



Introduction (Part 2: Politics and Culture)

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Introduction (Part 2: Politics and Culture)

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The second part of this double special issue, ‘Spanish Exile and Italian Immigration in Argentina (1930–1976)’, focuses on politics and culture in an Argentinian context where Italian and Spanish migrants and exiles interact. The first part of this double special issue adopted a gendered perspective, revealing how displaced women artists struggled to relate to old and new audiences, on the one hand, and how they contributed to the development of transnational feminist thought, on the other. The first part also showed the current rediscovery of the life trajectories of displaced twentieth-century women by artists in Argentina, Italy and Spain. In this way, the impact of twentieth-century women exiles and migrants on today’s cultural production was highlighted.

In the second part of the special issue, however, the focus is not on similarities between the experiences and recognition of women’s displacement but on differences between the roles that Spanish and Italian newcomers played in Argentinian society. These oppositions relate not so much to their countries of origin but to other factors. First, they are connected with political ideologies because communist, socialist and fascist exiles and immigrants interact within the context of twentieth-century Argentinian politics. Second, these contrasts concern the influence that the displaced people’s cultural output and ideas exerted on the host society: both highly impactful and completely forgotten works are addressed. Finally, these dissimilarities also relate to the prominence and fame of immigrants and exiles because the life experiences and autobiographical writings of very famous and almost unknown Spanish and Italian newcomers are juxtaposed.

The first series of articles revolves around commonalities, ideological divergences and transnational networks established in the Argentinian political arena. Federica Bertagna (U. degli Studi di Verona) focuses on the attempts by the elites of both the Spanish Republican exiles and the Italian fascists to gain leadership within their respective communities and within the Argentinian host society, taking into account its changing political context. The contribution of the Italian painter and graphic artist Attilio Rossi to the modernization of the Argentinian graphic arts and publishing industry is at the heart of the article by José Ramón López García (GEXEL, U. Autònoma de Barcelona), who also considers the artist’s special connection with the Spanish Republican exiles. The article of Roberto Risso (Clemson U., South Carolina) traces the evolution of the idea of human labor

in the context of the Italian migration to Argentina, focusing on the ideologically-opposed works of socialist Edmondo De Amicis and fascist Comunardo Braccialarghe.

The next set of articles highlights the testimony on the experience of exile and migration through fiction and autobiographical writing. Verónica Azcue (Saint Louis U., Madrid) investigates the transnational and cosmopolitan dimension of the literary works by Estanislao Lluesma Uranga, a Spanish Republican scientist who was exiled to Argentina in 1939 and whose work remains unknown and still partially unpublished. Alejandro Patat's article (U. per Stranieri, Siena/U. Buenos Aires) puts the phenomenon of exile in a transnational context by comparing two cases of autobiographic exilic narratives: *Giorni lontani*, by the Jewish Italian Paolo Vita-Finzi, ambassador and journalist, who was forced to go into exile following the introduction of the racial laws of 1938, and *La arboleda perdida*, by Rafael Alberti, a Spanish communist poet and writer of Italian ancestry, who was exiled after the end of the Civil War.

To conclude this double special issue, let us draw attention to the massive refugee and migrant crisis Europe is facing today. Today's crisis is often considered as 'unprecedented' although the twentieth century, often called the century of the refugee, is characterized by a large number of refugee and migrant crises, caused by conflict, natural disasters or economic recessions. The field of Refugee Studies focuses mainly on today's refugee crisis. By redirecting attention to periods in history in which large-scale refugee and migrant movements were taking place, scholarship can provide a valuable historicizing perspective on a challenge Europe is facing today. This double special issue of *Romance Studies* contributes to this historicizing perspective on refugees and migrants by combining insights from history, literature and gender studies and by adopting a comparative approach to the experiences and impact of Spanish and Italian exiles and migrants in their host country, Argentina.

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