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“The great night of Europe is shot through with long, sinister trains”: Transnational memory and European identity in Antonio Muñoz Molina’s *Sepharad*

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*Since 1975 Spain has been engaged in the recuperation of the memory of the Francoist past. For a long time, under the headline “Spain is different”, the public debate has reflected a view of the Spanish experience as a particular event tied to the nation state. However, since the turn of the millennium such a notion is constantly being challenged by global and transnational influences that affect and reshape the local memory discourse(s). The following article aims to show how the novel *Sepharad* by the Spanish author Antonio Muñoz Molina could be read as a literary manifestation of a “multidirectional memory”, in which different memory scenarios in dialogue inscribe the memory of the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship into a common European memory context. In this sense, the novel can be read as a paradigmatic example of a transnational memory discourse, which tries to transcend traditional Manichean divisions between “us” and “them”, instead focusing on the persecuted and oppressed and warning us of the presence of totalitarian and exclusionary logics in our contemporary society.*

I want European history to be incorporated into the Spanish collective consciousness, a history that is almost absent in the Spanish public sphere. Because of the Civil War and of Francoism, for a long time Spain has been isolated from the rest of Europe. But the knowledge of the Holocaust and of Nazism is important for us, important in order to interpret and understand our own history.

(Jeg vil gerne åbne den spanske forestillingsverden i forhold til den europæiske historie, som kun spiller en meget begrænset rolle i den spanske offentlighed. På grund af borgerkrigen og det frankistiske diktatur har Spanien i mange år levet isoleret fra Europa, men emner som holocaust, nazismen og modstandskampen er temaer, som det er meget vigtigt at vide noget om for at kunne sætte vores egen historie i perspektiv. Alzaga and Hansen; *my translation*, 11)

This was the response of Spanish author Antonio Muñoz Molina in 2003 to being asked by the Danish newspaper *Weekendavisen* about the purpose of his recently released novel, *Sepharad* (2003). As will become clear, *Sepharad* is a novel that is both representative and paradigmatic at the same time. Representative because it forms part of a broader transnational movement in which the Holocaust has become a global point of reference (Assmann), and paradigmatic because it can be read as one of the

first attempts to introduce perhaps the darkest chapter of European history into a Spanish context where the memory of the Holocaust has echoed only faintly (Reyes Mate; Baer).

Since 1975, Spain has been engaged in a public debate about the recovery of the memories of the past – of the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent period of dictatorship. While generating a clear political polarization, the debate has also fostered a range of differing memory discourses, and these have contributed to the cultural memory of the war. Cultural memory is here understood as the interplay between past and present in socio-cultural contexts (Erlil 2) through the circulation of texts in the broadest sense. In Spain, the literary discourse has contributed very significantly to the recovery of the memory of the Civil War, and hence it deserves special attention.

In what follows, I will argue two main points: first, I intend to show how the debate about the memory of the Spanish past has experienced a radical shift since the turn of the millennium – a shift that we could term an internationalization or globalization of Spanish memory, in which the local and national memory discourses regarding the Civil War have been affected and reshaped by the transnational influence of Holocaust memory. Second, I aim to apply Michael Rothberg's concept of 'multidirectional memory' in order to understand *Sepharad* as a novel in which different memory scenarios inscribe Spain inside a larger, European memory context.

This leads me to suggest that the novel *Sepharad* can be read as a paradigmatic example of a transnational memory discourse – a discourse transcending Manichean divisions between “us” and “them” to focus, instead, on the role of the victim and the oppressed in a totalitarian Europe. In many ways, such an approach could resemble the cosmopolitan memory discourse. Because of its abstract and universalising nature, the cosmopolitan memory approach reveals certain restrictions. At the same time, it is also inherently risky, especially in the context of a confrontational and polarized political landscape such that currently exists in Spain. In this respect, it will be my argument that the novel tries to nuance the cosmopolitan memory discourse. By transcending national borders and drawing a straight line of history from the Spanish Late Middle Ages to the contemporary European landscape, *Sepharad* insists on a collective responsibility for history, and hence conceives of a shared European cultural identity.

