura y en el desorden del tiempo, pánico y sobre todo vértigo, porque en un solo instante su conciencia salta a una distancia de más de medio siglo, de un continento entero' (*S*, pp. 279–280).[46] Recalling the vertiginous late perspective on the events of the twentieth century of the other melancholy cosmopolitan novels examined in this study, this sentence encapsulates the narrative strategy and perspective of *Sefarad*'s narrator. Distanced from the past he investigates, yet (over-)determined by it, the narrator is self-consciously situated after the events he describes. This is reflected and reinforced by his empathetic imagination of the Blue Division soldier who 'no llegó a tiempo' (*S*, p. 280).[47] The former soldier's geographical confusion and sense of temporal distortion upon waking recall the challenges of Spain's cultural difference and exclusion suggested by the narrator's particular position and perspective. Wishing to 'adormilarse y que durante unos minutos o segundos ahora se convierta de nuevo en entonces' (*S*, p. 281),[48] the narrator's imagining of the former soldier is unable to do so, which only further emphasizes his historical sense of coming after.

The sense of lateness evoked in 'Tan callando' is not only historically inflected, however. The title of this chapter is taken from the first stanza of a forty-stanza poem by Jorge Manrique entitled *Coplas a la muerte de su padre* composed in 1476. Through this chapter's intertextual dialogue with a masterpiece of medieval Spanish poetry, the narrator suggests himself not only as historically but also as culturally late, further casting himself in an epigonal light.[49] The poem's musings on the silent approach of death and his resigned acceptance of it adds a further sense of ending to this chapter. Yet this intertextual embellishment of

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[46] 'Panic, lost somewhere in the tangle of unreliable memories and the chaos of time, and vertigo, because in a single instant his mind has leaped more than half a century and an entire continent' (*S*, p. 69).
[47] 'Did not arrive in time'.
[48] 'Fall asleep and for a few minutes or seconds have now again become then'.
[49] The first of Manrique's *coplas* reads as follows: 'Recuerde el alma dormida, / avive el seso y despierte / contemplando / cómo se pasa la vida, / cómo se viene la muerte / tan callando; / cuán presto se va el placer; / cómo después de acordado / da dolor; / cómo a nuestro parecer / cualquiera tiempo pasado / fue mejor'. The English translation reads: 'Let the dozing soul remember, / let the mind awake and revive / by contemplating / how our life goes by so swiftly / and how our death comes near / so silently; / how quickly pleasure fades, / and how when it is recalled / it gives us pain, / how we always seem to think / that times past must have been better / than today'. See *The Golden Age: Poems of the Spanish Renaissance*, trans. by Edith Grossman (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), p. 37.

Sefarad's narrative is also complicated by the fact that Manrique's *coplas* from the early years of the Golden Age of Spanish literature recall a time before Spain's loss of empire and its subsequent ostracisation from European letters by other imperial powers.[50] While drawing on earlier classic works of medieval peninsular literature, Manrique's poem also contains allusions to recent contemporary history of the formation of the Spanish nation, recalling the deaths of key political figures, such as the King of Aragón in the sixteenth stanza.[51] As the narrator of *Sefarad* brings classic works of Spanish literature into contact with his attempted construction of a pan-European narrative, therefore, the distinctions and divisions between the two contexts are brought into sharper relief. Yet, since this intertextual link with Manrique's poem remains crucially unacknowledged in *Sefarad*, Spanish literature and its Golden Age are relegated in favour of later European cultural contexts. Through explicit intertextual marking of non-Spanish sources elsewhere in the novel, such as the writers and works acknowledged in the *nota de lecturas*, the narrator expresses a clear preference for them in relation to Spanish literary works. Given that he is keen to stress and mention by name the authors whose lives and works he draws on, it is notable that he neglects to do so for this significant literary figure of the Spanish Golden Age. Suggesting not only a lack of esteem for this particular work, in spite of his reliance on it, a sense of inadequacy on the part of the narrator towards earlier Spanish literary figures whose prowess and significance he is unable to measure up to is also implied here. This is indicative of a double-movement of lateness in *Sefarad*: the narrator conceives of himself as historically and culturally late, while Spanish culture itself is also cast as late, since its Golden Age is over. The Spanish nation and its literature are thus positioned as inferior in comparison to the European context so markedly preferred by the narrator in Muñoz Molina's novel.

Throughout the establishment of the Spanish nation state in the late 1800s, and even up to the end of the twentieth century, Spain was 'apparently doomed to be the permanently sick nation of Europe', as Navajas observes.[52] So late a developer was the Spanish nation considered to be that many regarded it, as Navajas argues, as 'a cultural and political "anomaly", a grotesque and absurd version of the conventional paradigm of Western culture'.[53] Such normative perspectives are echoed in *Sefarad* by the narrative's sense of

[50] For further discussion of the significance and legacy of Manrique's poem, see Frank A. Domínguez, *Love and Remembrance: The Poetry of Jorge Manrique* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1989) and Nancy Marino, *Jorge Manrique's* Coplas por la muerte de su padre*: A History of the Poem and Its Reception* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2011).

[51] '¿Qué se hizo el rey don Joan? / Los infants d'Aragón / ¿qué se hizieron?'. 'Where is the King, Don Juan? / Each royal prince and noble heir of Aragon?'.

[52] Navajas, 'The Curse of the Nation', p. 179.

[53] Navajas, 'The Curse of the Nation', p. 166.

lateness, which is reinforced in the fifth chapter 'Valdemún' – the name of his wife's childhood village – over the course of which the main narrator recounts their visit to his wife's dying aunt, who still lives in this village, where the narrator feels himself to be an outsider.[54] The narrative's sense of lateness is enhanced and even given a futile, hopeless sense in this chapter, such that the narrator feels separate and distanced from his surroundings. His engagement with the abandoned objects he sees around him in the house of his wife's aunt, such as the dusty old furniture and faded pictures in long-empty rooms, reflects *Sefarad*'s mounting sense of lateness and preoccupation with Spanish exclusion in a European cultural context. During this visit the village and objects in the house – 'las cosas que ella no volvió a ver, las últimas' (*S*, p. 282)[55] – are presented under an aspect of ending or dying. These places are not portrayed as beautiful, but instead decaying and lifeless: 'todo es muy viejo, no antiguo, despojado de pronto de la belleza embustera con que lo bruñía el recuerdo' (*S*, p. 299).[56] This is intensified by the fact that there are many uninhabited houses in this village and the narrator implies that all the objects and people connected to the past are simply waiting to expire: 'Hay un aire insomne y fatigado de espera en la casa, la espera de la llegada lenta de la muerte' (*S*, p. 300).[57] He, however, keeps himself apart and haunted by an inability to sleep, which recalls the Blue Divison soldier he imagined in the previous chapter: 'quién podrá dormer esa noche' (p. 305).[58] Mirroring Spanish cultural and historical lateness, the narrator's own sense of coming late is bound up with a sense of being distanced and construed – or even construing himself – as an outsider.

So prevalent is this in the narrator's account of his and his wife's visit to Valdemún, that he sees himself as distinct from the rest of the inhabitants of the house and the village, explicitly emphasizing how his perspective is different to theirs. Indeed, he remarks to his wife that 'soy conciente de que no veo lo mismo que tú' (*S*, p. 297) and later goes so far as to refer to himself as her shadow (*S*, p. 299).[59] He sets himself apart, casting himself as an outsider and an enlightened European cosmopolite, who does not wish to be sitting around in what he perceives to be a backwater village in rural Spain. Yet, while viewing himself as a

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[54] According to the latest annotated Spanish critical edition of *Sefarad*, the chapter was originally entitled 'Ademuz', which is a real village in Valencia. In order to avoid reductive readings of the novel as an autobiographical or semi-autobiographical account, the author uses a fictional name for the village described in this chapter. This is further evidence that, as discussed earlier, reading *Sefarad* as an entirely fictional work is more revealing and illuminating than simply comparing and contrasting the events in the narrative with Muñoz Molina's own life. (For further discussion of this, see *S*, p. 282).

[55] 'The things she never saw again, the last things' (*S*, p. 71)

[56] 'Everything is simply old, stripped of the beauty with which memory endows things from the past' (*S*, p. 84).

[57] 'There is an air of weary insomnia in the house, of waiting for the ponderous arrival of death' (*S*, p. 84).

[58] 'Who can sleep this night' (*S*, p. 88).

[59] 'I know I'm not seeing what you're seeing' (*S*, p. 82).

pale shade in comparison to his wife and her family, the narrator implicitly reinforces stereotypes of the Spanish nation, most especially its rural areas, as wild and passionate, thereby perpetuating long-held and suspect European constructions of Spain. As a shadow in the house, the narrator and his account of events are presented under a distinct aspect of degeneration and decay, while he remains passive, waiting and watching from an historically late and distant vantage point. Unable to sleep in 'la habitación que huele ligeramente a humedad y a cerrado' (p. 305),[60] only able to observe and wait, he is surrounded by these unremembered and decaying objects, which are 'ya rosada por la melancolía, por la intuición gradual de una pérdida irremediable' (*S*, p. 307).[61] In setting himself apart from that which he recounts in this chapter, the narrator effectively casts himself as a ghostly presence in his own narrative, haunting the remains of an historically and culturally outdated and decayed Spanish nation in a literary work that he desires to write into a broader European context. As such, the narrator presents himself as a latecomer and an outsider, imagining the past to which he returns in the narrative as late in the wake of the Spanish cultural Golden Age implicitly alluded to earlier in the novel. Constructed from a European perspective, then subsequently adopted by Spanish writers and artists themselves, the legacy of Spanish lateness is evoked in *Sefarad* by the narrator's constructions of his return to rural Spain.

While the events of the twentieth century, after which the narrator positions himself, include the Spanish dictatorship, it is nevertheless striking that this period features comparatively infrequently in *Sefarad*, in spite of its significant influence on the European conceptions of Spanish lateness with whose legacy the novel engages. Spanish literary lateness in Europe remained a defining feature of Spanish literature and culture during the twentieth century and may be seen – albeit somewhat reductively – as a contributing factor to the rise of Francoism. That this historical period is then conspicuous by its absence from the narrative of *Sefarad* further indicates a narratorial preference for an extra-Spanish focus. In the face of Spain's loss of empire, the Spanish Civil War arguably encapsulates a debate between those who thought that Europe was either the answer to or the cause of Spain's problems.[62] The difficult results of Spain's perceived exclusion from European modernity led to what Vilarós terms 'a period when the perceived non-modern Spanish difference

[60] 'The room that smells of mildew and gloom' (*S*, p. 88).
[61] 'Already brushed by melancholy and the inkling of inevitable loss' (*S*. p. 90).
[62] See, for example, the work of the philosopher and essayist José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955), which reflects a great deal of these issues such as his *Meditación de Europa* (1960). Originally given as a lecture in Berlin with the title *De Europa meditatio quaedam* in 1949, this was later published in a collected volume of his writing. See José Ortega y Gasset, *Obras de Ortega y Gasset, Vol. 26: Europa y la idea de nación*, ed. by Paulino Garagorri (Madrid: Alianza, 2003).

became the mold in which to shape a set of essentialist values'.[63] Emerging in the context of an inward turn in Spanish culture and drawing on Imperial Spanish rhetoric and iconography of essentialist Spanish heroism, the Franco military regime (1939–1975) ensured Spanish isolation from Europe for the coming decades.[64] Drawing lines of connection from the outcome of the European perspective on Spanish culture to the rise of Francoism, Vilarós observes that 'after the period of exploration and expansion typical of the imperial enterprise, the country [Spain] became increasingly self-centred and it retreated into itself, identifying with the defence of institutions and values that were disconnected from the more advanced trends of European culture'.[65] Already isolated from European literature by the beginning of the twentieth century, Spanish literary practitioners and artists themselves thus adopted Europe's conceptualisation of their country and its cultural as late.[66] External constructions of Spain thereby became internalised.

This self-understanding as an anachronistic and backward country particularly during the years of the dictatorship was principally due to censorship, suppression of cultural activities, and the ensuing mass exile of pro-Republican artists and writers. With the end of Francoism, however, and with the establishment of democracy in Spain during the second half of the twentieth century, new Spanish writers simultaneously looked to the past and sought to distance themselves from everything that had come before them. As Navajas notes, 'Spain's cultural and political trajectory […] has been characterized by an apparently insurmountable conflict between the need to permanently cast away the traditional parameters of national history and the imperative to critically study that history in order to definitively overcome its limitations'.[67] In the early 1970s, writers such as Juan Benet, Juan Goytisolo and Carmen Martín Gaite, and later Javier Marías and Pere Grimferrer, sought to change Spanish literature anew in the final decades of the twentieth century. Literary works by these and other writers are unavoidably linked to literature that came before them, however, since in order to differentiate themselves as something new, authors must define their own works *ex negativo* in terms of what came before. Towards the end of the twentieth century in Spanish literature, then, as Navajas remarks, 'great cultural referents of the past

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[63] Vilarós, 'The Novel Beyond Modernity', p. 250.
[64] For further discussion of this, see Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936–1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 119.
[65] Navajas, 'The Curse of the Nation', p. 169.
[66] In spite of or, perhaps better, because of this, some significant Spanish writers would later draw on and rework contemporaneous canonical works of European literature, such as Proust's *Recherche*, in order to galvanise their creative impetus, shape their imaginative acts, and guide their stance against Francoism. For further discussion of this, see Samuel O'Donoghue, *Rewriting Franco's Spain: Marcel Proust and the Dissident Novelists of Memory* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2018).
[67] Navajas, 'The Curse of the Nation', pp. 165–166.

are used to mitigate the insufficiencies of the present'.[68] Prior literary works thereby act as catalysts or touchstones for new Spanish writing, even when this is defined in stark contrast to them, as in the case of *Sefarad*'s narrative. Constructions of lateness and epigonality thus remain fundamental to Spanish literature as the twentieth century comes to a close, and this is crystallized in *Sefarad* by the narrator's configuration of himself as an epigonal latecomer in comparison to a European literary context, as well as his sustained reinforcement of conceptions of Spanish literature itself as late.

The last chapter of *Sefarad* provides a culmination of the narrative's late perspective, while drawing together the novel's principal themes of exile and displacement with a certain irony, given that it deals with a literal displacement of the idea of Spain and Spanish culture in the twentieth century. This final chapter bears the same title as the novel itself, revisiting and recapitulating characters and locations encountered in previous chapters from the perspective of the main narrator himself. Drawing once more on Spanish literary figures from the Golden Age and on European modernist thinkers, the narrator adopts a preferentially European stance towards this division. This is indicated by his encounter with relics of Spanish literature and culture outside of Europe in a museum in New York and with a woman who works there, who personifies the Spanish literary canon. As a result the division between the Spanish and the European is perpetuated and, as the narrative of *Sefarad* comes to an end, Spanish literary artefacts are presented as physically displaced from Europe, kept isolated, and left to decay in an infrequently visited museum. The narrator chooses to consign Spanish literature to lateness and obsolescence, while simultaneously positioning himself as an epigonal latecomer in relation to European culture. He evokes the sustained tension between Spanish and European by recalling the museum of the Hispanic Society of America and the objects it houses (*S*. p. 729). This free museum and library was founded by Archer Huntington (1870–1955) in 1904, crucially a mere six years after Spain lost its final colonies to the United States of America.[69] This recalls how Spain's loss of imperial power coincided with and arguably prompted its loss of prestige on the European literary stage. The narrator's descriptions of the museum and its holdings are inflected with a sense of ending and decay. Removed from a Spanish or European context, these objects and characters continue to exist, but are presented as slowly expiring. The narrator suggests there is no

[68] Navajas, 'The Curse of the Nation', p. 167.

