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The Exile Experience Reconsidered: a Comparative Perspective in European Cultural Migration during the Interwar Period

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Renato Camurri

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The Century of Exiles

- 1 Exile is a phenomenon which has concerned all civilizations, ancient and modern. Starting from the Roman civilization, in which *exsilium* coincided with the voluntary departure from the city (Bettini, 2009, 1-2), one can also mention the experience of the political exile typical of the Renaissance (Shaw, 2000; Ricciardelli, 2007), or the exile of French aristocrats during the Revolution (Degl'Innocenti, 1992, 7-8).
- 2 Nevertheless none of these experiences could be compared to the phenomenon of exile in the 20th century, particularly the exile provoked by totalitarian regimes during the 1930s. This peculiarity was emphasized for the first time by the great European intellectuals who had escaped from the Nazi-fascist persecutions and emigrated to the United States. Already in 1937, for example, when the exodus toward the Americas was in full flow, *Social Research*, a journal published by the New School for Social Research in New York—an institution which over the course of a few years became one of the most important welcoming points for European intellectuals escaping persecution (Rutkoff and Scott, 1986; Krohn, 1993)—published a series of interventions by, among others, Thomas Mann, Emil Lederer, Franz Boas, Paul Tillich and Hans Speir in which the indissoluble link between the choice of exile and the battle against totalitarian regimes was theorized, and which defined the new responsibilities of intellectuals in exile. Most of them began with a reflection on the meaning of the experience of exile and on the social condition of intellectual refugees (*Social Research*, 4 September 1937, 265-327).
- 3 A few years later, some of these reflections found a more systematic re-edition in an important book in which essays by other great European exiles—Henry Peyre, Erwin Panofsky, Wolfgang Köhler, and the already cited Paul Tillich and Franz Neumann—were published. These papers were destined to deeply shape the studies into the emigration of European intellectuals.¹ In his article, Franz Neumann, a German political scientist who first reached England in 1934 and then the United States, and who in 1942 was to be the author of the fundamental study, *Behemoth, The Structure and Practice of National Socialism 1933-1934*, underlined that the experience of exile lived during the 1930s, could not be compared to any previous example in the history of modern societies. The reasons for its peculiarity, he suggested, belonged to a series of political, religious, racial and moral elements (Neumann, 1953, 16-17).
- 4 We must clarify, first, that when we speak of exile we implicitly refer to really different experiences and phenomena: social exile, political exile and the intellectual one. In fact there is often confusion (not only in Italian but also in other languages) about the use of the overlapping terms of “exile,” “refugee” and “emigrant.” Consequently it is necessary to use each of these terms in their right meanings (Groppo, 2003, 19-30). Bertold Brecht already expressed this need in poetic form in 1937:²

I always found the name false which they gave us: Emigrants.
That means those who leave their country. But we
Did not leave of our free will
Choosing another land. Nor did we enter
Into a land to stay there, if possible for ever.
Merely, we fled. We are driven out, banned.
Not a home, but an exile, shall the land be that took us in.