The decontextualization of the memory debate

As mentioned, Spain has long been engaged in intense debate over the recovery of the memory of the Civil War. Even though the country is currently experiencing a devastating economic crisis that has profoundly altered its political landscape, the primary interest in the outlook towards Spain's future is still rooted in discussion of the past. There is general agreement among scholars that the memory debate in Spain witnessed a radical shift around the turn of the century (Hansen and Cruz Suárez). After 2000, following a period of memory absence, an abundance of distinct discourses and social movements emerged to claim public recognition of the sufferings of the victims and their relatives (Bernecker).ⁱ At the same time, these memory discourses seem to have transgressed national borders in such a way that different memories from different societies draw upon one another, thus entering into a transnational dialogue. In this respect it is crucial to note that the acceleration of the memory debate in Spain occurred at the same point in time at which the Holocaust memory discourse became

globalized (Assmann 98). The global interest in the Holocaust has penetrated, and has to an extent affected, the national memory discourses in Spain, albeit not without controversy. As the sociologist Alejandro Baer affirms:

The European culture of memory and the globalized discourse on the Holocaust introduces a foreign body of ideas into Spain, which are simultaneously rejected and appropriated. They are rejected because there is no immediate historical connection with the events that are to be remembered and because the prevailing logic in Spanish political culture has been alien to memory; not until the past decade has this logic begun to be questioned. And they are appropriated in different ways by identification and comparison with the Spanish tragedy. (108)

In their anthology *Memory in a global age* (2010), Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad argue that during the last decade the study of memory has been significantly reconfigured. Processes of globalization have detached the production of memory from the national boundaries, thus unseating memory of the past from its status as a strictly national project. The two authors stress the migratory potential of the distinct memories in a global sphere: “Today, memory and the global have to be studied together, as it has become impossible to understand the trajectories of memory outside a global frame of reference” (2).

Assmann and Conrad’s observation is central to this paper, as it suggests that identity formation – something that is inherent in memory work – could be interpreted not only in terms of traditional national affiliation, but as an ongoing process of cross-border communication and circulation between different individuals and communities. In what follows, I will demonstrate how the novel *Sepharad* attempts to bring about the construction of a shared European cultural identity through its amalgamation of two distinct spaces of cultural memory: the memory of the concentration camps and the Spanish inquisitorial past.

Sepharad: multidirectional memory

“Sepharad” is the Hebrew name for the Iberian Peninsula, used by the Spanish Jews to designate their homeland. In 1492, as a part of “La Reconquista” and the alleged Christianization of the peninsula by the Catholic kings, many Jews were deported and forced into exile. The novel *Sepharad* was published in 2001. It is Antonio Muñoz Molina’s most complex work by far.ⁱ The novel has also clearly demonstrated an ethical turn in literary authorship, establishing a clear distance from earlier postmodern novels such as *Beatus ille* (1986) and *El invierno en Lisboa* (1987). Molina’s ethical stance becomes very clear in a passage from the novel’s last chapter where the narrator, a renowned Spanish author (who in every way resembles the empirical author), ruminates on the frivolity of inventing lives through fiction: “How can one be so frivolous as to invent, when there are so many lives that deserve to be recounted. Each one of them a novel, a vast network that leads to other novels and other lives [Cómo atreverse a la vana frivolidad de inventar, habiendo tantas vidas que merecieron ser contadas, cada una de ellas una novela, una malla de ramificaciones que conducen a otras novelas y otras vidas]” (*Sefarad* 490). I intentionally quote from the original Spanish version.

The English version says: “How, when there are so many lives that deserve to be told, can one attempt to invent a novel for each, in a vast network of interlinking novels and lives” (*Sepharad* 365). The problem, in my opinion, is that the English translation changes the content and hence does not wholly capture the self-referential encounter at stake.

The complexity of the novel lies in its very structure, which the author has subtitled “a novel of novels [una novela de novelas],” which translates as something like “a novel made of novels.” It is remarkable that the English translation has omitted the subtitle, as this is important for a true understanding of the novel’s structure. The novel consists of 17 chapters, all of which can be read individually as separate stories, but at the same time are interrelated through a complex register of intratextual references that mix fictive and real historical characters (such as Primo Levi, Franz Kafka, Eugina Ginzburg, Jean Améry). The chapters are told through various first-person narrators with different “ideologies”: for instance, a Spanish soldier from the Blue Division (a group of volunteers from the Spanish nationalist army who served in the *Wehrmacht* on the Eastern Front during the Second World War), the daughter of the legendary communist leader during the Civil War, Dolores Ibárruri Gómez, also known as “La Pasionara,” and relatives of Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

What is striking in the novel is the fact that no voice is given primacy. Instead, we as readers encounter a range of different voices, giving rise to a kind of multiperspectival view of the past. According to Astrid Erll (2011), literary works have the potential to “display and juxtapose divergent and contested memories,” thus creating what she calls “mnemonic multiperspectivity” (151). Close to multiperspectivity is the concept of “multidirectional memory” developed by Michael Rothberg. Rothberg’s work aimed to show that the relation between collective memory and group identity must be revised. In a quotation that almost echoes Astrid Erll’s statement cited above, Rothberg argues that “multidirectionality encourages us to think of the public sphere as a malleable discursive space in which groups do not simply articulate established positions but actually come into being through their dialogical interactions with others” (5).