[69] For further discussion of the life of Archer Huntington, see this recent biography: Patricia Fernández Lorenzo, *Archer M. Huntington: El fundador del Hispanic Society of America en España* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2018). See also Mitchell Codding, 'Archer Milton Huntington, Champion of Spain in the United States', in *Spain in America: The Origins of Hispanism in the United States*, ed. by Richard L. Kagan (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 142–170.

desire to return the museum's holdings to their place of origin, and that he will return home as a cultural latecomer and be left with only the imitations of them he can produce in his writing. Spanish culture and literature have quite literally been removed from Europe here, but have also been abandoned in the so-called New World and left to slowly decay. The museum in New York is flanked by statues of El Cid and Don Quixote, twin pillars of the Golden Age of Spanish literature, yet the building itself is tucked away in a corner of the city that is difficult to reach (*S*, pp. 730–731). Upon entering, the narrator and his wife realise 'que a este lugar no viene casi nadie, y que todo en él sufre un desgaste uniforme, el de las cosas que no se renuevan, que siguen durando cuando ya están gasatadas y se han quedado obsoletas, aunque todavía puedan usarse' (*S*, p.730).[70] The objects of cultural, historical, and literary significance held here with their yellowing paper labels are either obsolete or unwanted (*S*, p. 734). Even though they are preserved in a museum, they are presented in the narrative of *Sefarad* as abandoned and exhausted cultural artefacts.

The extensive collection that Huntington acquired and shipped to America as he followed the route of *El Cid* through Spain – effectively also casting himself as a kind of literary latecomer or imitator – is presented by the narrator of *Sefarad* under an aspect of obsolescence and ending. The woman who works in the museum is likewise characterized as one who has come late or is clinging to the past. She has 'los ojos vivos y fieros de una mujer mucho más joven' (*S*, p. 730) and her office is 'desordenado, con un olor a papel rancio, con muebles de oficina de los años veinte' (*S*, p. 736).[71] Not only has this woman taken on the decaying sense of lateness of the museum and its holdings, and surrounded herself with objects from the past, she further claims that after years of working in the museum and its library that she has memorized all of her favourite works of literature. According to the narrator, the museum has

> toda la literatura española y todos los saberes e indignaciones posibles reunidos en esa gran biblioteca a la que apenas va nadie. Pero a ella no le hacía falta abrir los volúmenes de poesía de la colección de Clásicos Castellanos porque en la época de sus clases con Professor García Lorca había adquirido, animada por él, nos dijo, el hábito de aprenderse de memoria los poemas que más le gustaban (*S*, pp. 739–740).[72]

[70] 'That hardly anybody comes to this place, and that everything in it suffers from a complete state of decay, that of things which are not renewed, which continue to last when they are already worn-out and which have stayed obsolete when they could still be used.'

[71] 'The lively and fiery eyes of a much younger woman' and 'Cluttered, and smelled of old paper, and had office furniture from the 1920s'.

[72] 'All of Spanish literature and all possible knowledge and research concerning Spain gathered in this one great library that almost no one visits. But she doesn't need to open the volumes of poetry of the Clásicos Castellanos collection to recite, because while she was studying under Professor García Lorca, she told us, she had acquired, at his urging, the habit of memorizing the poems she liked best' (*S*, p. 377).

The woman in the museum has memorized many canonical works of Spanish literature that she then enumerates for the narrator and his wife (*S*, pp. 740–741). She is presented as an inheritor and an embodiment of the canon of Spanish literature. Having studied under the brother of the playwright and poet Federico García Lorca at the University of Columbia, she has a closer personal connection to a Spanish literary tradition than the narrator. Earlier in his stay in New York, he visited the grave of García Lorca's father, but since his poet son's burial site is unknown as his body was never found after his assassination by nationalist forces in 1936, the narrator can only stop and reflect upon the impossibility of achieving closer familiarity with this canonical literary figure (*S*, pp. 719–721). The woman in the museum no longer has need of the books held in the library and is fulfilled in her reading, whereas the narrator is dependent on the texts of others, as he reveals in the *nota de lecturas*. Even so, he remains dissatisfied with the writing he produces that is inspired by them. Next to the woman in the museum he can only reflect on his own lateness and epigonality. In a further ironic twist, it is later implied that she is a character from an earlier chapter in the novel, a former nun who flees rural Spain for a new life in America (*S*, pp. 551–595). Within his own narrative, then, the narrator's fictional characters have more access to the literary tradition that is closed off to him. He constructs himself as an epigonal latecomer not only in relation to European literature and Spanish literature, but also even in relation to the characters he constructs in his own narrative.

The narrator's sense of epigonal inadequacy that emerges towards the end of *Sefarad* during his time in New York draws in particular on an earlier memory that he recounts when he was invited to give a talk in Germany years before, and this is subsequently echoed in the museum episode. He recalls being extremely dissatisfied with his own writing while on this trip to Germany, remarking that 'me desalentaba pensar en todas las páginas que me quedaban por delante y me aburría e irritaba lo que yo mismo había escrito' (*S*, p. 704).[73] Later, in contrast to this, the woman in the museum reverentially enjoys the canon of Spanish literature that she has internalized, including works by Garcilaso de la Vega (1498–1536), Fray Luís de León (1528–1591). San Juan de la Cruz (1542–1591), Luis de Góngora y Argote (1561–1627), Lope de Vega (1562–1635), Francisco de Quevado y Villegas (1580–1645), and Pedro Calderón (1600–1681). These are notably all writers from the Golden Age of Spanish letters, who were active before Spain's loss of empire and the emergence of a European

[73] 'I became depressed thinking of all the pages I had to go, and was disgusted and irritated by my own words' (*S*, p. 355).

conceptualisation of Spanish literature as a backward outlier in Europe. The narrator of *Sefarad*, meanwhile, is plagued by a sense of his own literary inadequacy. He later claims to be physically and intellectually tired, crumpled, and worn-out (*S*, p. 709–710). Leaving America, where he has encountered material remnants of Spanish literature and culture outside of Spain, as well as a woman whom he views as an embodiment of the canon of the Spanish Golden Age, he envisages himself and his wife as 'dos fantasmas en este lugar, los anteriores ocupantes desconocidos e invisibles' (*S*, p. 722).[74] Recalling their earlier trip to Valdemún, the narrator emphasizes the ghostliness of their presence in a place described in terms of decay and disintegration. Whereas earlier the narrator assumed the role of the elite cosmopolitan in a backward village, now the tables are turned. Here, it is as if he and his wife are erased by leaving America and returning to Europe, which entails their separation from physical manifestations of a literary canonical heritage. Since the narrator's attempt to bring together Spanish and European literary traditions presupposes a divide between the two, and since his preference for a European perspective sustains this, he is left bereft, cast adrift in his own narrative, while casting himself as *Sefarad* approaches its conclusion as the ultimate epigonal latecomer.

In the final chapter of *Sefarad* the rift between Spanish and European literary traditions evoked by the narrator's lateness proves insurmountable. Spanish literature, the narrator suggests, is unable to be written into a tradition of European 'high' culture without losing something of itself. Which is to say, in reinforcing the European perspective, Spanish culture is kept in its place and the conception of it as underdeveloped is sustained. Despite or, perhaps better, because of his attempt to work through this long history of Spanish and European separation in the novel, the narrator's late perspective ensures that he relies upon and reproduces the division he attempts to overcome in order to engage with the histories and experiences his narrative chronicles. In attempting, therefore, to write Spanish literature into a European literary tradition, *Sefarad* does not resolve the European conception of Spanish literature as late. Instead, the novel ultimately suggests that this conceptualisation will always be part of Spanish literature. As Cubillo remarks of the novel's contents, 'despite his interest in the European project and his willingness to transcend what he perceives as provincial nationalities, Muñoz Molina's narrative in *Sefarad* continues to resort to the same notion of a Spanish non-European exceptionalism that he was supposedly critiquing'.[75] The challenge by *Sefarad*'s narrator to Spanish literary lateness and alterity in Europe ends up

[74] 'Two ghosts in this place, the former occupants, unknown and invisible'.
[75] Cubillo, *Memories of the Maghreb*, p. 111.

perpetuating it. Marije Hristova, in her work on memory of the Spanish Civil War likewise remarks that *Sefarad* is one of several Spanish novels written around the end of the twentieth century which are 'marked by hegemonic frameworks that set the possibilities and limits for approximating the Holocaust and that establish clear boundaries for a European identity'. She argues that these novels 'produce a new set of very clear boundaries for transnational memory, because they ultimately fail to engage with the exclusions they have generated themselves'.[76] At the end of *Sefarad*, the narrator explicitly casts himself as one who is so late that the canon of Spanish literature is inaccessible to him. He and his narrative are imbued with a sense of lateness, such that this is prolonged indefinitely with no further possibility expressed for a coming together of Spanish or European literary traditions.

That being said, although uneven modernisation in Europe resulted in Spanish literature and culture being overdetermined by external conceptualisations which sought to cast it as late, underdeveloped, and unworthy of inclusion within the literature of Europe, Spanish literary lateness may not, in fact, indicate Spain's complete exclusion from a modern European literary context. Indeed, Vilarós argues that 'during modernity, Spain's non-modern literary difference should be understood as akin to a political, cultural and economic configuration deeply and unavoidably linked to the realities of Western economic modernisation and to its corollary of hegemonic and political dominance'.[77] Essentially, the exclusion caused by Spain's perceived difference and lateness in terms of modern Western European cultural development may in fact be considered constitutive of Spain's particular form of modernity and the very thing that ensures its inclusion within Europe. Drawing on Fredric Jameson's work on the postmodern cultural turn, Vilarós suggests that 'the much-mocked anti-modern Spanish literary difference in fact falls within the logic of modernity', arguing that 'difference is in fact a wholly modernist construct'.[78] Setting aside the political and historical baggage of empire, its legacy and its losses, it is possible to conceive of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spain as a site of an alternative modernity, through the very sense of cultural and historical lateness that signalled its exclusion. There is not simply one template for modernity, as the hegemonic Western European perspective on Spain from outside might suggest. As Labanyi and Helen Graham note, 'the complex interaction of cultural, social, and political alternatives which competed in the past,' reveal 'not a "single," homogenous "modernity" but many potentials'.[79] The lateness of the Spanish literary

[76] See Hristova, *Reimagining Spain*, p. 25 and pp. 185–232.
[77] Vilarós, 'The Novel Beyond Modernity', p. 251.
[78] Vilarós, 'The Novel Beyond Modernity', p. 252.
[79] Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, eds., *Spanish Cultural Studies. An Introduction: The Struggle for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 18.

tradition is one such potential. In spite of this, however, the outlook of *Sefarad*'s narrator reveres European culture over a Spanish literary tradition and seems unable to set aside the burden of history. *Sefarad* reinforces and promotes this perspective, ultimately sustaining the separation of Spanish letters from a canon of European culture. This is underscored by the narrator's historical position at the turn of the millennium, such that his personal sense of lateness and his desire to write his narrative into a European tradition obscure the Spanish alternative modernity. In response to the resultant anxiety caused by the European perspective, namely a Spanish quest for legitimacy, *Sefarad* ultimately reinforces the European construction of Spain as late.

Nevertheless, uncertainty inflected with a sense of lateness and Spanish exceptionalism is distinctly characteristic of what Chris Perriam, Michael Thompson, Susan Frenk, and Vanessa Knights call 'New Spanish Writing' at the end of the twentieth century, a category in which Muñoz Molina's work is frequently located. With the arrival of the millennium, Spanish literature begins 'shaping new Spains whose fragments connect and disconnect as we turn the kaleidoscope' via new literary movements and new discourses, as Perriam et al observe.[80] Spanish literature is understood at the millennial caesura as fluid, always changing and different, never static, and able to incorporate multiple identities, including the Spanish and the broader European, the old and the new. Novels by Muñoz Molina demonstrate what Navajas considers to be a prime characteristic of Spanish literature at the end of the twentieth century, which 'make[s] apparent the power of the aesthetic medium to broaden and renovate the narrow national culture and integrate it into diversified international currents'.[81] However, if *Sefarad*'s narrator attempts to construct a narrative within both the broader contexts of European memory and European literature, then, as Dagmar Vanderbosch remarks, this narrative's attempt to create 'a European space of totalitarian repression and persecution' is nevertheless 'conditioned by the strong relation with the Spanish context of enunciation'.[82] *Sefarad* is a Spanish novel complicated by a European scope and focus tinged with historical and cultural lateness. Indeed, as Perriam et al indicate, Muñoz Molina's works are considered to be characterised by such eclectic forms of intertextuality that they have variously been described as 'neo-neo-realism' and 'postmodern', terms which both already evoke a sense of coming after.[83] In attempting to

[80] See Chris Perriam, Michael Thompson, Susan Frenk, and Vanessa Knights, *A New History of Spanish Writing: From 1939 to the 1990s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 220–221.
[81] Navajas, 'The Curse of the Nation', p. 170.
[82] Vanderbosch, 'Transnational Memories', p. 614.
[83] See Perriam, Thompson, Frenk, and Knights, *A New History of Spanish Writing*, pp. 146, 172, and 208 respectively.

articulate an end to Spanish exceptionalism and isolationism through an act of writing into Europe, therefore, Spanish literature at the end of the century ensures that lateness and difference are two of its essential components. Yet the attempt to end Spanish exclusion from the canon of European literature presupposes that Spain is late in being incorporated into it. Lateness, then, returns as a long-exemplified feature of Spanish literature in various guises. Jessica Folkart draws lines of connection from pre-dictatorship Spain in its crisis of lateness during European modernity at the start of the twentieth century to the post-dictatorship identity crisis at the end of the twentieth century. She observes that a sense of liminality is 'essential to the vision of Spanish national identity at the brink of the Civil War and, decades later, at the end of the millennium'.[84] The Spanish nation and its literature, she argues, is and always has been in 'perpetual transition between old and new'.[85] As such, liminality at the turn of the twenty-first century may be understood as the most recent iteration of Spanish literature's sense of coming after, the newest instantiation of its European lateness. Folkart observes that Spanish literary identity 'defies stasis and sameness', since novels engaging with liminality at the turn of the twenty-first century 'in their exploration of the development of identity in Spain at the millennium's edge, […] enact and embody the liminal not simply as a transitional and transient mode but as the structuring principle of identity in Spain'.[86] Liminality, however, this study submits, is a symptom of Spanish literary lateness not a cause. Spanish literature, this would suggest, is constructed as late, even when attempting not to be. From a European perspective on modernity and literary history, Spain is still perceived as an outsider.