Two classic paradigms

- 5 The historiography of cultural migration has been through new and important developments in the last twenty years, which have enlarged the field across the borders from within which sector-based studies had developed in the early post war years.
- 6 The first phase of studies into intellectual exile was strongly conditioned by two interpretative paradigms: the acculturation paradigm and the paradigm regarding the impact European scholars had on American culture.
- 7 The first one emphasized the exchange (cross-cultural relations) between different cultures and different forms of scientific knowledge resulting from the migration of European intellectuals to the United States. This interpretative model prevailed from the end of the 1930s starting with the first reflections about cultural migration from Europe developed by the protagonists themselves.
- 8 Many of the works published after 1945 focused on the “refugee scholars,” a concept promoted by the institutions engaged in their rescue (Duggan-Dry, 1948). Works of that period attempted an empirical measurement of the phenomenon. Laura Fermi’s now classic *Illustrious Immigrants* remained for several years one of the few books available on this topic (Fermi, 1968).
- 9 Laura Fermi, wife of Nobel prize laureate physicist Enrico Fermi (1938) and originally from a Jewish family, attempted a first analysis of the specific phenomenon of the exile of European intellectuals, an attempt which was only partially attained owing to the great difficulty in elaborating the few data at her disposal when she was writing. Her only source of information then was Maurice Davie’s book, *Refugees in America. Report of the Commission for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe*, New York, 1947 (which we refer to below).
- 10 The greatest difficulty appeared to be that of defining clearly the category of exile. To distinguish the phenomenon from Davie’s more generic category of “immigrant,” Fermi referred to “the refugee movement.” She also posed the problem of defining the specific experience of European Jews, among all “émigré scholars” (Fermi, 1968, 13-15).
- 11 Another study of fundamental importance was the book edited by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn. In this collection of essays (Fleming and Bailyn, 1969), published in the same years as Fermi’s book, for the first time, the focus was on the main protagonists of cultural migration (Theodor Adorno, Paul Lazarsfeld, Henry Levin) as well as on some scholars who later produced important research about the culture of refugee migration, in particular from the German and Austrian area, such as Martin Jay and Stuart Hughes.³
- 12 This book is an important point of reference for the historiography of intellectual exile for several reasons. Firstly, as noticed by the editors in their introduction, the facts were now sufficiently distant to be analyzed with peaceful historical judgement. Secondly, the book is interesting for the editors’ methodological choice of favouring the studied intellectuals’ academic production directly linked with their period of residence in America. And thirdly it is notable for its choice of beginning to analyze this production sector by sector (even if not all are represented). Concerning only the impact of German-speaking scholar exiles, the book was the first in a long and uninterrupted series of studies dedicated to the effect of German culture on the American cultural and intellectual environment.
- 13 The founding study of this line of interpretation of the experience of exile can be considered to be the *Report of The Committee on Recent Emigration from Europe*, edited by Maurice R. Davie (London-New York, 1947). The author, essentially using data sources from several governmental institutions and from a questionnaire distributed throughout the country, presented a series of very interesting statistical data to which we will refer later. Except for the study by Malcolm Proudfoot (Proudfoot, 1957), no other scholar has tried to venture into this forest of figures, which is considered to be reliable (Palmier, 2006, 683-87).
- 14 The limit of the book is that it doesn’t capture the specificity of this migration, putting it on the same level as other population movements so that the existence of a refugee problem is denied.⁴ Clearly the intention of the author was the appeasement of American public opinion, showing the high level of integration and rapid Americanization of the refugees, an issue that later had various and meaningful developments.

- 15 What elements do these two paradigms have in common and what are their limits? We can underline that:
- a. They ignore the detachment from the single national realities and their specific cultural and political conditions including the, often traumatic, moment of escape.
 - b. They underestimate the political aspect of the experience of cultural migration: they don't link the events with the historical scene connected with the breaking of old balances and the political crisis which led to the dissolution of the old Europe and the takeover by totalitarian regimes.
 - c. They ignore the internal dynamics within the exile groups and the kind of relations they maintained with their countries of origin, the trans-national character of this experience.
 - d. They do not analyse the problem of the building of exiles' social spaces (Bourdieu, 1979, 582), interdependent microcosms which constitute an "other" society, composed of so called "hétérotopies" (Foucault, 1994, 752-62)
 - e. They ignore the importance of the production of some symbolic elements in the experience of migration.
 - f. They do not study the forms of artistic and visual creativity. Above all, in the narration of the personal experience of the exiles, their fortune and their new lives, they over emphasize the inevitable happy ending.