This understanding of memory processes as the ongoing result of a multidirectional renegotiation is very present in *Sepharad*. Each chapter in the novel is dedicated to one specific voice. The common denominator that relates the different voices and the different stories is the experience of exclusion and marginalization. Whether this exclusion is socially, politically or racially motivated, it is always somehow related to the totalitarian time of Europe – a Europe permeated by the concentrationary universe.

In the context of the totalitarian landscape of Europe, it is important to make a distinction between the memory of the Holocaust and the concept of “concentrationary memories”. The concept is coined by Max Silverman and Griselda Pollock in their compelling study *Concentrationary Memories: Totalitarian Resistance and Cultural Memories* (2013), in order to grasp a range of memories and, at the same time, broaden the Holocaust’s insistence on uniqueness and spatio-temporal particularity (2). Thus, whereas the memory of the Holocaust insists on the specificity and particularity of an appalling and racially motivated genocide, “concentrationary memory” is not restricted to the world of the concentrations camps:

It is also the total society of which the camps are a symptom, instrument and symbol. The camps are indicative of a society in which thought is deadened, action is programmed, and there is no vigilant anxiety about or active resistance to the absolute corrosion of human singularity and human rights (3).

In this respect, the experience of the concentration camps is not an isolated event, but surely an event that has initiated “a repeatable possibility in human history” (1). The real achievement of the approach by Silverman and Pollock, in my opinion, is the fact that “concentrationary memory” adds a dimension to the victimization discourse often inherited in the Holocaust memory. While recognizing the suffering of the victims, “concentrationary memory” questions and points to the fact that the system of corrosion is not confined to the camps, but is, in fact, a prevailing logic in our society. As it will become clear, this approach is also present in the novel *Sepharad*. The novel’s aesthetic capacity to represent and make visible the multidirectional interconnectedness of separated memories is exemplary here.

Chapter two, entitled “Copenhagen,” demonstrates very clearly the multidirectional approach replicated in the novel as a whole. In a scene situated in the present, the narrator rides the train through Europe. The train trip encourages him to remember a childhood experience when he travelled with his grandfather through postwar Spain:

During my first trip to Madrid, as I dozed on the hard, blue plastic seat, I listened in the dark to my grandfather Manuel and another passenger tell each other tales of train trips during winters of the war [...] As I watched those faces and listened, their words dissolved into sleep, and I felt myself on one of the trains they were telling about, past trains of defeated soldiers or deportees who traveled without ever reaching their destination, stopped for whole nights beside darkened platforms. Shortly before he died, Primo Levi said that he was still frightened by the sealed freight cars he occasionally saw on sidetracks. [...] As clearly as I remember that first trip, I remember the first time I stopped at a border station [...] Scowling, rough-mannered policemen examined our passports on the platform at Cerbère Station. Cerbère. Cerberus. Sometimes stations at night do resemble the entrance to Hades, and their names contain curses; Cerbère, where in the winter of 1939 French gendarmes humiliated the soldiers of the Spanish Republic, insulted them, pushed and kicked them; Port Bou, where Walter Benjamin took his life in 1940; Gmünd, the station on the border between Czechoslovakia and Austria where Franz Kafka and Milena Jesenka sometimes met secretly [...] What would it be like to arrive at a German or Polish station in a cattle car [...] In February 1944, Primo Levi traveled in a cattle car toward Auschwitz [...] It took Margarete Buber-Neumann three weeks to travel from Moscow to the Siberian camp where she had been sentenced to serve ten years... (*Sepharad* 26–29).