As the first part of this chapter has suggested, in *Sefarad* this sense of liminality is expressed most clearly first though the novel's status as a late work by a narrator who likewise considers himself to be an epigonal latecomer, and secondly through the encounter between Spanish and European cultural traditions he stages in the narrative. The final scene of *Sefarad* underscores these two fundamental aspects of the novel. Themes of lateness and exclusion are rearticulated and reemphasised through the narrator's reflections concerning the objects in the museum and the objects he himself has on his desk. These include a shell from a beach mentioned earlier in the chapter 'Berghof' (*S*. 439) and a postcard he bought at the museum in New York. In his final reflections the narrator offers an extensive list of the paintings adorning the walls of that museum and what they portray, which includes scenes from many

[84] Jessica A. Folkart, *Liminal Fiction at the Edge of the Millennium: The Ends of Spanish Identity* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2014), p. 2.
[85] Folkart, *Liminal Fiction*, p. 207.
[86] Folkart, *Liminal Fiction*, p. 6.

different regions of Spain (*S*, p. 745). These paintings have been taken out of the context of their country of origin, however, and arranged in a museum, which he describes as exemplifying a 'desorden de las láminas de una enciclopedia […] y también la minuciosidad abrumadora de un catálogo o de un reglamento' (*S*, pp. 744–745).[87] The tone of this description is unfavourable, even dismissive, towards the attempt to taxonomize Spanish cultural and literary history. As in parts of *Dora Bruder* and *Austerlitz*, there is an implied critique of Western European Enlightenment thinking here, which almost defensively reinforces Spanish exceptionalism, given the nation's conceptualisation as late and separate within the European grand narrative of progress and modernity. Removing the artefacts of Spanish literature and culture out of Europe and displaying them in a museum maintains their exceptionalism, which is reinforced by the narrator's description of this as a clumsy and mechanical process.

In the novel's final paragraph, the narrator's focus moves from the catalogued objects in the museum to the abandoned artefacts on his desk, which he has collected over the course of recounting the stories included in *Sefarad*. As he contemplates them, he remarks how 'el tiempo se nos deshacía entre los dedos con una inconsistencia de papel quemado, de hojas de ceniza, minutos y horas sin sosiego' (*S*, p. 745).[88] The end of his narrative is inflected not only by a sense of ending but also by a literal counting down of time passing, recalling the figure of the Angel of History who views preceding events as one great catastrophic accumulation. Surrounded by the objects left behind after the stories he has recounted, coming after the Spanish cultural figures that he is unable to access, as well as the European canonical figures whom he draws on to construct his narrative, the narrator casts himself as a being facing backwards in the Nietzschean sense. He reinforces his own epigonality in comparison to others, imbuing his narrative with a sense of futility and inadequacy. In a final moment of Proustian introspection after his attempt to produce a narrative bringing together empathetically imagined accounts of exile, suffering and persecution from both within and beyond Spain, he reminds himself, 'puedo tener la sensación de que nada de lo que invento o recuerdo está fuera de mí, de este espacio cerrado' (*S*, p. 745).[89] He is self-consciously aware that this is just an illusion. Arriving historically late, as well as being unable – or, indeed, unwilling – to synthesise Spanish and European traditions through the machinations of his own narrative, he concludes *Sefarad* by conceiving of himself as the epitome of epigonal

[87] 'A jumble of encyclopaedia illustrations […] and also the grinding meticulousness of a catalog or rule book'.
[88] 'Time was disintegrating in our hands with the flimsiness of burned paper, pages of ash, anxious minutes and hours' (*S*, p. 380).
[89] 'I can entertain the illusion that nothing I invent or remember exists outside of me, beyond this reduced space' (*S*, p. 380).

latecoming in the narrative so far. His narrative, he acknowledges, stands as an illusion, a testament to the perpetuation of the unresolved tension between the Spanish and the European. All that is left to him are these abandoned objects, as well as the realisation that he himself is superfluous to the narrative, a ghostly presence outside of his unsuccessful attempt to write Spanish literature into a European literary context. At the close of the novel, the narrator obviates any resolution of the encounter he has staged between Spanish and European literature by separating himself from these cultural artefacts, thereby reinforcing the lateness and Spanish exceptionalism that have been present throughout the narrative.

In a final crystallisation of its narrative epigonal lateness, *Sefarad* concludes with a reproduction of a Velásquez portrait from around 1640 (*S*, p. 747). While this image is curiously absent from the English translation of *Sefarad*, its inclusion in the original Spanish novel pre-empts the narrator's admission of epigonality in the subsequent *nota de lecturas*, focalizing his gaze as one looking back to the Golden Age of Spanish culture before the loss of its empire and concomitant cultural prestige in Europe. Gazing at the portrait, the narrator is acutely aware that 'la niña que me mira desde la pálida reproducción de una postal mira y sonríe levemente en un lienzo verdadero y tangible, […] colgado en un gran salón medio en penumbra de un museo que visita muy poca gente' (*S*, p. 746).[90] His musings on the reproduced nature of the postcard and the fact that it lacks something that only the original possesses recalls Benjamin's observation that 'even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be'.[91] By concluding his narrative with a mere reproduction of a work of art from the Spanish Golden Age that has been left hanging in a gloomy and infrequently visited room, the narrator recalls his preoccupation with Spanish cultural and historical lateness, while also emphasising his concerns with his own epigonality in relation to both Spanish and European culture. The original painting has been removed from Spain and from Europe, and all that is left for the narrator is a mass-produced copy. The final chapter of *Sefarad* thus concludes with his musings on recognizing 'la melancolía de un largo destierro' in the eyes of the girl in the portrait (*S*, p. 746).[92] Unable to resolve the tensions between Spanish and European literary traditions in *Sefarad* thanks to his own constructions of epigonal lateness, the narrator, exiled from his narrative, chooses instead to adopt a decidedly melancholy outlook on the past as unavoidably unreachable and unalterable. Even

[90] 'The girl who watches me from the pale reproduction of a postcard is showing the hint of a smile on a real and tangible canvas, […] hung in semidarkness in a large room of a museum that few people visit' (*S*, p. 381).
[91] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), pp. 217–251 (p. 220).
[92] 'The melancholy of a long exile' (*S*, p. 381)

though he attempts to overcome the long history of literary division between Spain and Europe in his narrative, *Sefarad* ultimately reinforces this separation, as the narrator dwells on Spanish literary lateness and on his own sense of epigonality. On the one hand, the attempt in *Sefarad* to tell a pan-European narrative of persecution and exile obscures the problematic nature of the European conception of Spain as late. Yet, on the other hand, the aesthetic preoccupations of the novel echo this very conception, ensuring that Spanish lateness in a European cultural context is sustained.

The narrator's attempt at a rapprochement between Spanish and European literature ultimately upholds the divisions it seeks to overcome, such that the melancholy of long exile identified by the narrator not only may be understood to concern the thematics of the novel and its characters, but also emerges as fundamentally imbricated with *Sefarad*'s aesthetic and literary historical circumstances. Emanating from epigonal lateness, *Sefarad*'s constructions of melancholy are nonetheless determined – even overdetermined – by forms of nostalgia, as the next part of this chapter will show. In sentimental, artificial, and even violent ways, this complicates and nuances the construction of a melancholy outlook on the past that the narrator strives to establish over the course of the novel. As such, it is not only *Sefarad*'s sense of narrative lateness that emerges as 'conditioned by a strong relation to the Spanish context of enunciation', to use Vanderbosch's formulation.[93] The narrator's express desire to produce a melancholy aesthetic and outlook on history is conditioned by nostalgic undertones for a Spanish childhood, lost moments in time, and the idea of a lost homeland, which not only further evoke the irreconcilability of tensions between past and present, but also reinforce those between the Spanish and the non-Spanish. If, as Svetlana Boym argues, 'nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy', then for the narrator of *Sefarad*, his narrative's fantasy is one of literary melancholy.[94]

MELANCHOLY

The very title of Muñoz Molina's novel is burdened with the potential for nostalgia in the most literal sense of the word – a longing for a homeland – invoking as it does the name of the centuries-lost Jewish homeland of Sepharad.[95] The narrator of *Sefarad* draws at various

[93] See Vanderbosch, 'Transnational Memories', p. 614.
[94] See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 1.
[95] The word nostalgia is derived from the Greek words 'nóstos', meaning 'homecoming', and 'álgos', meaning 'pain' or 'ache'. It was first coined in 1688 in a dissertation by the medical scholar Johannes Hofer (1669-1752)

intervals in the novel on nostalgia for the Sephardic homeland and persistently lapses into nostalgic longing of his own. This becomes the foundation for his personal reflections and his empathetic imaginings of others' lives and experiences. In *Sefarad*, the narrator is at pains to stress the melancholy nature of the novel's aesthetics, but since this has its roots in nostalgia, it is compromised, revealing a central vacuity at its core. Unlike the narrators of *Austerlitz* or *Dora Bruder*, the narrator of *Sefarad* explicitly uses the word 'melancholy' many times over the course of the novel.[96] In a conscious attempt to imbue the narrative with a melancholy aesthetic attitude, even the novel's concluding line, as discussed above, reflects on the narrator's sense of 'la melancolía de un largo destierro' (*S*, p. 746).[97] The heavy emphasis on melancholy in the narrative inevitably draws attention to it, but closer examination reveals a dependence on and overdetermination by forms of nostalgia which ultimately restrict *Sefarad*'s narrative melancholy to a hollow and affected aesthetic mode.

The attempted construction of melancholy perspective on history that results from *Sefarad*'s lateness is compromised by being rooted in both geographical and temporal forms of nostalgia, which even carry the potential for violence against the past. Firstly, nostalgia for the notion of a lost homeland is evoked and then undermined over the course of the novel, and secondly, nostalgia for lost moments in time carries a potential for violence and erasure of the past, which filters into the narrator's constructed melancholy mode. This is revealed to be a posture which he adopts and repeatedly reinforces explicitly during the novel, preferring to privilege a European cultural and historical ideal over individual contextual specificity, as discussed above. If this 'tension between the respect for cultural and ideological diversity and the hegemonic drive', to quote Cubillo, is what needs to be overcome in order to achieve a European literary identity, then *Sefarad* goes so far as to stage this tension, but does not resolve it.[98] As such, by addressing the divisions, which, as established in the first part of this chapter, essentially define the novel's sense of lateness and epigonality, and by explicitly attempting to construct a melancholy aesthetics, the narrator of *Sefarad* establishes an aesthetic double-bind, whereby his attempts to empathetically construct a pan-European narrative in a melancholy aesthetic mode prove to be of limited viability.

One of this thesis's principle points of departure echoes Walter Moser's understanding that nostalgia expresses a desire to return to the past, whereas melancholy

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at the University of Basel to describe the condition of Swiss mercenaries fighting away from their homeland. See <www.etymonline.com/word/nostalgia>. Last accessed 26 July 2019.

[96] The word 'melancholy' appears once in *Dora Bruder* (p. 52) and twice in *Austerlitz* (pp. 243 and p. 385), whereas in *Sefarad* it is explicitly stated over twenty times (such as on pp. 165, 225, 236, 254, 285, and 309, for example).

[97] 'The melancholy of a long exile' (*S*, p. 381).

[98] See Cubillo, *Memories of the Maghreb*, p. 114.

stems from the realisation that a reconciliation of the past and the present is impossible.[99] In *Sefarad*, however, such a distinction between melancholy and nostalgia is not so clear cut. Nostalgia is mobilized by the narrator in *Sefarad* in the creation of his self-consciously melancholy narration. *Sefarad*'s melancholy narrative mode is thus inflected by reactionary nostalgia for earlier moments in time evoked in various chapters in *Sefarad*, ensuring that a potentially violent sense of reconfiguration of the past, and even of its erasure, metaphorically occupies the space left in the narrative by nostalgia for a lost homeland, which is periodically rejected or invalidated during the novel. The cumulative effect of empty nostalgia for a lost homeland, combined with personal nostalgia for an earlier time, as well as its implications of erasing and reconfiguring of the past, complicates and even compromises the narrator's vision of a melancholy aesthetic mode in the narrative of *Sefarad*. Certainly, as Tabia Linhard remarks in her analysis of *Sefarad* and its representation of Jewish memory in the Mediterranean, 'the desire to return to a lost and consequently mythical homeland necessarily leads to fragmented and open-ended narratives'.[100] Yet the intrinsic contradictions and compromises that arise from the nostalgic roots of *Sefarad*'s melancholy aesthetic attitude result not only in the separation of the past from the present, but lead the novel's conceptualisations of the present and the past themselves to be compromised and fractured with tensions that the narrator is unable to resolve.

Nostalgia is a complex and polyvalent concept, which has generated a wealth of scholarship. Indeed, as Boym warns, 'the moment we try to force it into a single image it breaks the frame'.[101] From Homer's *Odyssey* – the original European narrative of longed-for homecoming – and beyond, nostalgia has been a staple feature of European literature and one which persists until today. 'The longing to return to a lost homeland', John J. Su observes 'becomes a central feature of the Western literary tradition long before the term "nostalgia" was coined to describe it'.[102] Yet nostalgia does not only belong to literature of classical Antiquity. As Su later acknowledges, 'the economic, social, and political forces associated with late modernity have evoked widespread nostalgia' in more contemporary literary fiction.[103] For Boym, too, nostalgia is an affliction that is particularly prevalent in the modern age due to new understandings of time and space, such as an increased awareness of the

[99] See Moser, 'Mélancholie et nostalgie', pp. 83–103.
[100] Tabia Linhard, *Jewish Spain: A Mediterranean Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), p. 64.
[101] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 1.
[102] John J. Su, *Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 1.
[103] Su, *Ethics and Nostalgia*, p. 3.

unrepeatability and irreversibility of passing time.[104] Much scholarship, however, has denigrated nostalgia as a 'social disease', as in Susan Stewart's famous formulation.[105] This classification further highlights nostalgia's distinction from melancholy, which, when discussed in nostalgia studies, is usually understood as an individual depressive malaise. Boym, for example, understands nostalgia 'not merely an individual sickness but a symptom of our age, a historical emotion'.[106] She furthermore classifies melancholy solely in Freudian psychological terms as a diagnosis of an individual's process of unconscious repression of a lost object and resistance to working through trauma. As a result, Boym is able to distinguish the two concepts of nostalgia and melancholy, devoting her analysis to the former as a broadly conceptualized Zeitgeist of the twentieth-century. However, in this study, melancholy is conceptualized as an aesthetic mode influenced by the looming end of the twentieth century, which acknowledges the impossibility of reconciliation between the past and the present. In *Sefarad*, moreover, this mode inflected by a vestigial desire to return to earlier times and places.