Exile and Cultural Transformation

- 16 In the last twenty years the treatment of the phenomenon of cultural migration in international historiography has undergone a profound renewal. A first phase started in the mid-1980s with the publication of books by Antony Hielbut,⁵ Lewis Coser⁶ and Martin Jay.⁷ These three studies are still marked by the paradigm of the impact of German political and philosophical culture on American culture and focus on German-speaking refugees. We can find the same topics in Jean Michel Palmier, *Weimar en exil. Exil en Europe. Exil en Amérique* (Paris, 1987), Hartmut Lehmann-James J. Sheehan eds, *An Interrupted Past. German-speaking refugee historians in the United States after 1933* (New York, 1991). In the "latest generation" of studies, this theme appears again, for instance in the books by Mitchell G. Ash and Alfons Söllner,⁸ Edward Timms and Jon Hughes,⁹ as well as in the important work of Christian Fleck.¹⁰
- 17 More recent contributions have submitted the canonical interpretation of the German case to a (partial) critical revision (Kettler and Lauer, 2005; Rose, 2005). Greater attention has recently been given to the presence of exiles on the West Coast (exclusively in California and Los Angeles), with innovative studies undertaken by Pol O'Dochartaigh and Alexander Stephan,¹¹ Sabine Eckmann and Lutz Koepnick (eds),¹² and Ehrhard Bahr;¹³ or to the study of migrations within Europe, for example the German intellectual migration to England (Bergman, 1984; Conway, 2001; Snowan, 2002), or from France to England, or the case of "double exile," from Hungary to Germany and from Germany to the United States (Frank, 2009).
- 18 Studies into the French case have developed considerably (Jeanpierre, 2009) and are referred to further below. Similarly the story of exiled Spanish intellectuals to Mexico after the end of the Civil War has been reinvigorated (Faber, 2002).
- 19 What has this more recent historiography demonstrated? The extent of this broadening goes beyond the strictly historical environment, into the fields of philosophy, literature, sociology and anthropology. This has led to a series of negative "collateral effects," which I would like to underline here: a) an excessive generalization of the concept of exile, applied to contexts and situations that are very different from one another; b) the loss of historical specificity of this phenomenon: exile has become a kind of metaphor for post-modern life; so a symbolic conception of exile has prevailed, in which the exile's condition is a trouble that afflicts the whole of mankind.

Ten Issues for a Reconsideration of the Exile Experience

- 20 A first methodological suggestion is to circumscribe the field of analysis, defining precisely the concept of exile as I shall try to do at the end of this section.

21 The second affirms the necessity to differentiate—as some scholars have done (Kettler, 2009)
—any kind of trivialization of the experience of exile through its symbolic and metaphorical
use that has sometimes occurred, confirming the necessity of a precise and rigorous historical
contextualization of the phenomenon of 20th century exile.

22 The third necessity concerns the transnational character of this experience. As I shall explain
by placing the Italian case in a comparative perspective, during the study of the experience of
a single person or of a group it is necessary to consider the cultural conditioning stemming
from the new environment in which they were welcomed, and of the “contaminations” which
percolated through the relations among exiles of different nationalities.

23 The fourth point regards the re-definition of national identity in exiles. This issue has not been
studied in detail yet but is of great interest and rich in implications. The condition of exile
involves processes of de-nationalization and re-nationalization; these processes are tied to the
decision to return to the country of origin. Put in a transnational perspective, the exiles see
their primal identity subjected to a process of weakening, to strong transformations tied to the
objective conditions of the environment (social and working) in which they happened to be
staying.

24 There are also subjective elements, such as the individuals’ cultural resources, the knowledge
eventually gained in the new environment, and their relationship with their mother tongue.
Regarding this issue we can consider the reflections devoted by Hannah Arendt to the
significance of the mother tongue as a surrogate motherland and as a last residual belonging.
Similarly, one can recall that it was Theodor Adorno’s affection for the German language that
motivated his choice to return to his country in 1965.¹⁴ These resources determine oscillations
in relations in an exile’s national identity. Accordingly, Laurent Jeanpierre, studying the
French case, has identified three types of exiles, which could also be applied to the Italian
case, which we talk about in the paragraph below:¹⁵

1. the patriot defends his national identity
2. the permanent exile loses his national identity
3. the cosmopolitan lives a decoupling of his identity, acquiring a double national belonging.