This passage shows us how the narrator’s memory of a conversation between his grandfather and a travel companion “activates” the narrator’s imagination of the deportees’ “train journey” which

then evokes associations with the stories of Primo Levi and of others. In other words, it shows us the juxtapositioning of different memories through a kind of superimposition, in which memories that at first sight are separated in time and space are brought together in an almost palimpsestic figure (Silverman 4).ⁱⁱⁱ Furthermore, one could argue that two dialogical principles are at stake in the passage. Whereas the figure of the palimpsest denotes a textual composition between different memories separated in time and space, multidirectional memory points to the interconnectedness of distinct social discourses. This argument is strengthened by a metaphor that comes after, yet brackets this passage, but that at the same time condenses the entire history of contemporary Europe:

The great night of Europe is shot through with long, sinister trains, with convoys of cattle and freight cars with boarded-up windows moving very slowly toward barren, wintry, snow- or mud-covered expanses encircled by barbed wire and guard towers. (*Sepharad* 30–31)

Sinisterly – and tragically – the atrocities committed around the European continent in the totalitarian decade are connected and facilitated by the well-developed infrastructure of horror manifest in the deportation trains. As the passage also shows, the Holocaust – understood as the central memory trope – is acting here as a kind of trigger for other memories. The passage also enables us to see how memories that in the first instance are not directly related enter into a dialogical relation with one another. The multidirectional interconnectedness between memories, thus, resonates with the quoted passage. The figure of the train is the everyday vehicle for travel and, at the same time, a vehicle for traumatic memory.

This point is developed later in the novel. In Chapter 14 – “you are...” – the narrator’s remembrance of the Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza, whose family was expelled from the Iberian peninsula in the fifteenth century, leads to a veritable *tour de force*, where different memories, fictional narratives and everyday experiences are blended together in a vertiginous collage, and, at the same time, demanding the readers ethical attention:

You have always lived in the same house and the same room and walked the same streets to your office, where you work from eight to three Monday through Friday, yet you are also constantly running and can’t find asylum anywhere. You cross borders at night along smugglers’ routes, travel with false papers on a train, and stay awake while the other passengers snore at your side. [...] You are the person who after the morning of September 19, 1941, must go outside wearing a Star of David on your chest, visibly displayed, printed in black on a yellow rectangle, like the Jews in medieval cities [...] You are the guest who may not be invited, the tenant who may be ejected [...] the black Moroccan who leaps from a smuggler’s boat onto a beach in Cádiz [...] You are the Spanish Republican who crosses the French border in February 1939 and is treated like a dog or someone with the plague [...] You can wake up one morning at the unpleasant hour of the working man and discover with less surprise than mortification that you’ve transformed into an enormous insect [...] You are Eugenia Ginzburg listening for the last time to the sound her door makes as it closes, the house she will never return to. You are Margerete Buber-Neumann, who sees the illuminated sphere of a clock in the early dawn of

Moscow, a few minutes before the van in which she is being driven enters the darkness of the prison. You are Franz Kafka discovering with amazement that the warm liquid you are vomiting is blood. (*Sepharad* 288-299).

As we have seen, the inclusion and juxtaposition of the Holocaust memory with other traumatic memories automatically creates a semantic extension. Rather than denoting a unique historical event, the memory of the Holocaust begins to symbolize the struggle for human rights and the defence of democracy and freedom. In other words, we are talking here about a special kind of memory discourse that is constituted across historical, political and national borders. Bearing in mind that Spain is still struggling with the memory of the past, one might expect that such an approach could open the way to a future of mutual understanding.

The transnational memory discourse at stake does resemble the cosmopolitan approach in many ways. However, the cosmopolitan memory discourse reveals certain limitations and fails to include other memories. At the same time, because the Spanish memory debate is so politicized, the adoption of external influences by national discourses is problematic. Instead we see numerous examples of political discourses (ab)using the memory of the Holocaust, bringing it up in mainstream political debates for instance.

Rarticulating the cosmopolitan approach: towards a shared European cultural identity

It has long been a shared assumption that the outcome of the Spanish Civil War led to the isolation of the country from the rest of Europe. While other countries in postwar Europe (re)initiated a process of modernity, Franco's dictatorship led to the restoration and retraditionalization of elements from the *ancien régime*. This dichotomy persists as it facilitates a simple historical interpretation. However, as *Sepharad* shows, the interrelatedness between Spain and Europe is more complex. The novel's juxtaposition of the totalitarian time of Europe and the expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492 is an acute example of how cultural memory can be understood in "[t]he superimposed traces of different histories" (Silverman 4). And thus, when the novel alludes to the thousands of corpses of fugitives from Africa that wash ashore on the coasts of Spain as a result of European asylum policy,^{iv} it draws our attention to a repeating image which, nevertheless, is subject to different memorial practices. While we surely remember and acknowledge the sufferings of the victims of the Holocaust, the victims of contemporary EU policy on asylum are treated as an everyday normality in our society. In this way, the novel shows how consecrated cultural memory is detached and shielded from the so-called 'normal realities' located in the present. Furthermore, it stresses that the exclusionary logic of the totalitarian time in Europe has not ceased to exist and – to paraphrase Walter Benjamin – that the oppressed live in a constant state of emergency.^v

