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Introduction

E. Helena Houvenaghel [a], María Luisa García Manso[a], Monica Jansen[a]
and Maria Bonaria Urban[b]

[a]ICON (Institute for Cultural Inquiry), Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands; [b]ARTES (Amsterdam School for Transnational, Regional and European Studies), University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Exile and Migration

An exile or refugee is a person who is expatriated by force, whereas the term migrant describes a person who leaves his homeland by choice. The exile or refugee leaves his country of origin for reasons of political opinion, race or religion, whereas the migrant leaves for economic motives in search of a better life. Furthermore, the exile or refugee cannot return to his country of origin whereas return is possible for the migrant. In spite of these crucial differences between political exiles and economic migrants (Bernard 1976; Gaertner 1955), exiles and migrants face similar problems and their cultural output in the host country is comparable. Migration and exile are both based on the experience of rupture with the country of origin, which creates analogous anxieties, cultural identity issues and integration challenges for both groups of expatriates (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989: 10, 12), with the difference that 'exile makes the same experiences all the more intense and heartrending' (156). Accordingly, these special issues of *Romance Studies* juxtapose the experiences, activities and cultural output in Argentina of both exiles and migrants from Spain and Italy.

These special issues focus on the period between 1930 and 1976, during which Argentina received more European exiles and migrants than any other country in Latin America, notwithstanding the immigration restriction policies. More than two-thirds of these European newcomers were Spaniards and Italians (Devoto 2001) who travelled to Argentina for a variety of reasons and under different circumstances.

On the one hand, many Spanish and Italian citizens migrated; they voluntarily chose to cross the ocean and enter Argentina in search of better economic conditions. The Italian case of labour migration to Argentina is the most significant. The serious economic difficulties in Italy during the interbellum led Italians — first the male migrants of working age and afterwards their relatives — voluntarily to leave their home country en masse in search of better opportunities. In the same vein, northern Spanish Galicians and Basques emigrated voluntarily to Argentina for economic reasons before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

On the other hand, Spanish and Italian citizens also expatriated en masse to Argentina because they were forced to leave their homes, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, due to war, and the rise and consolidation of fascist regimes or their downfall. Despite its

nationalist regime, Argentina was an attractive option for these exiles, not only because of its cultural and economic possibilities but also because of the large Spanish and Italian communities established in the country as a consequence of the mass economic migration that took place in the decades before the 1930s. With regard to exile, the Spanish case is important: Argentina became the second host country of Spanish exiles in America, after Mexico (Ortuño Martínez 2018, 34). Spanish Republicans fled en masse after the Civil War (1936–1939), seeking to avoid persecution under the fascist regime led by Franco (1939–1975) or to escape their transit country, France, then under Nazi occupation (1940–1944). Likewise, the repression of the Mussolini regime (1922–1943) forced anti-fascists to leave their country. In the same context, the promulgation of Mussolini's racial laws forced Jews to leave Italy. After the fall of Mussolini, when the allied forces occupied Italy, the Italian supporters of the fascist rule, in turn, fled their home country.

For the country of resettlement, Argentina, to which these groups turned, the difference between exiles and migrants was crucial. Twentieth-century Argentina attributed to immigration a pivotal role in the modernization process (Schneider 1996, 174) and welcomed immigrants who intended to work the land or who brought technical skills. In the 1930s, when anti-fascists, Jews and Republicans from Italy, Germany, Austria and Spain sought refuge in Argentina, the Argentine government restricted its immigration policy. People who wanted to enter Argentina were divided into two groups: exiles and refugees, on the one hand, and immigrants, on the other. Political exiles or racial refugees, according to the adopted ideology, 'could not be considered migrants because their decision to move to Argentina was a forced and not a voluntary decision'; the forced character of their decision 'limited these persons' productivity and these persons' willingness to integrate in the new country' (Devoto 2001, 288).

Underneath this economic discourse lay political arguments: Argentina was reluctant to permit persons expelled by Europe, considered leftists, communists, anarchists, and disrupters of order, to enter the country. The left opposition in Argentina protested against this immigration policy, but the government refused to open its borders, arguing that: 'The undesirable, the expulsed, the political refugee, the racial refugee who flees Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain, is not an immigrant' (Argentine Ministry of Exterior Relations, 1939, quoted by Biernat 2007, 88). After the Second World War, during the Peronist regime (1946–1955), Argentina's door was opened to the Italian fascists who had fled after the fall of the Mussolini regime. At the same time, Peron's regime made an alliance with Franco, which caused a number of Spanish Republican exiles to flee from Argentina and go into a second exile.

Once in the host country, all these groups, both exiles and migrants from Spain and Italy, interacted within the same Argentine context while maintaining ties with their countries of origin. This transnational dimension, an element that Spanish and Italian exiles and migrants have in common since they all established connections between two (or more) societies at the same time, determines the perspective these special issues adopt vis-à-vis their experiences, activities and cultural output in Argentina.