25 We can say, generically, that the patriots go back to their countries, the permanent exiles
remain in the United States whilst the cosmopolitans choose to live between two worlds.

26 The fifth question regards the issue of return (*nostos*), another topic in studies into the
phenomenon of exile. Concerning the German case, David Kettler has studied the so-called
“first letters” that exiles exchanged after 1945 with their compatriots who had remained in
Germany. According to his interpretation, these letters are a significant source in evaluating
the exile’s experience and to understand the dynamics which regulate their return. The latter
option seems to be determined by a kind of re-negotiation of the role of the exile and by a
revision of their experience (Kettler, 2011).

27 The sixth point concerns the following question: does exile end with the return to the
motherland? Regarding this issue I suggest two lines of research that seem to be particularly
interesting:

a. the first one is tied to what we can define as the legacy of exile. In other words, it would
be useful to analyse what the generation of exiles created in the inter-war years and measure
the weight of this production in the Cold War years: the course of ideas between America and
Europe must be traced.

b. the second suggestion concerns the role of exiles in the building of transatlantic networks,
through the creation of a series of research institutions in scientific and cultural fields.

28 The seventh question regards the complexity of the experience of exile in the 20th century,
due to the intertwining within it of several analytical levels. This phenomenon can be
contextualized within a historical background but other levels must also be considered: a)
exiles who do not fit into the traditional classification system due to personal histories which
are dependent on highly individual factors; b) the fact that research thus far in the Italian
situation, and to a lesser extent the French, has often highlighted exiles’ political involvement
in the countries where they have been welcomed at the expense of focusing on their intellectual
and academic activities whilst in exile.

29 Eight, the institutional/organizational dimension of exile must also be considered, i.e. the role of rescue organizations, American foundations, and universities. The role of the foundations was of fundamental importance bearing in mind that they were able to obtain admission to the United States for academic personalities from the government on a non-quota basis. This role has been studied in recent years, (Gemelli and Mac Leod, 2003) with results that have confirmed both the extent of the funds and the sectors in which support for research and for refugee scholars was mainly concentrated.

30 Nine, to avoid confusing the historical experience of exile, which is essentially connected to the transformations wrought by 20th century totalitarian regimes, with the representation of exile as a postmodern metaphor of life or as a kind of exile of the soul, typical (and necessary) for artistic creativity.

31 Ten, a comparative approach contrasting exile to different cases of cultural migration could highlight some interesting questions regarding national specificities (Green, 2004, 41-56; Haupt and Kocka, 2009).

32 Having developed these considerations, I think that the semantic meaning of the word exile still has to be clarified. Generally the word suggests a form of emigration. Since the beginning of the last century the word has started to suggest a specific form of political emigration and has been used as synonymous to refugee and political immigrant. Nevertheless, in contrast to people who migrate for economic reasons, exiles do not leave their country of their free choice, but to escape from persecution or from the risks derived from their personal political or religious opinions, or due to their belonging to a persecuted ethnic group or minority.

33 The meaning of exile in the 20th century essentially indicates the experience of fracture, of displacement from the motherland, of alienation lived as a loss, an injury. Adorno sums it up pointedly—in *Minima moralia*—when he writes that exile is, essentially, “a mutilated life” (Adorno, 1954, 27). Years later, another intellectual, Edward Said, reflected on the condition of exile. In his *Reflections on Exiles*, he writes: “the achievements of exiles are permanently undermined by the loss of something left beyond forever.” He then adds:

Exiles are cut off from their roots, their land, their past. They generally do not have armies or states, although they are often in search of them. Exiles feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people (Said, 2003, 47-64).