Such an argument is very close to the controversial, yet rich insight of Zygmunt Bauman when he affirms that the Holocaust was not in fact the "antithesis of modern civilization" but that, rather, "every 'ingredient' of the Holocaust—all those many things that rendered it possible—was normal" (7–8). According to Bauman, then, the Holocaust does not mark a break with European modern civilization, as we are often inclined to think. Rather, it has revealed the other, the dark side of modern

society's industrialization. When Bauman quotes the historian Henry Feingold remarking that the Holocaust was to a great extent facilitated by the fact that "[t]he brilliantly organized railroad grid of modern Europe carried a new kind of raw material to the factories," (8) it reminds us of the argument discussed above in *Sepharad*. Furthermore, when the novel draws together the different memory scenarios and connects them to the present situation in Europe, it echoes Bauman's statement that "none of the societal conditions that made Auschwitz possible has truly disappeared" (*ibid* 11). In order to enrich Bauman's study, we must again insist on the distinction between the Holocaust and the aforementioned concentrationary universe. By doing that, we do not isolate a singular and exceptional event in time:

The concentrationary as a system, however, with the camp as its locus and symbol, historically stretches back into European imperial wars and extends beyond Germany and its satellites between 1933-45 into the post-war German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Stalin's gulags, South African townships, Argentina's ESMA, Chilean secret prisons *stidia*, and even beyond these politically-specific sites. (Pollock & Silverman 10).

Drawing together the insights of Bauman and of Pollock & Silverman, then, we can argue that *Sepharad* opts for a special kind of transnational memory discourse. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider have suggested the term "cosmopolitan memory" in order to explain how a shared European memory of the Holocaust has engendered a kind of memory that transcends ethnic and national borders: "At the beginning of the third millennium, memories of the Holocaust facilitate the formation of transnational memory cultures, which in turn have the potential to become the cultural foundation for global human rights politics" (88). In this respect, the cosmopolitan memory discourse suggests that a European cultural identity ought to be founded on the universal struggle for human rights. However, we could say that *Sepharad* nuances this perspective. While The Holocaust might have constituted a memory that transcends national boarders, it has failed to include other moments of violence. In this sense, "the cosmopolitan memory" has become uniquely a space for Holocaust memory. What *Sepharad* shows is that there is a line from the persecution of Jews during the Spanish Inquisition to the marginalization of immigrants in contemporary democracy. The consequence is that the opposition that exists by default between Spain and Europe disappears. Instead, Spain comes to be inscribed in a European memory context, at the same time as Europe is interpreted in the light of Spanish history – suggesting shared responsibility for both the past and the present.

Regardless of its detaching and universalizing nature, cosmopolitan memory represents a paradox that we could term the "simultaneous uniqueness and moral universality" (Rothberg II 124). In this sense, it is reasonable to argue that while the intention might be a moral universalism, the sacralisation of Holocaust memory has screened off other traumatic memories. Furthermore, one might ask if the abstract ethico-political nature of cosmopolitan memory is able to denounce other types of violence in our contemporary democracy. Surely, through the template of human rights and the universal distinction between 'good' and 'evil' it is possible to detect and even prevent violations of well-established moral norms. But what about the social, cultural and economic violence still

embedded in our society? These types of violence are committed by the same democratic states that enforce the very paradigm of human rights. In relation to this, instead of using the Holocaust as a universal moral standard applied to other histories, *Sepharad* suggests forms of multidirectional memory processes in order to show the interconnectedness between different periods of violence.