Within the context of Spanish literature, instances of nostalgia capture in particular the contradictory nature of modernity hinted at by Boym and Su. 'While born out of a modern world, and hence modern in its character,' Sarah Bracke asserts, '[nostalgia's] sentimentalised yearning for a place or past long (or perhaps not so long) gone became systematically attributed to modernity's "others", i.e. to those groups inside and outside of Europe, that were considered "incompletely modernized", and were to "cling" to an older world as it was destroyed by a newer one'.[107] This clearly resonates with the long history of Spanish literary lateness elaborated in the previous section of this chapter, and feeds into the complexities of nostalgia and melancholy in Muñoz Molina's novel. Even if, following Jameson, Spain's non-modernity may in fact constitute its inclusion within a broader logic of European modernities, then the normative European perspective is nonetheless perpetuated in the narrative of *Sefarad*, acting as a trigger for nostalgic sentiment, even as the narrator explicitly desires to establish a sense of melancholy. According to Vilarós, the

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[104] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xiv. In spite of her caveat regarding its conceptual slipperiness, Boym suggests two principal forms of nostalgia: first, 'restorative nostalgia', which represents the somewhat aggressive impulse that motivates attempts to recapture and reanimate an imagined past in the present; and secondly, 'reflective nostalgia', which is more escapist and optimistic in nature, is characterized by wistful longing for what is lost to time, and tends to be experienced in particular for eras perceived (however misguidedly) to be historically uneventful, devoid of momentous social or political events, and thus characterized by a sense of simplicity and stability. See Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xviii.

[105] See Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1992), p. ix.

[106] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. xv.

[107] Sarah Bracke, 'Nostalgia's Violence', in *Forum* 15 (2012), pp. 1–6 (p. 6, n. 4).

aforementioned perception of non-modern Spanish literary exceptionalism was mobilized during Spanish modernity in order to shape symbolic values that nostalgically represented a vanished heroic Spanish national character.[108] These essentialist notions of heroic Spanishness were hallmarks of an obsolete imperial state, from which Francoism with its enthusiastic embracing of imperial iconography and the traditional figure of the Spanish hero emerged in the early twentieth century. After the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1975, contradictory nostalgic traits persisted in Spanish culture. As Brad Epps argues: 'in post-Francoist Spain nostalgia was most succinctly expressed in two apparently contradictory, but actually quite complementary, phrases: "with Franco we lived better" and "against Franco we lived better"'.[109] Writers at this time, he suggests, simultaneously refused to fall prey to nostalgia and nonetheless expressed it in their work. Such post-Dictatorship nostalgia, expressed variously by supporters and dissidents alike, is suggestive of a longing for the moral certainties afforded by the moral positions of yesteryear.[110] These brief examples gesture towards a long-standing nostalgia in Spanish literature, as well as the ambiguous and contradictory nature of its promises and potentialities.

It is on such ambiguous ground that the narrator attempts to establish such a melancholy aesthetic attitude in *Sefarad*. Nostalgia may well be considered as a common feature of the novel's seventeen chapters, for by the end of *Sefarad*, 'it is not the sadness of melancholy but rather the promise of nostalgia that ends up unifying the different texts', as Linhard remarks.[111] However, in spite of or, perhaps better, due to the narrator's insistence, a compromised melancholy view of history emerges out of this promise of nostalgia as he fashions his narrative of long exile. If, as Linhard suggests, 'the idea of a return to a lost home is not only meandering and often misleading, it is never to be realised', then this is certainly indicative of the melancholy separation of past and present in the novel, but one which is complicated by nostalgic tendencies.[112] Writing from his position of historical and cultural lateness, the narrator is torn between forms of nostalgia and a desire to create a melancholy aesthetic attitude in his narrative. Towards the end of the novel, he recognises the tensions inherent to his narrative, suggesting that his belief of having control over the events and places described in his narrative is a vain one, and that in attempting to chart his

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[108] See Vilarós, 'The Novel Beyond Modernity', p. 251.
[109] Brad Epps, 'Spanish Prose, 1975–2002', in *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature*, ed. by David T. Gies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 705–723 (p. 708).
[110] For further discussion of this, especially in relation to the Spanish transition to democracy, see Teresa M. Vilarós, *El mono del desencanto: una crítica cultural de la transición española (1973–1993)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1998).
[111] See Linhard, *Jewish Spain*, p. 64.
[112] See Linhard, *Jewish Spain*, p. 64.

melancholy of long exile he is unable to marshal the past to his present aesthetic wishes. As the narrator reflects at the novel's close when he is alone in his study, 'al inventar uno tiene la vana creencia de que se apodera de los lugares y las cosas, de la gente acerca de la que escribe' (*S*, p. 745).[113] The narrator is conscious here of the impossibility of his narrative to move beyond the contradictions and divisions it communicates, thereby recalling Spanish exceptionalism and European cultural hegemony in the course of the novel, even as it ostensibly attempts to move beyond such distinctions. A similar conundrum emerges in his attempt to create a melancholy narrative inflected by nostalgic yearnings.

The two principal forms of nostalgia in *Sefarad* are evoked first in the title of the novel itself and later in various reminiscences of idealized times before instances of persecution that enact a potentially violent erasure of the past, sometimes masked by a sense of mourning or pity, within the narrative. *Sefarad*'s title, as mentioned above, echoes the name of a lost Sephardic Jewish homeland. This is immediately suggestive of Su's and Boym's more contemporary sense of nostalgia for a lost homeland as a response or reaction to the ravages of twentieth-century modernity. In spite of its eponymous status, however, the place Sepharad itself is barely addressed in the course of the novel, only surfacing by name in the chapters 'Oh tú que lo sabías' – one of the narrator's empathetic imaginings of the life of a Hungarian Jewish exile – and in the final chapter, also entitled 'Sepharad', which forms the narrator's final reflections on the text he has assembled. Both occasions establish a sense of nostalgia, which is then emptied out or rejected during the narrative, leaving a space in which a compromised form of melancholy aesthetics may be established. Disorientingly, the narrator's empathetic imaginings of others' experiences are imbricated with his own personal nostalgia, as well as an implied nostalgia for the Sephardic Jewish homeland, even as his narrative predominantly stays rooted in the twentieth century. If, as Su remarks, writers may make use of 'nostalgia's tendency to interweave imagination, longing, and memory in their efforts to envision resolutions to the social dilemmas of fragmentation and displacement described in their novels',[114] then the narrative of *Sefarad* concerns itself with the dilemma of fragmentation that emerges in the creation of a network of common experience among victims of totalitarian oppression across Europe and beyond, as well as in the concurrent intention of resolving divisions between Spanish and European cultural traditions. The narrative of *Sefarad* exhibits such fragmentation and displacement not only in the range of experiences it recounts, but also in its unresolved tensions between Spanishness and

[113] 'When you invent, you have the vain belief that you are controlling places, things, the people you write about' (*S*, p. 380).
[114] Su, *Ethics and Nostalgia*, p. 3.

Europeanness, as well as the question of locating the legacy of the Sephardic Jewish homeland among these concerns. As such, the melancholy aesthetic attitude established by the narrator is variously complicated and compromised by its constitutive nostalgic tendencies.

Sepharad is the name that has been given by Spanish Jews to the Iberian peninsula since the second century.[115] Centuries later, the marriage between the Catholic monarchs, Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469 resulted in the foundation of a Spanish kingdom. With the conquest of the last Iberian Muslim kingdom of Granada in 1492, religious unity – for want of a better term – was established with the expulsion of all Jewish citizens who refused to convert to Catholicism. Castilian was imposed as the language of Spain, thus ensuring linguistic homogenisation both in peninsular territories and abroad in Spanish imperial colonies. The name Sepharad thus bears connotations with the founding of a Catholic Spanish nation and empire that subsequently went hand in hand with Jewish exile from and displacement within Spain. Yet, while there is a clear connection here to the narrative's thematic concerns, the Sephardic Jewish homeland is largely absent from *Sefarad*. The most explicit reference to it occurs during the narrator's empathetic imagining of Isaac Salama, an elderly Sephardic Jewish exile born in Hungary and now living in the Moroccan port of Tangier in the chapter 'Oh tú que lo sabías'. The narrator imagines Isaac recalling his family being rounded up in Budapest in 1944, and a visit later in life to the concentration camp where his mother and sisters died, as well as his father's perpetual state of mourning following their murder. Isaac and his father remain exiled from the mythical homeland of Sepharad, living on the margins of the Jewish community in Tangier. Isaac recalls how his father would reminisce about the idea of a Sephardic homeland, the house his family had owned, and the keys to the homes that were left behind centuries earlier, as if he had experienced this personally:

> Sefarad era el nombre de nuestra patria verdadera aunque nos hubieran expulsado de ella hacía más de cuatro siglos. Me contaba que nuestra familia había guardado durante generaciones la llave de la casa que había sido nuestra en Toledo, y todos los viajes que habían hecho desde que salieron de España, como si me contara una sola vida que hubiera durado casi quinientos años (*S*, p. 337).[116]

[115] For further discussion of the origins of the name 'Sepharad', see Isidro Gonzalo Bango Torviso, *Remembering Sepharad: Jewish Culture in Medieval Spain* (Washington D.C.: SEACEX, 2003), p. 10.

[116] 'Sepharad was the name of our true homeland, although we'd been expelled from it more than four centuries ago. My father told me that for generations our family had kept the key of the house that had been ours in Toledo, and he detailed every journey they'd made since they left Spain, as if he were telling me about a single life that had lasted nearly five hundred years' (*S*, p. 110).

For Isaac's father, Sepharad is the lost homeland in the past that he can nostalgically cling to in exile to such an extent that he even remarks during the decolonisation of Tangier during the 1950s, 'sólo espero que nos echen con mejores modales que los húngaros, o que los españoles en 1492' (*S*, p. 340).[117] He does not see himself as Spanish, choosing instead to align himself with a lost homeland, even though, as his son indicates earlier in the narrative, 'un decreto de 1924 nos devolvió a los sefardíes la nacionalidad española' (*S*, p. 338).[118] Salama's father draws on the history of a Spanish nation being founded in opposition to the Jewish homeland of Sepharad. As such, the narrator's attempt to create a pan European novel of memory and melancholy relies on nostalgic stories that perpetuate the divisions and differences within the novel, even while the narrator seeks to move beyond them.

During this chapter, Isaac himself also makes reference to the Sephardic Jewish homeland. In a reversal of his father's behaviour, however, he does so in order to distance himself from his Jewishness. By mentioning the lost Sephardic homeland, Isaac implies nostalgic sentiments. Yet, in fact, he is afraid of returning to Spain with his father, whom he describes as having become a 'pinta de judío viejo de caricatura' (*S*, p. 332),[119] whom others back in Spain would look down upon. Isaac establishes further negative connotations with the idea of return to the Sephardic homeland when recalling the accident that paralysed him at the age of twenty-two while he had returned to Spain for a time to study. From Isaac's perspective, his return to the Sephardic homeland led to this 'castigo de su propia soberbia, de la culpable desmesura que le había empujado a avergonzarse de su padre' (*S*, p. 340),[120] such that the fulfilment of his father's notion of nostalgic return to their homeland only leads to disaster and emptiness. This realisation contributes towards the construction of the melancholy aesthetic of *Sefarad*'s narrative, but it is founded on nostalgic complications. Nostalgia for the lost homeland of Sepharad moves from being an imagined memory of Isaac's father to a broken notion for Isaac, before finally becoming a blank slate on which the narrator may inscribe a melancholy mode of narration, as the nostalgic potential of Sepharad is emptied out and rejected by Isaac.

Isaac's father's nostalgic reveries and the museum where Isaac works become emptied of their prior significance and overwritten with the impressions of others, such that the lost homeland of Sepharad and its potential for nostalgia are overwritten by the narrator's

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[117] 'I hope they throw us out with better manners than the Hungarians, or the Spanish in 1492' (*S*, p. 112).
[118] 'A 1924 decree restored Spanish nationality to the Sephardim'.
[119] 'Caricature of an old Jew' (*S*, p. 107)
[120] 'Punishment of his own pride, for the self-indulgence that had pushed him to be ashamed of his father' (*S*, p. 112)

inscribing the stories he wishes to tell in his self-consciously constructed melancholy mode. Isolated from the Jewish community in Tangier, Isaac himself and the Ateneo Español museum where he works, have become seldom-frequented fixtures in the city, which visiting writers and academics recall via Sephardic and more generally Jewish stereotypes: 'Aquel sitio, que estaba cayéndose. Entranable, el judío, y muy servicial, ¿no es verdad? […] Parece que era de una familia de dinero, en Checoslovaquia o por ahí, y que tuvieron pagar un dineral para que los nazis los dejaron salir' (*S*, p. 348).[121] Isaac removes nostalgic potential from the notion of a Sephardic homeland, describing it as 'casi inexistente de tan remote, un país inaccesible, desconocido, ingrato, llamado Sepharad, añorado con una melancolía sin fundamento' (*S*, pp. 339–340),[122] in spite of his geographical proximity to it when living in Tangier. In contrast to Isaac's assertions, however, the melancholy of *Sefarad*'s narrative does, in fact, have a basis and it is in precisely this nostalgic longing for a Sephardic homeland. Isaac stresses, albeit regretfully, that when he was younger 'lo que yo quería no era que los judíos nos salváramos de los Nazis. […] lo que yo quería era de no ser judío' (*S*, p. 342–343).[123] He wished to sever all ties and nostalgic links to a Jewish homeland and its people. While the name Sepharad holds the potential for nostalgia for a lost homeland, this is emptied out and rejected during the narrator's empathetic imagining of Isaac Salama's reflections on his life. In its place the narrator constructs a melancholy aesthetic attitude towards history, which is rooted in and complicated by sentiments of nostalgic longing. Although the notion of the Sephardic Jewish homeland is barely mentioned let alone interrogated in *Sepharad*, it is nonetheless aptly employed as the title of the novel, even if its absence in the narrative is of greater significance than its presence.

The empathetic imaginings in *Sefarad*, which form the majority of the novels' chapters, are recounted by a narrator figure who is on occasion also nostalgic himself. Sequences in the novel such as the chapter recounting Isaac Salama's life are thus rooted not only in the nostalgic potential of Sepharad as Jewish homeland before the establishment of a Spanish nation, but also in the narrator's personal nostalgia, which intersects with and complicates the aesthetic attitude of his empathetic imaginings. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, *Sefarad* begins with the narrator's Proustian reflections on the food

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[121] 'The place was falling apart, you know. Very accommodating that Jew was, […] didn't you think? […] It seems he came from a moneyed family, from Czechoslovakia or somewhere like that, and they had to pay an enormous sum to the Nazis to get out' (*S*, p. 117).