The Italian case in a comparative perspective

34 Bearing in mind these considerations, what follows is a first, concise overview of the experience of Italian intellectuals exiled to the United States in the interwar period. It uses a methodological approach based on the comparison between different national cases, starting with the German situation, which among those studied is by far the most relevant example of cultural migration.

35 The exile of German Jews between the two wars undoubtedly represented the most significant example of intellectual migration in the entire twentieth century. Between 1933 and 1938, more than 450,000 Jews of German origin left Nazi occupied Central Europe (Strauss, 1987).

36 The archives speak to us of this tragic experience of forced exile. One need only read the letters by Adorno and Walter Benjamin, as well as Hannah Arendt’s correspondence from 1933 when she left Germany for France and then the United States (in 1941), with other Jews in America or Israel or those who stayed behind in Europe (like Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger).

37 These letters not only describe the tragedy being played out on the European stage but more importantly describe the condition of these “men without a world,” out of place, cosmopolitan out of necessity, desperately seeking a chance of being saved or just staying alive. These individuals tell us—just as the great sociologist George Simmel had previously noted—what it means for an exile to be known as a “foreigner” in the land that welcomes them (Simmel, 1998, 580-600). These accounts, furthermore, allow us to understand the various “mutilations” that the exile is submitted to, starting from a linguistic one. It was Adorno who wrote that the language of the exile is an “expropriated language.”

38 The few data we have about the exile of Italian intellectuals underline a clear link between the introduction of the racial laws and the growth of entries in the United States. This doesn’t

exclude the presence among the intellectuals in exile of persons who arrived in America before 1938, nor the presence of an element of non-Jews among them (quite a small one in reality).

39 We will try to analyze some features of the experience of Italian exiles in the United States starting from a comparative approach, with the aim of firstly highlighting some significant differences between the various national cases. At the same time we underline another fundamental aspect: the world of the exiles is one in which several experiences co-exist, a world in which a plurality of worlds meet one another. In this transnational dimension the very notion of nationality can at the same time be reinforced or weakened.

40 Moving from this perspective we can try to see what happens within these different national microcosms. The elements characterising the experience of the German-speaking exile schematically include the following features: the fundamental role of Jewish rescue organizations in aiding the refugees; the high availability of academic and scientific structures that welcomed them; the strong cohesion and solidarity inside the community group; the weak political commitment of the refugees; the very strong impact, as already underlined, on the American culture, following the interpretative outsider/insider scheme proposed by Peter Gay in a famous article;¹⁶ the high willingness to assimilate; the low percentage of return to homeland after 1945; and finally the great number of memories, collections of letters and other writings by the protagonists on the experience of exile, which has permitted a strong sedimentation and revision of the memory of this event (Anderson, 1998).

41 The second case that we examine is the French one, recently studied after years of silence. An interpretative standard tends to consider the French exile as an anomaly among the different national cases of intellectual exile. This is for three reasons: the high percentage of return to the homeland after 1945, the low “impact” on American culture and the substantial isolation from it.

42 The “new” French historiography has partially acknowledged and confirmed this interpretation. But some of the most recent work (see for example Laurent Jeanpierre), tries to overcome this consolidated stereotype, showing the French experience as more dynamic and open to contact with American institutions, with a lower group cohesion and a stronger presence in the cultural debate than previously perceived.

43 We could say, schematically, the French case has some elements in common with the German experience: the high availability of welcoming structures and a strong sense of cohesion, although not without fractures (recall the famous fracture between Maritain and Saint-Exupery in 1942 about the Vichy regime).