At the same time – and perhaps because of its abstract nature – the cosmopolitan memory approach inherently risks being abused, a risk that becomes very real in the context of a very polarized political landscape such as in Spain. The conflict arises when a decontextualized memory discourse becomes politicized. As mentioned above, the Spanish political landscape is still very polarized. A sharp distance between the left wing (represented by the socialist party PSOE) and the governing right-wing Partido Popular is somehow a continuation of a century-old conflict. The use of the Holocaust as a symbol of atrocities committed by totalitarian regimes, then, allows the left-wing register to make the connection between Hitler and Franco. At the same time, the Holocaust has been a useful tool for the right wing, and especially right-wing revisionists, to compare the persecution and killing of those associated with the Church during the Civil War with the Holocaust. The confusion and conflation of concepts resonate with contemporary Spanish politics. Lately, the president of Partido Popular in Madrid, Esperanza Aguirre, has demonstrated this *ad absurdum*. First in 2008, by comparing the Holocaust with ETA terrorism at a commemoration act of the victims of the Holocaust, and recently, in her comparison of the new political movement ‘Podemos’ with the rise of Nazism during the Weimar Republic.^{vi} The banalization of the past through unwarranted parallels with present conflicts reminds us of Tzvetan Todorov’s warning against falling into the fire, “by seeing the present exclusively through the lens of the past” (Todorov 161). Taking this into consideration, it seems that part of Spain is still not ready to adopt a cosmopolitan memory discourse. The above mentioned case is an acute example of how the memory of the Holocaust is being rearticulated in order to produce a kind of antagonistic confrontation. In this sense, rather than transcending the political borders, the cosmopolitan memory discourse seems only to reproduce and reinforce a Manichean division between “us” and “them.” In relation to this, *Sepharad* is radically different. It insists on going beyond the national context, focusing instead on a broader European frame of reference by arguing for a transnational and collective responsibility for the past.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the political discourses in Spain seem to be stuck in a confrontation. In several respects the Spanish case illustrates Andreas Huyssen’s argument when he affirms that “it is important to recognize that although memory discourses appear to be global in one register, at their core they remain tied to the histories of specific nations and states” (16). The litmus test, then, is whether the universalizing memory discourse enhances or hinders the local memory practices (ibid.).

Yet the novel *Sepharad* tries to transgress national borders, focusing instead on a shared transnational responsibility for history. In this sense, I have argued, *Sepharad* points towards a reinterpretation of the relationship between Spain and Europe by amalgamating the histories of these two spaces. This is facilitated by literature’s potential to juxtapose differing and divergent memories so as to create a “mnemonic multiperspectivity” (Erll 151). Today, it is exactly in terms of

multiperspectivity and multidirectionality that we have to understand cultural memory. It is the result of a dynamic cross-fertilization between various mediated discourses.

In this respect, *Sepharad* is a paradigmatic example. The novel represents a range of various fictional and historical voices in dialogue and hence is a mimetic representation of the processes of multidirectional memory. The real achievement of the novel, however, lies in the fact that it contributes to the memory of the Spanish Civil War while at the same time keeping it at a distance – the war is, in fact, not the main focus of the novel. We might suggest, then, that *Sepharad* constitutes a genuinely transnational example of a multidirectional memory discourse. Thus, the novel focuses on the persecuted and oppressed victims and warns us of the persistence of totalitarian and exclusionary logics in our contemporary society. Whereas other memory novels in Spain focus more directly on the Spanish Civil War, *Sepharad* inscribes Spain into a broader European memory context. By juxtaposing the deportation of Spanish Jews in 1492 with the memory of totalitarian Europe during the Second World War, and by introducing contemporary political concerns, the novel addresses a European cultural identity that is based on a collective responsibility for the past, the present and the future.

ⁱ First and foremost, the social movement “The Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory” initiated in 2000. See also <http://www.memoriahistorica.org.es/joomla/>.

ⁱⁱ In what follows I will quote from the English version, unless explicitly marked.

ⁱⁱⁱ In his study *Palimpsestic memory: the Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* on the working of memory, Max Silverman suggests that “the relationship between present and past [...] takes the form of a superimposition and interaction of different temporal traces to constitute a sort of composite structure, like a palimpsest, so that one layer of traces can be seen through, and is transformed by, another” (4).

^{iv} “with the new moon, the speeding launches of the tobacco and hashish smugglers breast the foam, along with emigrants coming from the other side, from the darkest line of shadow, the coast of Africa [...] Some are returned by the waves, swollen and livid and half eaten by fish” (*Sepharad* 196).

^v The 8th thesis of Walter Benjamin’s *On the concept of History* says “The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule” (Benjamin VIII).

^{vi} “Esperanza Aguirre equipara la banalización del Holocausto y la ‘naturalidad con la que algunos conviven’ con ETA.” Libertad Digital [Madrid] 24 Jan. 2008. Web. 14 Jan. 2015.; Aguirre, Esperanza. “El populismo.” ABC [Madrid] 14 Jul. 2014. Web. 14 Jan. 2015.

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