[122] 'So remote that it is nearly nonexistent, an inaccessible, unknown, thankless country they call Sepharad, longing for it with a melancholy without basis' (*S*, p. 111).

[123] 'what I wanted was not for us Jews to be saved from the Nazis. […] what I wanted was to not be a Jew' (*S*, p. 114).

he used to eat in his hometown. He admits in the novel's opening sentence that 'nos gusta cultivar su nostalgia' (*S*, p.159), shortly before reflecting on 'la misma […] melancolía que nos quedaba' (*S*, p. 165).[124] By drawing attention to his own nostalgia here, the narrator clearly indicates its connections to and contradictions with the melancholy mode of narration he wishes to create, ensuring that their tensely symbiotic relationship is established at the outset of the novel. The narrator mobilizes personal nostalgia in the creation of a melancholy aesthetic mode that is both personal and collective, in that it subsumes the stories and experiences of others. This tension is thus suggestive of the violent potential of nostalgia for the past to revise or erase earlier events and experiences. Such violence is endemic to nostalgic sentiment, as scholars such as Sarah Bracke, Paul Gilroy, and Renato Rosaldo argue, although nostalgia's very nature ensures that its violent potential is not always immediately perceptible. For Rosaldo, the violence of colonial nostalgia in particular, for example, takes the form of a contradictory commitment of imperial violence and subsequent mourning of its victims by the colonisers.[125] Originating from a modernized perspective, this constitutes a longing in Western European civilization for premodern societies to be a stable and static reference point. The uneven conditions of modernity and imperialist destruction thus lead to nostalgic longings. As Bracke argues, 'while such longing emerges from violence and destruction, a disavowal of violence occurs at the heart of nostalgia, notably through its characteristic mode of innocence'.[126] Nostalgia thereby enables an erasure of colonialism's crimes by locating the agent of change within time passing rather than within those exhibiting nostalgia. As Nauman Naqvi observes, 'the authority of nostalgia relies on a remarkably violent set of epistemological and institutional histories'.[127] These obscure nostalgia's violence and power, while attempting to uphold Western cultural privilege and legitimize the erasure of other perspectives. Nostalgia is thus predicated on cultural and historical privilege, recalling the misguided European former construction of Spain as a late cultural outsider discussed earlier in this chapter. Nostalgia for another time and place arises when one has opportunity, as well as the concomitant power and the privilege, to be nostalgic. The narrator of *Sefarad* draws on such a position as this, since he is able not only to be nostalgic in his empathetic imaginings, but also able to transform said nostalgia into a melancholy aesthetic mode of reflection on the past. As such, in *Sefarad*, passing time – and, by extension, the gulf between past and present – that is essential to a melancholy perspective on history conceals

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[124] 'We like to nurture our nostalgia' (*S*, p. 1). And 'The same […] melancholy that awaited us'.
[125] See Rosaldo Renato, 'Imperialist Nostalgia', in *Representations*, 26 (1989), pp. 107–122 (p. 108).
[126] Bracke, 'Nostalgia's Violence', p. 4.
[127] Nauman Naqvi, *The Nostalgic Subject: A Genealogy of the "Critique of Nostalgia"* (Università di Messina: CIRSDIG, working paper 23 , 2007), p. 3. Cited in Bracke, 'Nostalgia's Violence', p. 3.

the potential violence in the narrator's nostalgic tendencies. Whereas for Paul Gilroy, power and privilege lead to what he calls 'postimperial melancholia', which is to say, the inability to acknowledge the changes brought by the end of the British Empire and the unwillingness to mourn its crimes, for the narrator of *Sefarad*, any form of melancholy or nostalgia that is postimperial is intrinsically bound up with the bygone Golden Age of Spanish literature and its implications.[128] While Gilroy transfers a Freudian reading of melancholia from an individual's behaviour to the behaviour of a society at large, he problematically uses the terms melancholia and nostalgia interchangeably, as Bracke and Alistair Bonnet have noted.[129] Nevertheless, when melancholy is understood as a late literary mode that engages with the past from a perspective of acknowledging its irreconcilability with the present, as this study proposes, it constitutes a step beyond nostalgia. In *Sefarad*, however vestigial nostalgic elements still linger.

Although the nostalgia in *Sefarad* is not directly bound up with the colonial history of Western European modernity *per se*, it nevertheless contains an inherent potential for metaphorical violence towards past events. Intimately connected with Enlightenment understandings of progress, the destructiveness of modernity is inherited by, and thus constitutive of, subsequent nostalgia. The contradictions of modernity, along with the ambivalences of human nature and experience, are reproduced in *Sefarad*'s narrative, but not explicitly interrogated. The violence of nostalgia, which is imported into the narrator's construction of the novel's explicitly melancholy aesthetics, leads to the impression that the narrator 'seems to have a hard time imagining a world in which cultural difference does not become an alienating factor', as Cubillo observes, in spite of the narrator's desire to establish a pan-European melancholy narrative.[130] The sudden estrangement of Jewish citizens and political dissidents, for example, are presented alongside stories of cultural differences between lovers ('Valdemún'), childhood reminiscences (Sacristán), and other experiences outside of twentieth-century European totalitarianism, exile, or diaspora. This results in a potentially troubling equivalence among these tales, and the suggestion that in trying to bring together these discrete experiences, the narrator ends up reiterating the divisions that prevented their being drawn together initially. The narrator of *Sefarad* resorts to a form of melancholy that grows out of his personal nostalgia, as well as out of his attempt to corral the experiences and histories of others. Not only does this evince a tendency towards a

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[128] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Multiculture or Postcolonial Melancholia* (London: Routledge, 2004).
[129] See Bracke, 'Nostalgia's Violence', p. 4 and Alistair Bonnet, *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia* (New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 125.
[130] See Cubillo, *Memories of the Maghreb*, p. 115.

troubling universalisation of others' experiences, it also gestures towards a euphemistic longing for a pre-difference time. That is to say, a temporal nostalgia for a time when those who have been persecuted were unaware of the forthcoming dangers visited on them because of what makes them different – in most cases their Jewishness. The resultant melancholy of long exile described in these stories (*S*, p. 746) ultimately emerges as a narrative aesthetic compromised by a euphemistic form of temporal nostalgia.

When carried over into his empathetic imaginings of others' lives, there is a replication of nostalgia's potential for violent erasure, which, in turn, feeds back into the narrator's own recollections. As such, by inheriting nostalgia's violent potential, the narrator's melancholy aesthetic attitude in *Sefarad* is revealed as an artificial and ultimately hollow construction. In 'Sefarad', the novel's final chapter, for example, the narrator's voice surfaces again as he echoes Isaac Salama's story and the nostalgia of Isaac's father for the lost Jewish homeland. When describing the Jewish quarter of his Spanish hometown located near the Alcázar (a Moorish citadel or palace), the narrator muses how 'Quizás la llave que se correspondía con el gran ojo de la cerradura se la llevaron los expulsadoes y la fueron legando de padres a hijos en las generaciones sucesivas del destierro igual que la legua y los sonorous nombres castellanos' (*S*, p. 694).[131] Recalling the narrator's earlier imagining of Isaac Salama's recollection of his father's nostalgia, this reinforces the notion of passing on or inheriting nostalgia through analeptic structures in the novel, while also implicitly echoing forms of narrative epigonality and literary inheritance in *Sefarad*. In another explicit evocation of the Jewish expulsion from Sepharad outside of Isaac Salama's chapter, the narrator recalls being told by a school teacher that the Jewish expulsion was a moment 'de mayor gloria en la Historia de España […] cuando se reconquistó Granada, y se descubrió América, y nuestra patria recién unificada empezó a ser un imperio' (*S*, p. 695).[132] This reaffirms the distinction and division between Spanish imperial cultural history and a lost Jewish homeland. The nostalgic potential of Sepharad's name is recalled through the image of a house key passed on through generations of exiles. Yet, as in Isaac's story, nostalgia for the past is removed and overwritten. Sepharad is no longer seen here by the teacher as the lost Jewish homeland, but rather as a conquered part of a new Spain, indeed a new Spanish empire. Furthermore, it is only the Spanish language and Spanish names that are passed on down the generations in the teacher's account. The narrator's desire to construct a pan-European narrative of exile,

[131] 'Maybe the people who have gone carried with them the key that fit this large keyhole, maybe they handed it down from father to son through generations of exile, just as the language and sonorous Spanish names were perpetuated' (*S*, p. 349).
[132] 'Of the greatest glory in the history of Spain […] when Granada was reconquered and America discovered, and when our newly unified country became an empire' (*S*, p. 350).

displacement, and oppression that acknowledges the separation of past and present is at odds with his reliance on instances of nostalgia for earlier moments in time, alternative histories, and lost places, which suggests a potential to redress not only the historical gulf between past and present, but also the separation of Spanishness and Europeanness. Divisions are ultimately further entrenched by both narrator and characters, however, while tensions are upheld in a novel whose melancholy aesthetics are imbricated with nostalgia's violent potential for historical erasure.

Such erasure and entrenchment are further intensified by the narrator's subsequent account of meeting Emile Roman, a Romanian writer of Sephardic Jewish origin, whom he describes as speaking an antiquated form of Spanish 'que debía de parecerse al que hablaban en 1492 los habitants de aquella casa del barrio de Alcázar' (*S*, p. 696).[133] The narrator's remark draws a direct line of connection between this exiled writer in his present and the Sephardic Jews as representatives of nostalgic sentiment towards the lost Jewish homeland, while also recalling the genesis of the Spanish nation and its imperial project whose later collapse would inculcate Spanish cultural and literary epigonal lateness within Europe. Nevertheless, the nostalgic potential of the idea of Sepharad is emptied out as Roman declares of his family, 'pero nosotros no nos llamábamos sefardíes, […] nosotros éramos españoles' (*S*, p. 696).[134] Here again the idea of a lost Jewish homeland is reconfigured in terms of the Spanish nation. As before, on the few occasions that Sepharad is mentioned in the novel that bears its name as its title, the nostalgia connected with the lost homeland is evoked and then removed. In this instance, the narrator presents himself as an outside observer, who, given his own lack of identification with the former inhabitants of this neighbourhood, may be presumed to not be Jewish. At a certain remove, then, he attempts to reconcile the notion of a lost Sephardic Jewish homeland with the Spanish nation in his narrative reconstruction of events. Yet he succeeds only in emphasising the contradictions and perpetuating the divisions that exist between them, which form the foundations of the melancholy narrative perspective in *Sefarad*, which the narrator is so explicitly keen to establish. Positioned at a remove from the conflicts he stages, the narrator is able to bend them to his will in fashioning a nostalgia-inflected melancholy narrative that desires to resolve them, yet holds them in tension.

Both the narrator's empathetic imagining of Isaac Salama's life and his account of his own nostalgia indicate how longing for a return to the past paves the way for *Sefarad*'s

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133 'Which must have been very similar to the Spanish spoken in 1492 by the people who lived in that house in the Alcázar barrio' (*S*, p. 351).
134 'We didn't call ourselves Sephardim, […] We were Spanish' (*S*, p. 351).

constructed melancholy aesthetic attitude and ultimately overdetermines it. In both cases, the expulsion of the Sephardic Jews from their homeland is connected to twentieth-century history by invoking the name of Sepharad. However, Isaac Salama not only suggests a direct temporal and historical connection between these events, but also a literary and cultural affiliation.[135] In the narrator's empathetic imagining, Isaac repeatedly quotes from Baudelaire's poem 'A une passante' ('To a Woman Passing By'), first published in *Les fleurs du mal* (1857), one of the most significant cornerstones of modern European literature. Isaac's moments of Baudelairean intertextuality invite parallels between the poem's nostalgic account of fleeting encounter with a woman in the street and the missed opportunities that have passed Isaac by during his life of exile, including his loss of mobility after a car crash with an oncoming truck left him paralysed, and his encounter with a Spanish woman on a train with whom he experiences an instant mutual attraction, but never contacts again (*S*, pp. 350–54). As Isaac's story comes to a close, he recites the poem's final lines, which give this chapter its title, while simultaneously echoing the thoughts of his nostalgic father:

> Oh tú a quien yo hubiera amado, recitó el señor Isaac Salama aquella tarde en su dispacho del Ateneo Español, con la misma grave persadumbre conque habría dicho los versículos del kaddish en memoria de su padre, mientras llegaba por la ventana abierta el sonido de la sirena de un barco y la salmodia de un muecín, oh tú que lo sabías (*S*, 354).[136]

By quoting from Baudelaire's poem, the narrator's empathetic imagining of Isaac invokes echoes of modern European literature, which are complicated by a sense of nostalgia for the Sephardic Jewish homeland. Yet, in a further example of removing nostalgia even as it is invoked, Isaac imagines that his father – the embodiment of Sephardic nostalgia earlier in the novel – has now passed away. In this passage, questions of Spanishness, Europeanness, and Jewishness are brought together as Isaac cites Baudelaire and simultaneously imagines chanting the Kaddish in mourning of his father, while in his office in a Spanish cultural museum in Tangier. Spanish culture here is exiled and cordoned off in a museum, while his father and the idea of a lost Jewish homeland have passed away, and Isaac is left to recite

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135 For further discussion of this, see Linhard, *Jewish Spain*, p. 63.

136 '*Oh you, whom I would have loved*, he recited that evening in his office at the Ateneo Español, moved as deeply as if he were chanting the Kaddish in his father's memory, the sound of a ship's horn and the music of a muezzin's call came through the open window. *Oh you, who knew so well*'. [Italics in translation] (*S*, p. 122). The final stanza of the original French poem reads 'Ailleurs, bien loin d'ici! trop tard! *jamais* peut-être! / Car j'ignore où tu fuis, tu ne sais où je vais, / Ô toi que j'eusse aimée, ô toi qui le savais!'. See Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes, tome 1*, ed. by Yves-Gérard le Dantec and Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 88. The most recent English translation reads, 'Far from this place! too late! *never* perhaps! / Neither one knowing where the other goes, / O you I might have loved, as well you know!'. See Charles Baudelaire, 'To a Woman Passing By', in *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. by James McGowan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 189.

Baudelaire, transforming the poem's nostalgia into a melancholy reflection on these losses. Once again, the conflicts and contradictions of these multiple cultural traditions are evoked but not reconciled. Ultimately, the narrator's imagining of Isaac's poetic allusions embellishes the constructed melancholy of *Sefarad*, while ensuring it remains overdetermined by nostalgic inflections. In the final chapter of the novel, the narrator recalls 'los romances y los cantos de niños que los hebreos de Salónica y Rodas llevarían consigo en el largo viaje infernal hacia Auschwitz' (*S,* 694).[137] Here an explicit link is forged between the fifteenth century expulsion of the Jews from Sepharad and the Holocaust, which, as Linhard suggests, are brought together here via a literary cultural connection, not necessarily an historical one. Nevertheless, it is once again a connection that is profoundly suggestive of temporal nostalgia, of the desire to return to the past and for history to take another course. The narrator, separated from these moments, can only gaze back towards history, such that on a thematic level melancholy in *Sefarad* is present, yet the novel's melancholy aesthetic attitude remains bound up with nostalgia.