Transnational Perspective

In the early 1990s, migration researchers (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc 1995) from social sciences proposed to adopt

a transnational perspective on migration. The scholars made this proposal on the basis of their fieldwork with migrants standing with one foot in their society of origin and the other in the society of resettlement, forging their identities in between these two societies and embedding their activities in both. This transnational perspective on migration differed considerably from the traditional view on migrants as uprooted persons who leave behind their original society definitively in order to integrate into the new host society. It also differed considerably from the traditional image of exiles as isolated outsiders in the society of resettlement who dream of a swift return to their country of origin and therefore keep postponing the process of integration. The new conceptualization was called 'transnationalism' and can be defined as 'the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement' (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992, 5). In the context of this reframing, the term 'transmigrants' was used to refer to 'immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state' (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc 1995, 48) and 'whose lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field' (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992, 1). Over the years further research has been carried out on the transformative power of transnational migrant practices worldwide and transnationalism has emerged as a key concept in migration and cultural studies (Vertovec 2009, 211)

These special issues adopt the transnational focus, developed in the 1990s, on the Spanish and Italian exiles and migrants who entered Argentina in the period between 1930 and 1976. Our objective is to rethink the experiences, activities, and cultural output of these groups in Argentina in the transnational framework (Gabaccia 2000; Esteban 2003; Novick 2008). Gender, politics and culture will be the central analytical categories guiding our exploration. The transnational frame of analysis allows for an emphasis on the way in which the migrants' and exiles' gender commitment, political engagement and cultural output can be understood in a context that goes beyond national borders, a multiple context that combines the society of origin and the society of resettlement. This approach makes it possible to shed a different light on exiles' and migrants' experiences and identity construction in the Argentina of 1930–1976. These aspects are either linked to the society of origin (that was thought to be left behind by the migrant), to the host society (that was thought to be of little importance to the exile) or to the dynamic interaction between the society of origin and the host society.

The articles presented in these special issues grew out of an encounter between scholars specializing in the Spanish exile, the Italian migration, or the Argentine immigration. In this encounter, the Argentine context of 1930–1976 and the transnational perspective acted as go-betweens, linking the different case studies. By giving the scholars the opportunity to go beyond their usual working terrain and to discuss the differences and similarities between the Spanish and Italian case studies, the international conference 'Italian and Spanish Migrants negotiating Transnational Identities in Argentina (1930–-1976): Gender, Politics, and Culture' aimed at opening up a new horizon in the field of exile and migration studies in the Argentine context. This comparative conference was held at Utrecht University in December 2018 and was sponsored jointly by the Instituto Cervantes in Utrecht and several centres and sections of Utrecht University: the Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication; Spanish Language &

Culture; Italian Language & Culture; the ICON Institute for Cultural Inquiry; the research group Modern and Contemporary Literature and the research focus area CCHR (Cultures, Citizenship and Human Rights).

Part 1: Gender

The first part of these special issues treat gender and women's cultural productions. A first set of articles concentrates on the politics of authorship and readership, focusing on the strategies used by women writers in Argentina to overcome the obstacles of entering a transnational context of production and reception.

E. Helena Houvenaghel (U. Utrecht) identifies Rosa Chacel's dialogical strategies to involve Argentinian readers in *La lectura es secreto* (1989), a collection of short essays published from 1940 to 1959, in which the tension between the Spanish past and the Argentinian present is visible. María del Carmen Alfonso (U. de Oviedo) reflects on the negative impact of exile on Elena Fortún's literary project, which was subject to the Francoist censorship and did not have the support of Argentinian readers in the 1940s. María Carrillo (U. d'Avignon) examines two essays on femininity and exile published by María Zambrano in the 1940s in *Sur*, a Buenos Aires magazine founded by feminist writer Victoria Ocampo that contributed to reinforcing the Spanish philosopher's position within the Hispano-American canon. Carole Viñals (U. de Lille) concentrates on the articles written by the politician and women's rights advocate Clara Campoamor in Buenos Aires between 1938 and 1955, which show her anti-fascist concerns during the years of WWII and her struggle for women's emancipation in a transnational context.

Another set of articles, which will be published in the next issue, relates to more recent cultural productions that underpin the intergenerational and transcultural interest of contemporary creators in recovering, remembering and reassessing the Italian and Spanish migratory flows. Monica Jansen (U. Utrecht) and Maria Bonaria Urban (U. van Amsterdam) explore *Anni Ribelli* (1994), a film by Italian Argentine director Rosalía Polizzi that focuses on the coming of age of an Argentinian woman of Italian descent in Buenos Aires, whose rebellion against authority — both paternal and political — takes place in 1955 when Perón is overthrown in a coup d'état. Taking into account the representation of the Republican exile in contemporary theatre, Luisa García-Manso (U. Utrecht) draws attention to the way in which Elena Boledi rewrites and dramatizes Carmen Antón's memoirs (2002) and some of the most emblematic artists and archetypes of the Second Republic and the Spanish Civil War. Emilia Perassi (U. degli Studi di Milano) offers a panoramic analysis of the interplay between nation and gender and the representation of maternity in Italian and Argentinian migration novels by women writers from the last 30 years.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

E. Helena Houvenaghel ⬤ http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7877-2065

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