The narrator's melancholy perspective in *Sefarad* that views the events of the past as unbridgeably distant from the present is not only rooted in a hollow and contradictory form of nostalgia for the Sephardic homeland, but also inflected by a nostalgia for specific moments in the past like Isaac Salama's encounter on the train, which cannot be altered. That is, a nostalgia for another time, not just another place, as well as the desire to undo or remake those moments, to return to a particular temporal juncture, and to wish that history might proceed along another path. Nostalgia is not only emptied out in order to create *Sefarad*'s melancholy aesthetic attitude, but the violent potential for nostalgia to erase or rewrite the past is carried over this melancholy, further complicating it. Cubillo argues that in attempting to tell one paradigmatic story of exile and persecution in twentieth-century Europe, Muñoz Molina ends up transforming potential hybridity into a monolingual identity: 'Rather than developing a polyphonic discourse, [he] longs for a time when those who would later be persecuted were still not aware of how their difference could be used to separate them from the rest'.[138] Each of *Sefarad*'s chapters is structured around particular moments where, in Cubillo's words, people 'woke up one day to find out that they were no longer members of the community at large, and suddenly realised their cultural or political diversity had turned them into a liability'.[139] Throughout *Sefarad*, the narrator regularly imagines

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[137] 'The poems and children's songs that the Jews of Salonica and Rhodes would carry with them on the long, hellish journey to Auschwitz' (*S*, p. 350).
[138] Cubillo, *Memories of the Maghreb*, p. 115.
[139] Cubillo, *Memories of the Maghreb*, p. 115.

instances where characters' differences – be they ethnic, religious, social, or political – suddenly endanger them. Potentially violent nostalgia for a time before these moments when differences became a liability, for the possibility that things might have turned out differently, and for characters not to have lost a relatively stable identity, is explicitly suggested in the chapter 'Eres'. Such temporal nostalgia is also articulated by Isaac Salama in the chapter 'Oh tú que lo sabías', drawing further connections between his nostalgia for an earlier time and his father's nostalgia for Sepharad as he echoes his father's nostalgic speech patterns:

> Se da cuenta de que está repitiendo las mismas palabras que le escuchó a su padre tantas veces, el mismo afán de corregir el pasado tano solo en unos minutos, en segundos: […] la vida entera quebrada para siempre en una fracción imperceptible de tiempo, en una eternidad de remordimiento (*S*, p. 341).[140]

Boym's analysis of Baudelaire's poem, which Salama implicitly recalls in this passage as an example of his own nostalgia, asserts that 'the chance of happiness is revealed in a flash and the rest of the poem is a nostalgia for what could have been; it is not a nostalgia for an ideal past, but for the present perfect and its lost potential'.[141] Imagining that which might have been thereby enacts a violent rewriting of that which was. Isaac's father's nostalgia for a lost homeland and his son's nostalgia for a lost moment in time are brought together here, but ultimately their nostalgic potential is extinguished. Isaac's encounter with the woman on a train in 'Oh tú que lo sabías' mirrors the one described in Baudelaire's poem and gestures towards a heightened fictionality in the narrative, as well as its overtly and overly constructed melancholy nature. Moreover, it serves to once more recall the staged conflict between a European and a distinctly Spanish cultural tradition in *Sefarad*. These examples of irrecoverable losses transform the nostalgia in *Sefarad*'s narrative into a compromised form of melancholy. The irreconcilability of present with the past for the narrator, and for those whose lives he empathetically imagines, is articulated from a nostalgic point of origin, which develops into a melancholy outlook on history and awareness of the gap that cannot be bridged, and of the absence that cannot be filled. The nostalgia for a time before, however, brings with it a potentially violent desire to reconfigure or even erase the events of the past. This ensures the narrator's melancholy is overdetermined by instances of nostalgia, while re-

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[140] '[He] realises he is reprising the words he heard his father speak so many times, the same desire to go back and correct a few minutes, a few seconds – […] an entire life shattered forever in one fraction of a moment, an eternity of remorse' (*S*, p. 113).
[141] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 21.

emphasising the conflicts and divisions that the narrator attempts to overcome in the writing of *Sefarad*.

The chapter 'Eres', where the narrator predominantly speaks in the second person in an effort to communicate empathy for the historical figures with whose plight he engages, closes with a summary of the moments when the narrator's imaginings of, among others, Walter Benjamin, Jean Améry, Primo Levi, Margarete Buber Neumann, and Eugenia Ginzburg realise the precarity of their situations: 'Caminas por la ciudad que ya no es la tuya' (*S*, p. 616), the narrator ominously declares.[142] He then explicitly quotes the opening line from Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* (1912). Returning as a mantra-like literary touchstone in this chapter, the quotation builds on earlier references to the lives of Kafka and his lover Milena Jesenska in other chapters: 'Una mañana, al despertrse, Gregor Samsa se encontró convertido en un enorme insecto' (*S*, p. 615).[143] Once again, the narrator cites a canonical European modernist text as a means of expressing the moments of sudden, perilous difference experienced by the historical figures he includes in *Sefarad*. With this direct citation he once more recalls the conflict between European and Spanish literary traditions staged in the novel. As suggested earlier in this chapter, the narrator's words imply a preference for European literary and cultural reference points as the narrator attempts to express a commonality of experience among those lives and histories he mentions. Yet here, it is the differences and distinctions which stand out, as the narrator's nostalgia suggests a desire to return to the past, to change it, and even to erase and rewrite it. As such his narrative appears to be unable to reconcile its more specific contexts, namely distinct but connected national and cultural traditions, with the broader picture of common experience it seeks to paint.

Unlike the figures whose lives and fates he empathetically imagines, the narrator of *Sefarad* was not a victim of totalitarian persecution during the twentieth century. From his historically and culturally late perspective, the melancholy aesthetic attitude in *Sefarad* that expresses the fundamental irreconcilability of the past and the present is founded on nostalgic impulses, which contain unacknowledged privilege with regard to what he is able to mobilize from the past in the creation of his narrative. Such mobilisation in service of his construction of a self-consciously melancholy mode of narration does not erase the erasure, so to speak, that is contained within his nostalgia. Nor does it eradicate the potential of the narrator's nostalgia for violence towards others less privileged than himself. This violent potential is reworked and repackaged as a form of melancholy. The narrator's attempt to

[142] 'You walk through the city that is no longer yours' (*S*, p. 299).
[143] 'One morning, Gregor Samsa awoke and found himself transformed into an enormous insect' (*S*, p. 298).

bridge the gulf between the past and himself results in the reiteration and reinscription of nostalgia's violence into his melancholy aesthetic attitude. Such rewriting encapsulates what Boym identifies as the negative outcomes of what she terms 'reflective nostalgia', which is to say, an 'abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free homecoming, an ethical and aesthetic failure'.[144] However, the fact that the narrator chooses to channel his nostalgic personal longings into a broader melancholy outlook on the past in his narrative does, perhaps, suggest an awareness of the problematic violence contained within his nostalgia. His melancholy acknowledgement of the gulf between the past and the present may not repair the violence of the nostalgia that overdetermines it, but it may gesture towards an acknowledgement of its violent potential. Part of his melancholy – as with each text examined in this thesis – is nevertheless the realisation that the past cannot be reconciled with the present from the narrators' late perspectives. The recognition that nothing can be done about the past, which includes his nostalgic longings for another place and another time, and the replication of those feelings, are thus a constitutive part of the melancholy in *Sefarad*, as is the violence inherent to the narrator's nostalgia. The narrator's perceived insufficiencies may therefore still constitute essential elements of the creation of *Sefarad*'s self-consciously late and melancholy aesthetics, although these are riddled with contradictions and tensions.

In writing a nostalgia-inflected, yet purportedly melancholy pan-European saga of suffering and persecution, the narrator fashions a outlook on the past that embodies the potential violence of nostalgia's capability to erase others' stories, even as he is arguably aware of its shortcomings for a melancholy narrative mode. *Sefarad*'s focus on the lost Sephardic Jewish homeland, for example, and the simultaneous insistence in the narrative on the Spanishness of its Spanish Jewish characters over their Jewishness privileges their nationality. Jewish nomadism and cosmopolitanism, as explored towards the end of the first chapter of this study, are qualities that have historically been held against the Jewish people for centuries. In *Sefarad*, they are implicitly erased in favour of a fixed national context. While this might seem to be at odds with the narrator's inclusion and valorisation of canonical European Jewish modernist writers, it nonetheless recalls his self-conception as an epigonal latecomer who is able to draw on the legacy of prior cultural figures. The insistence on the Spanishness of Jewish characters and a desire to return to a state of pre-difference and pre-persecution gestures towards a euphemistic conceptualisation of difference at best and at worst towards an erasure of said difference. There is a self-conscious awareness on narrator's

[144] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. xiv.

part that his narrative is engaged in a questionable and potentially compromised exercise. As Su observes, 'even the most ideologically compromised forms of longing express in attenuated fashion a genuine human need'.[145] Creating melancholy out of nostalgia, as compromised as this is, is as far as the narrator can go, given the historically and culturally late position he establishes in the novel, which draws on, and confronts, but also emphasizes tensions between Spanish and European literary and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, just as for Jameson, non-modern Spanish literary difference is ultimately indicative of Spanish literature's worthy inclusion within the broader paradigms of European modernity and modernism, so *Sefarad*'s difference-oriented lateness and nostalgia-inflected melancholy constitute another distinct iteration of the melancholy cosmopolitan novel. An iteration, moreover, which arguably more than any other novel in this study, evokes fundamental constitutive tensions between the national and the European at the turn of the millennium.

COSMOPOLITANISM

So far this chapter has shown how *Sefarad*'s lateness stages an encounter between Spanish and European literary traditions, while indicating a preference for a European perspective, which perpetuates the divide and unevenness between the two contexts. The novel's resultant melancholy outlook on the past, this chapter has also argued, is compromised to a certain extent by nostalgia and potential for violence towards the events and characters imagined by the narrator. The fundamental tensions and contradictory elements that emerge when exploring *Sefarad*'s particular form of late and melancholy aesthetics have their origins, this chapter now suggests by way of conclusion, in the narrator's ambiguity and his Quixotic yet self-conscious elusiveness. When *Sefarad* is read as part of a cosmopolitan collective of European novels, this stands out all the clearer. If Muñoz Molina's novel is to be understood, as this study suggests, as a self-consciously late and melancholy novel that is thereby exemplary of a form of literary cosmopolitanism emergent in European literature at the turn of the millennium, then this is most clearly encapsulated in the Quixotic nature of both the novel and its narrator, and, indeed, in their Cervantine echoes. While the adjective Quixotic may simply imply naïve or unrealistic idealism, as well as sense of whimsical unpredictability, when considered in light of the title of Miguel de Cervantes's most celebrated work, notions of tense contradiction or troubling ambiguity also emerge as essentially Quixotic. Even the

[145] Su, *Ethics and Nostalgia*, p. 3.

name of the protagonist, Don Quixote, is suggestive of both gentlemanly nobility and base foolishness.[146] As such, *Sefarad*'s ambiguities, contradictions, and tensions are distinctly Quixotic in a variety of ways and this is key to the novel's late and melancholy aesthetic attitude. The narrator's sense of freedom to travel and imagine others' experiences, as well as his implicit desire to embody all of his predecessors, only adds to this, echoing Don Quixote's famous declaration, which forms the epigraph to this final chapter, that his deeds will surpass all those who came before him, when counted both individually and together.[147]

Published in two parts in 1605 and 1615, a year before its author's death, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha* by Cervantes is widely considered to be the first novel published in Europe. *Don Quixote*, like Spain itself at the time, was caught between the Middle Ages and the modern world.[148] By parodying classical morality and critiquing rigid Spanish social structures, it both resembled the chivalric romances of medieval Spain, while acting as a forerunner for the modern novels of the future, in particular self-conscious and self-referential narratives.[149] Ian Watt, for example, considers *Don Quixote* to be on a par with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Goethe's *Faust* (1808 and 1832).[150] Harold Bloom, moreover, famously names *Don Quixote* as the 'first modern novel' and, in his not entirely uncontroversial tome *The Western Canon* (1994), Bloom considers Cervantes's work to occupy the same heights in the Spanish-speaking world as William Shakespeare occupies in the English or Dante Alighieri in the Italian.[151] Significantly, in light of the present chapter's arguments, however, Bloom also suggests that Cervantes's masterpiece was haunted by the legacy of 1492 and subsequent expulsions of non-Christian populations from peninsular Spain.[152]

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[146] For further discussion of this, see Roberto González Echevarría, *Cervantes's* Don Quixote (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 7. As Echevarría notes, since the '-ote' ending in Spanish denotes a grotesque version of whichever noun it is appended to, '*Quijote* […] was meant to sounds abasing and ridiculous, particularly when paired with don'.

[147] See Miguel de Cervantes, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (Madrid: Gaspar y Roig, 1864), p. 31.

[148] For discussion of *Don Quixote* as both a telling and a retelling of historical transition in the master narrative of early-modern Europe from feudalism to capitalism, see David Quint, *Cervantes's Novel of Modern Times: A New Reading of* Don Quijote (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[149] For further discussion of this, see Anthony J. Cascardi, '*Don Quixote* and the invention of the novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to Cervantes*, ed. by Anthony J. Cascardi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 58–79 and Edwin Williamson, 'Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616): *Don Quixote: romance and picaresque*', in *The Cambridge Companion to European Novelists*, ed. by Michael Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 17–35 (pp. 20–21 especially). See also Jordi Gracia, *Miguel de Cervantes: La Conquista de ironía* (Madrid: Taurus, 2016), p. 43 especially.

[150] See Ian Watt, *Myths of Modern Individuality: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[151] See Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994), p. 119.

[152] See Bloom, *The Western Canon*, p. 120.

Don Quixote is mentioned by name in passing at several points towards the end of the narrative of *Sefarad* (*S*, pp. 732 and 735, for example), but an earlier allusion in the chapter 'Berghof' indicates clear parallels between Cervantes's early modern novel and Muñoz Molina's late modern offering. In this episode in *Sefarad*, the narrator recalls how one of his empathetically imagined characters found some manuscripts that he had long been searching for hidden away on a market stall in Barcelona. As the narrator reports, 'las encontró por casualidad rebuscando en un puesto de papeles viejos, en algún callejón […], igual que dice Cervantes que encontró el manuscrito en árabe del *Quijote* en la tienda de un ropavejero de Toledo' (*S*, pp. 444–445).[153] This moment of serendipitous discovery not only explicitly establishes an intertextual connection with Cervantes's novel, it also suggests parallels between the two texts and their narrators. Part of the narrative development of *Don Quixote* is the introduction of an imagined narrative voice. The first few chapters of the novel are recounted by an unnamed narrator to whom no special significance is attached, who is reporting the events of Don Quixote's life from texts found in the archive of La Mancha, such that the Cervantine narrator mediates other sources that he has uncovered. Nevertheless, there is a dispute regarding the factual accuracy of various authors' accounts of Don Quixote's exploits in the novel in what Edwin Williamson describes as the 'ludic mediation of the text of *Don Quixote* to the reader', such that Cervantes becomes a kind of meta-fictional character in his own novel.[154] For Michael Bell, this 'play of interpretation' is key to the parodic and inventive form of Cervantes's novel.[155] In a parody of chivalric romances and their frequent self-presentation as Spanish translations of found ancient texts, the Cervantine narrator playfully introduces the figure of the lying Moorish historian Cide Hamete-Benengeli, as well as his equally unreliable Morisco translator who between the two of them provide the subsequent narrative account of the Don's life and adventures. This narratorial ambiguity and playfulness reflects the tensions between the Spanish context and a wider one, since it focuses attention on the multicultural and cosmopolitan nature of the Spanish Golden Age. As Barbara Fuchs observes, Cervantes' fiction 'present[s] a challenge to the enterprise of national consolidation according to essentialized hierarchies […] because [it] consistently engage[s] with the problems of the nascent Spanish nation'.[156] Muslims, Jews,

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[153] 'He found them by chance one day as he was looking through old papers in a stall […], just the way Cervantes says he found the Arabic manuscript of *Quixote* in a secondhand clothes shop in Toledo' (*S*, p. 180).
[154] See Williamson, 'Miguel de Cervantes', p. 20.
[155] See Michael Bell, 'The European Novel After 1900' in *The Cambridge Companion to European Novelists*, ed. by Michael Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 428–443 (p. 429).
[156] Barbara Fuchs, *Passing for Spain: Cervantes and the Fictions of Identity* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2003), pp. 3–4.

and Christians are present in the narrative of *Don Quixote* and interacting such that the novel is presented as having been constructed across and with the support of many languages and traditions.

Such narrative ambiguity and instability finds its echoes in *Sefarad* as Cervantine playfulness is reworked in a late and melancholy narrative of memory that ultimately emphasizes the tensions between national and European consolidation in literary works. Also in the chapter 'Berghof', for example, while sat working at his desk, the narrator remarks how

> Otro lugar surge cuando la penumbra empieza a volverse oscuridad y fosforecen en ella la luz de la pantalla del ordenador y la de la lámpara […] La mano que posa sobre el ratón deja de ser la mía. […] De la oscuridad […] surge sin premeditación mía una figura, una presencia que no es del todo invención ni tampoco recuerdo' (*S*, p. 439).[157]

As he begins to imagine the character whose story he is imagining and retelling, he experiences a sense of disorientation. Nevertheless, he is still able to distinguish himself from those whom he imagines in his narrative. This gestures to a distinct self-consciousness with regard to constructing his narrative and an awareness that what is emerging is uncertain or inchoate. He acknowledges that it is neither memory nor invention, allowing himself some distance from his attempted mapping of interconnected lives and fates. As he goes on to describe a memory of walking home from the beach one day, he observes that other people's 'pisadas […] se convierten en las delicadas oquedades de sombra' (*S*, p. 439), before returning to the image of him working in the dark at his desk.[158] Redolent of *Dora Bruder*'s 'marque en creux' – the hollow traces left by historical figures that are to be filled by the narrator's words over the course of the novel – these traces in the sand may be understood as metaphorical receptacles for the narrator's lateness and melancholy. That this scene takes place at the narrator's desk surrounded by his collected objects also prefigures the novel's epigonal and melancholy conclusion, as well as recalling the narrator's self-consciousness. He offers an image which implies, on the one hand, an awareness of the contradictory elements and constitutive tensions of the self-consciously late and melancholy aesthetics in the narrative of *Sefarad*, while on the other hand, observing a commitment to the construction of the narrative in spite of this. 'Unas cosas traen otras', remarks the narrator, 'como unidas entre

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[157] 'Another place rises before as shadows begin to turn to darkness lighted only by the phosphorescence of the computer screen and the lamp […] The hand resting beside the mouse isn't mine any longer. […] From the darkness […] without any premeditation on my part, a figure emerges, a presence that is not entirely invention, or memory either' (*S*, p. 177).

[158] 'Footprints […] become delicate hollows of shadows' (*S*, p. 177).

sí por un hilo tenue de azares triviales. Las conchas en la orilla del mar […], los trozos curvados de ánforas rotas. Hay que ir dejándoles llegar, o que tirar poco a poco de ellas […] sin que el hilo se quiebre' (*S*, p. 441).[159] The narrator evokes a sense that discovery or understanding is just out of reach, as well as articulating through the image of the delicate thread the precarity of the narrative of interwoven empathetic imaginings that he has created. This is subtly reminiscent of the Benjaminian Angel of History and its melancholy perception of connected events proceeding it as one great piled up catastrophe, an image which is itself not dissimilar to the fragments of pottery in the grains of sand on the shore in *Sefarad*. A few pages later, the narrator recounts how, when he returned to the beach, 'Tomaba un puñado de arena en la mano y luego la abría para que la arena fuse cayendo poco a poco, en un hilo tenue […] no quedan más que unos granos mínimos en la ancha palma abierta, puntas minerales heridas por la luz' (*S*, p. 449).[160] Combining his two earlier images, this recollection shows a narrator who is aware of the instability and possible futility of his narrative enterprise, who may break the threads in attempting to weave a web of interconnections or who may allow fragments to fall from his grasp like an unspooling thread as he tries to cling to them. Nevertheless, his intent remains to at least retain some glinting fragments of this, suggesting that, beyond the tensions and contradictions of *Sefarad*'s narrative, something might yet remain to be salvaged from its fragments.

While David K. Herzberger has noted how '*Don Quijote* has long cast a powerful shadow over the modern novel, and Antonio Muñoz Molina has been happy to locate his fiction squarely within it', he nonetheless cites *Sefarad*'s concerns with social justice and memory as the novel's prime indicators of the Quixotic.[161] Although he acknowledges that 'the very idea of having one's existence chronicled in a story narrated by someone else, as well as the idea in general of one's existence represented as a character in a story', implies a clear intertextual connection between the two novels, for Herzberger, the significance of Cervantine echoes in *Sefarad* rests squarely on the social and historical importance of storytelling.[162] As he remarks, 'in the work of both writers, storytelling undermines stability, but to a large degree this is precisely the point: it allows the authors to create characters who seek to become something other than what they have been and to conceive of a world that

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[159] 'Some images evoke others, as if joined by the slim thread of coincidence: shells on the seashore […], curved bits of a broken amphora. One must let the thread roll off the spool, or pull lightly lest it break'.
[160] 'I took a handful of sand then opened my fingers to let it trickle away in a thin thread […] leaving nothing but a few grains glinting in the sun' (*S*, p. 183).
[161] See David K. Herzberger, 'The shadow of Don Quijote in the narrative of Antonio Muñoz Molina', in *Tradition and Modernity: Cervantes's Presence in Spanish Contemporary Literature*, ed. by Idoya Puig (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 13–28 (p. 13).
[162] See Herzberger, 'The shadow of Don Quijote', p. 25.

might be other than it is'.[163] Beyond its social and historical contexts, however, and in the realm of the novel's aesthetics, Cervantine echoes in *Sefarad* have further implications. When is understood as a self-consciously late and melancholy Spanish novel, which also forms part of a cosmopolitan collective of European literary works written and published around the turn of the millennium, *Sefarad*'s Quixotic contradictions and ambiguities may articulate the constitutive tensions between the Spanish and the European in the novel, while also indicating the inherent potential of this mode of writing to point beyond itself to the possibility of future cultural renewal, however latent.

[163] Herzberger, 'The shadow of Don Quijote', p. 28.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Whither 'European' fiction?

In answer to the question of what literature is good for – *à quoi bon la littérature* – W. G. Sebald once remarked, 'einzig vielleicht dazu, daß wir uns erinnern und daß wir begreifen lernen, daß es sonderbare, von keiner Kausallogik zu ergründende Zusammenhänge gibt'.[1] The original impetus for writing this study, however, was to investigate the strange coincidence of the mutual articulation of shared thematic concerns, as well as aesthetic and stylistic similarities, in several novels from different national linguistic and literary contexts around a particular moment in time, while also shedding light on these works' significant literary influences and intertexts. If the preceding chapters have reflected the legacies of various literary traditions, along with what Cohen terms the 'conditions of possibility' for the emergence of the literary works they examine, then these novels' melancholy cosmopolitanism is the dark back of the mirror that allows it to shine.[2] This study began by asking what makes European literature European. In order to shed some light on this complex issue, the close readings of *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* in the preceding chapters have attempted to provide an account of their self-conscious narrators, of their late and melancholy aesthetics, as well as of the implications of understanding these novels as a collective expression of a form of literary cosmopolitanism. The aesthetic attitude of melancholy cosmopolitanism, this study suggests, emerges as a constitutive element of European novels written and published at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first.

Lateness, for melancholy cosmopolitanism, is not merely accident or happenstance, but its first principle, a deliberately sought after and repeatedly implemented motif in the novels examined in this study, as well as a key structural and aesthetic element in these works. *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* respond in different ways to a sense of *cultural* lateness in Europe, such that the narrators understand themselves as epigonal figures coming after

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[1] Sebald, *Campo Santo*, p. 247. 'Perhaps only to help us to remember, and teach us to understand that some strange coincidences cannot be explained by causal logic'. The translation is taken from *Campo Santo*, trans. by Anthea Bell (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 213–214.

[2] See Cohen, *A History of European Literature*, pp. 7 and 501.

canonical writers and works of modern European literature, as well as to a sense of *historical* lateness, since they are writing at the close of the twentieth century. Folding these senses of cultural and historical lateness into an aesthetics of lateness contributes towards the establishment and enhancement of the melancholy perspective on history exhibited in these novels: the past is always irrecoverably separated from their narrators' present. Having established these principles, this study then makes a further original contribution to knowledge by arguing that these novels' late and melancholy aesthetics might be read as a form of literary cosmopolitanism, coining the term '*melancholy* cosmopolitanism' as a new way to describe a mode of writing in European novels published at the turn of the millennium. The variously mediated – or, to recall Sebald's Bernhard-inspired term, 'periscopic' – narratives of these novels indicates a self-consciousness of their lateness and melancholy. By returning to Nietzsche's notion that latecomers (*Spätlinge*) have the potential to become firstcomers (*Erstlinge*) through their self-consciousness of their lateness – and, by extension, their melancholy – this study has argued that in the novels it examines the narrators' self-conscious mode of writing contains the latent potential to overcome their lateness and melancholy, since it implies in various ways a sense of possible futurity and renewal. This suggests, furthermore, that the narrators' self-consciousness of their lateness and melancholy can be read as a European stance that might further be understood as cosmopolitan due to its parallels with Nietzsche's cosmopolitan figure of the 'good European' – a consciously assumed pose. This study contends that 'melancholy *cosmopolitanism*' is the best term to describe the mode of writing among this group of novels, especially since through this way of reading they form an 'imagined community' of works that exists across national contexts in European culture, while still having national literary traditions at its heart. The sustained tension between the nation and a broader European context, not its resolution, is key to melancholy cosmopolitan novels. Ultimately, this study has brought together a group of novels with common thematic, aesthetic, and stylistic concerns across national borders, with each at the same time exhibiting its own specificities that are determined by its national context. So, what emerges over the course of the dissertation is the sense that among these novels there is a tension between the contexts of the national and the European, which is a foundational element of their aesthetic practice, and which can be most clearly observed and analysed by reading these novels alongside one another.

The first chapter of this study moved beyond conventional autofictional readings of memory in *Dora Bruder* to show how the narrator understands himself through intertextual

references and allusions as an epigonal latecomer, attempting to resuture Jewishness back into a French literary tradition. His melancholy regarding the history he is investigating is expressed through encounters with abandoned objects and ekphrastic descriptions of photographs, as well as through repeated motifs of imprisonment and attempted escape. Lastly, this chapter argued that, if *Dora Bruder* is read as part of a cosmopolitan collective of late and melancholy novels, then this is notion complicated by the narrator's wanderings around Paris searching for traces of Dora's life and family, which evoke tensions between the figures of the cosmopolitan flâneur and the wandering Jew.

This study's second chapter built on established readings of Sebald's œuvre as late modernist and investigated the implications of reading *Austerlitz*, the author's final novel, as a work of late German Romanticism. This chapter moved to discuss how the figure of the suffering Romantic artist helps configure the narrator's engagements with and enactments of lateness in the narrative, as well as how the form of the Romantic *Kunstmärchen* deeply influences the narrator's Romantic subjectivity, his melancholy self-fashioning, and a growing awareness of the falseness of reality in the narrative. Finally, this chapter argued that a reading of *Austerlitz* as an example of the melancholy cosmopolitan novel would necessitate working through questions regarding German Romanticism's nationalist legacy, which evoked a key tension between a national context and a broader European one.

The third chapter of this study went beyond readings of trauma and memory in *Sefarad* to explore the novel's aesthetic response to a long history of perceived Spanish cultural lateness in Europe and how the narrator's attempt to write Spanish literature into a European literary tradition ends up replicating these divides. The novel's melancholy view of history, however, was revealed to be complicated by instances of nostalgia for lost moments and lost places, which threatens to erase the past with which the narrator attempts to engage. These fundamental contradictions in *Sefarad*'s late and melancholy aesthetics, this chapter concluded, emerge as echoes of defining elements of *Don Quixote*, such that the Quixotic nature of *Sefarad*'s aesthetics complicates the novel's inclusion in a European literary collective of melancholy cosmopolitan novels. Ultimately, the narrator's self-conscious mode of writing is overdetermined by a desire to embody a sense of lateness and melancholy, such that the novel reveals the tensions between the national and the European, but cannot overcome them. Tensions between the national and the European thus emerge in all of the novels examined in this study as constitutive elements of their aesthetics. It is this that marks them out as European fiction.

This study's originality lies not only in the new readings it offers of these individual novels, but also in its broader task of establishing a sensibility for a particular mode of writing in European fiction at the turn of the millennium. Furthermore, in making connections among the discourses of lateness, melancholy, and cosmopolitanism, and thereby arguing for their potential progressive causality as exemplified by literary works at a particular moment in history, this study has suggested the possibility that such a collective of literary works may optimistically – if unexpectedly, given its late and melancholy provenance – be considered as an expression of a form of literary cosmopolitanism that is suggestive of a latent sense of futurity in European literature.

The remainder of this conclusion offers some reflections on the generative potential of this study's way of reading late and melancholy cosmopolitan aesthetics in European fiction, as well as considering some of its potential limitations and possible avenues for future research. If, as Aleida Assmann suggests, the concept of 'cosmopolitan memory' has provided a language for articulating traumatic historical events of the past century, then this study's notion of melancholy cosmopolitanism offers a language for discussing European literary fiction written around the turn of the millennium.[3] Delineating this mode of writing constitutes a heuristic manoeuvre that enables acknowledgement of the presence of aesthetic and stylistic formulations of cultural and historical lateness, as well as a melancholy view of history, in European fiction. It also highlights the sense of future-oriented potential that emerges when self-consciously late and melancholy novels are read alongside one another, as well as their constitutive tensions.

If melancholy cosmopolitan novels derive their significance from their narrators' self-understanding as latecomers at the end of an era, then how might this linear, teleological view of history be reconciled with their melancholy sense of an unbridgeable gulf between their present and the past? If, for Hutchinson, modern literature is 'dialectically dependent on the lateness from which it attempts to demarcate itself', then melancholy cosmopolitan novels are dialectically dependent on their internal tensions.[4] They are an embodiment of the idea of a perceived end point – both *finis* and *telos* – at the end of the twentieth century which coincides with the perceived obsolescence of European literature. At the same time, when understood as a community of novels facing backwards, the possible synthesis of their lateness and melancholy into the bringing into existence of something new – the suggestion of the future-oriented potential of their literary cosmopolitanism – is implied when they are

[3] See Aleida Assmann, 'Europe: A Community of Memory?', in *GHI Bulletin*, 40 (2007), pp. 11–25 (p. 14).
[4] Hutchinson, *Lateness*, p. 6.

read alongside one another yet remains continually deferred within the novels themselves. While any form of critique always implies an alternative futurity, an examination of the aesthetics of lateness and their concomitant melancholy in these novels is a hermeneutic mode heavily invested in the potential of its own overcoming. This, however, is likewise always deferred. Nevertheless, at the turn of the millennium, the constitutive tensions in European literature are not incongruous discrepancies, but rather integral elements holding the concept together. Melancholy cosmopolitanism thus recalls a form of dialectic somewhat more Adornian than Hegelian, which encapsulates the tensions at the heart of the melancholy cosmopolitan novel. Whereas, for Hegel, in the process of *Aufhebung* ('sublation' or 'lifting up', but also 'cancellation' or 'abolition') distinct elements are both preserved and changed, then resolved into a new, greater form through dialectical interaction, any ultimate synthesis is deferred in melancholy cosmopolitan novels. The optimistic cosmopolitanism of future renewal is therefore neither cancelled outright nor fully achieved, but postponed. Yet, insofar as it is postponed, its potential remains. *Aufgeschoben*, as the German adage goes, *ist nicht aufgehoben*.[5] Through their sustained lateness and their melancholy view of history, the cosmopolitan collective of backward-facing novels identified and analysed in this study defers the resolution of the tensions that are fundamentally constitutive of European fiction at the turn of the millennium. As such, a vestigial future potentiality emerges out of and simultaneously reaches beyond their ongoing sense of ending. Moving forward into the future with their gaze fixed on the past, melancholy cosmopolitan novels enter an event horizon of European literature, ever approaching but never quite reaching an end.[6]

While this study does not claim lateness, melancholy, or cosmopolitanism to be aesthetic elements exclusive to European works of literature, it has attempted to draw on them in order to generate a hermeneutic model for exploring the aesthetic attitudes of significant European novels written and published around the turn of the millennium. To a certain extent, this study crosses borders only to once again come up against others, since

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[5] It is not easy to translate this phrase succinctly into English in such a way that preserves its multiple meanings and ambiguities, but it might be somewhat clumsily rendered as follows: 'to be deferred or postponed is neither to be cancelled nor to be resolved'. The more idiomatic renderings of 'a pleasure deferred' or 'forbearance is not acquittance' may be less maladroit, but they lack the Hegelian *double-sens* implied by the word *aufgehoben*.

[6] In general relativity, an event horizon, crudely summarized, is a spacetime region beyond which light cannot fully escape. As such, an object approaching the horizon will, from the point of view of the observer, appear to continually move closer to the horizon without ever passing over it. Though teleological in nature, it would be necessary to know the universe's entire past and future spacetime in order to precisely locate the event horizon, which is to all intents and purposes impossible. Beyond its application in theoretical physics, the term acts as a useful metaphor for the way in which the idea of 'European literature' might, on the one hand, be understood to be continually approaching its end, but, on the other, be sustained into a future yet to come. For further discussion of these ideas, see Eric Chaisson, *Relatively Speaking: Relativity, Black Holes, and the Fate of the Universe* (New York: Norton, 1990), p. 213 especially.

the inclusion of particular authors, works, languages, cultures, and literary traditions necessitates the exclusion of others. Yet, in the end, this is the nature of the comparative enterprise, since decisions must be made, lines drawn, and limitations demarcated. In comparative literary study, tensions between national contexts and traditions are predominantly seen as obstacles to be overcome, not least because nation states and national literatures have long defined the discipline in a European context. However, this study has attempted to show how the interplay between the national and the European can be understood not as a problem to be solved, but as a key constitutive element of what makes European novels European at the end of the twentieth century and the turn of the twenty-first. While a reading of melancholy cosmopolitanism unavoidably erects its own borders, in spite of its implicit goals of unity and commonality, such a reading is also necessary in order to examine the particularities of literary works. In the three novels examined in this study, which engage with the troubled legacies of European modernity and of European literature, there still remains a residual potential for renewal within their sustained 'sense of ending' and their melancholy perspective on the past. As such, in unexpected defiance of the millennial moment's sense of historical and cultural exhaustion and obsolescence in European culture, these novels collectively constitute a defence of literary fiction's power to not only react to the world and history, but to suggest the potential of recasting it. This might only be perceived in the novels examined in this study, however, if the act of reading them crosses borders and languages, while remaining true to each work's specificities and resisting totalizing impulses.

This study has only begun to scratch the surface of melancholy cosmopolitan aesthetics and their implications. Future avenues of research could broaden the scope of European fiction at the end of the twentieth century to include other writers whose work also engages with the legacy of European modernity such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Imré Kertesz, László Krasznahorkai, or Orhan Pamuk. Consideration might also be given to literary forms beyond the novel, such as the poetry of Michael Hamburger, an extract from which was used as the epigraph to the second chapter of this study. Further research into forms of lateness and melancholy aesthetics, and their cosmopolitan implications, might also move beyond the millennial caesura and, indeed, beyond Europe, in order to examine what happens next, so to speak, in works by writers such as Teju Cole, Karl Ove Knausgård, Ben Lerner, Jaroslav Rudiš, or Dušan Šarotar. Examination of the melancholy aesthetics in the works of writers such as Joanna Bator, Rachel Cusk, Jenny Erpenbeck, Elena Ferrante, Felicitas Hoppe, Siri

Hustvedt, or Olga Tokarczuk, for example, would also help shift the focus of melancholy cosmopolitanism away from male prize-winning writers.

Aside from broadening the range of points of enquiry into melancholy cosmopolitan aesthetics, further consideration might be given to the extent to which melancholy cosmopolitan literature might be classed as a literary genre, as much as, say, crime fiction, fantasy and science fiction, family sagas, and romance novels frequently are. Melancholy cosmopolitanism is both a heuristic strategy and a classificatory system, just as a literary genre may both describe and prescribe literary texts. If, as Astrid Erll observes, 'als konventionalisierte Weisen der Kodierung von Geschehensverläufen sind Gattungsmuster in der Erinnerungskultur allgegenwärtig. Repertoirs gattungsspezifischer Formen gehören als Gegenstände des kollektiven Gedächtnisses', then literary genres constitute a taking up of patterns that already exist and a reworking of them into new transformations that feed back into literary culture.[7] Just as, in Erll's words, 'die Neubildung von Gattungen [kann] auch als Antwort auf erinnerungskulturelle Herausforderungslagen verstanden werden', so the emergence of melancholy cosmopolitanism as a literary genre might be understood as a response in the narratives of European novels to the mnemonic challenges of a particular moment in time, its literary Zeitgeist, and the approach to history shared by these novels.[8] Insofar as melancholy cosmopolitan novels exemplify what Tzvetan Todorov calls the 'codification of discursive properties' that are realised historically, while also encapsulating what Gérard Genette terms the meeting point between the texts' 'mode[s] of enunciation' and their thematic specificities, then it might be possible to conceive of melancholy cosmopolitan novels as an emergent literary genre in European fiction at the turn of the millennium.[9] Through the identification and analysis of melancholy cosmopolitanism as a genre, further research might uncover more details regarding how and why it recurs in Western European fiction published at the turn of the twenty-first century, as well as its influence on these texts' canonisation, commodification, and circulation. Identifying and exploring the potential of melancholy cosmopolitanism beyond the purview of the present

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[7] Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen: Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: J. B. Mezlersche, 2005), p. 146. 'Genres are conventionalized formats we use to encode events and experiences; and repertoires of genre conventions are themselves the contents of memory.' Translation taken from Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trans. by Sara B. Young (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 147–148.

[8] See Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, p. 147. 'The emergence of new genres can […] be understood as an answer to mnemonic challenges'. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p. 149.

[9] See Tzvetan Todorov, 'The Origin of Genres' in *New Literary Histories*, 8:1 (1976), pp. 159–170 (p. 162) and Gérard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 61–62.

study will surely be a fruitful enterprise, which would ensure its ongoing relevance to European (and possibly 'world') literature.

When reading *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* in isolation, it might appear as though each narrator's sense of lateness and melancholy would preclude any future potential of cultural renewal. That is to say, in the individual novels themselves it appears unlikely that they might suggest the possibility of ever overcoming their sense of lateness and melancholy. However, when read alongside one another, they invite being grouped together and understood as an expression of a late and melancholy form of literary cosmopolitanism. By looking at how this sense of potential renewal in European literature (*Spätlinge* becoming *Erstlinge*) is never fully actualized in these novels, but is rather suggested yet continually put off when they are read together, this study has concluded that the futurity alluded to by melancholy cosmopolitanism is *aufgeschoben* without being *aufgehoben* – deferred, but neither cancelled outright, nor fully brought into reality. The lack of resolution here emerges as a key constitutive element of melancholy cosmopolitan novels, just as their lack of resolution between the categories of the national and the European marks them out as works of European literature. In drawing this study to a close, it will be helpful to consider two recurrent and resonant metaphors from *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad*, which helpfully illuminate the tensions at the heart of melancholy cosmopolitanism. While some might balk at this study's recourse to metaphor in order to illustrate its arguments, particularly in this conclusion, this is justified and retains conceptual potency, not least because the metaphors elaborated here are concrete realities both within and beyond the novels examined in the preceding chapters. In particular, the key ambiguities and potentialities of melancholy cosmopolitanism are encapsulated in two powerful images that recur frequently in the three novels that have been examined in the preceding pages, namely trains and twilight.

There is no symbol of European modernity more potent than the railway, with its criss-crossing lines, its monumental station edifices, and, most resonant of all, the steam locomotive thundering ever faster towards its goal along the rails scarring the landscape laid out before it. In *Dora Bruder*, images of trains recur during the narrator's Parisian peregrinations as reminders of Dora's ultimate fate, such that 'en passant au-dessus des voies ferrées, [c'était] comme si j'avais pénétré dans la zone la plus obscure de Paris' (*DB*, p. 29).[10] In *Austerlitz*, railways and stations link together the travels of both the narrator and the protagonist: the novel opens with the image of the narrator arriving by train into Antwerp, and, later, underground stations act as symbolic places of descent and discovery during

[10] 'On crossing the railway tracks, [it was] as if I had penetrated the darkest part of Paris' (*DB*, p. 24).

Austerlitz's story, while the first meeting and final leavetaking of the narrator and Austerlitz also both occur in railways stations (*A*, pp. 14 and 414). In *Sefarad*, European railways appear once again as a frequent symbolic touchstone for the narrator's account of twentieth-century exile, persecution, and suffering throughout the novel's seventeen chapters, serving as a reminder to the reader that 'la gran noche de Europa está cruzada de largos trenes siniestros' (*S*, p. 217).[11] In European modernity, and in modern European literature, the default metaphoric resonance of the train is one of ineluctability, of a single route forward, which is most closely associated with ideas of inexorability, of progress, and of an ultimately inevitable and teleological line of history with all the destruction and calamity that entails. However, it should not be forgotten that equally constitutive of the main line railway is the siding, the branch line, the smaller and less-noticed alternative route. The generally unacknowledged aspect of the representation of railways in the modern European literary tradition is the metaphorical possibility of steering the train of history onto a less frequented track, finding a new and heretofore undetected route forward. Conceived of in these terms, the resonant metaphor of the railway in the novels examined in this study therefore not only echoes the legacy of European modernity, but also encapsulates the potential of symbolically rescuing trains – and, by extension, the novels in which they act as crucially significant metaphors – from notions of doomed progress, destruction, inevitability, and ultimate obsolescence, relating to them instead to a future plurality of new potentialities.

Another recurrent image in *Dora Bruder*, *Austerlitz*, and *Sefarad* that helps elucidate the tensions of reading melancholy cosmopolitanism in European fiction, as well as its latent possibilities, is that of twilight. Often portentously presented in the novels examined here, twilight is the melancholy darkness in which much of their narratives, but most especially their endings, take place. From *Sefarad*'s conclusion as 'empieza un anochecer de diciembre' (*S*, p. 746),[12] to *Austerlitz*'s narrative ending 'als es Abend wurde' (*A*, p. 421),[13] to *Dora Bruder*'s final ruminations on 'les rues vides', which, as the narrator remarks, 'pour moi elles le restent, même le soir' (*DB*, p. 144),[14] these novels are saturated with crepuscular gloom. Yet, while twilight or crepuscularity – in French, *le crépuscule*; in Spanish, *el crepúsculo*; in German, *die Dämmerung* – might typically denote dusk and the evening, it might just as equally connote the dark half-light before dawn, the dim glow of future renewal, in which *Erstlinge* might emerge from a melancholy cosmopolitan collective of *Spätlinge*. An imagined dawn, this

[11] 'The great night of Europe is shot through with long, sinister trains' (*S*, p. 29).
[12] 'Night falls at the end of a December day'.
[13] 'As evening fell'.
[14] 'Empty streets' […] 'for me they are always empty, even in the evening'.

might suggest, along with remembered evenings, is better than no light ahead at all. Perhaps, however, the crepuscular glimmer on the horizon might be suggestive neither of a longer, darker sunset, nor of a slower, more drawn-out dawn, but rather of an ongoing constitutive ambiguity. In the strange light of this ambiguous crepuscularity is where melancholy cosmopolitan novels emerge, and such ambiguity is inherent to this mode of writing. Yet, inasmuch as the idea of lateness is predicated on its own overcoming and an implied future, a reading of melancholy cosmopolitanism in European novels published around the millennial caesura suggests that through self-consciously late and melancholy aesthetics a cosmopolitan collective that articulates the possibility of future renewal and restitution for European literature and culture may be perceived. While an ultimate *finis* or *telos* may remain as elusive as ever, European literature moves ever closer towards it. Or so it looks for melancholy cosmopolitan novels at the turn of the millennium.

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