44 In contrast, if we want to underline the specific features of the exile of French intellectuals, we could isolate the following elements: a high presence of artists, especially in the New York area; the low impact on American culture (except in the artistic field); the strong political commitment of the exiles; the high number of returnees; the presence of many journalists and the subsequent high number of journals published during the period of exile; a strong commitment to the artistic and scientific fields; the presence of some intellectuals as “experts” in the organizations built after the United States entered the war, such as the Office of Strategic Services and the Office of War Information which, among various propaganda activities, coordinated radio programs for European immigrants (Winkler, 1978); the low production of memories and a low availability for assimilation. *Forever French*—as the title of one of the first books written on French exiles in the United States recalls (Nettlebeck, 1991)—seems to have been the destiny of French exiles. To sustain this interpretation we can mention two examples which for different reasons seem to confirm both the high level of autonomy (in some cases detachment) of French intellectuals from the country that hosted them and their organizational capacity. We refer primarily to the refusal of French scientists to collaborate with the programs for the realization of the atomic bomb;¹⁷ and to the experience, only recently studied, of the Pontigny Encounters at Mount Holyoke College in 1942-1944, where the pattern of summer meetings organized from 1910 in the Cistercian Abbey of Pontigny in France was recreated with writers, artists, intellectuals called together for ten days to discuss a predefined subject matter (Benfey and Remmler, 2006).

- 45 Regarding the Italian case, the comparison with the German and French experience suggests the following elements: the emigration of Italian intellectuals and scientists received little aid from international Jewish organizations. The Delasem, the most important Italian organization in this field, worked only in the European area (Leone, 1983; Antonini, 2000, 2005). As such, their inclusion in American scientific and academic structures was more difficult. If we consider these conditions, observations about the impact and so called “fertilization” of American culture ought to be evaluated in a different light. Lacking more in depth studies in this field, we can affirm that the contributions of Italian refugees appear noteworthy in four disciplines, which correspond to the fields of activity of four Nobel Prizes winners, whose biographies are for various reasons linked to the experience of exile: Enrico Fermi, Emilio Segrè, Salvatore Luria and Franco Modigliani.
- 46 The role played by Italian scientists (Fermi, Segrè and Rossi¹⁸) in the *Manhattan Project* for the realization of the first atomic bomb is broadly recognized (Bernstein, 1975, 23-69). Their impact on American culture was very important in theoretical physics, with Fermi and the Chicago School¹⁹ and with Segrè at Berkeley (Fermi, 1995), in experimental physics with Bruno Rossi (Rossi, 1987) and his school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) of Cambridge with several generations of students. At MIT, it is also possible to rebuild the legacy of Salvatore Luria, who created around him an important school in biology.²⁰
- 47 Another field in which it is possible to track a precise form of fertilization of American culture is that of economics with the influence of Franco Modigliani (Modigliani, 1999; Camurri, 2010), whose ideas spread from MIT to various universities around the world and to several international organizations.
- 48 Finally, a fourth field in which it is possible to track a precise Italian heritage is that of comparative literature: Giuseppe Antonio Borgese taught in Chicago between 1936 and 1948 and was also active in journalistic and political science;²¹ Renato Poggioli²² began a still fervent line of studies at Harvard University in 1947 (Della Terza, 2001).
- 49 Returning to the features of the experience of Italian *refugees*, in spite of their strong internal divisions, they were characterized by a willingness to assimilate, a high level of political commitment, collaboration with American institutions (confirmed by their presence in governmental and military organizations such as the OSS), a low rate of return to Italy after 1945, and a limited production of memoirs, some of which were only published later.
- 50 At first glance, what appears to differentiate the Italian case from the German and the French experience is the minor role of Jewish rescue organizations in aiding Italian intellectuals. Thus the means and itineraries by which exiles departed from Italy and arrived on the other side of the ocean were more diverse. The most frequent opportunity, within certain limits the most incisive one, was that of direct contacts with those who had left first, before the great wave of emigration started in 1938, and who had by then been introduced into the American academic world.
- 51 From this point of view Italians had few bridges. Among them there was George La Piana, a historian of religion who taught at Harvard²³ and had great prestige at Cambridge; Michele Cantarella who taught in one of the most important colleges of North America and was deeply committed to the rescue of European scholars,²⁴ and above all Max Ascoli. This philosopher and professor of law, born into a Jewish family from Ferrara, became dean of the New School for Social Research, and is the key character in understanding the experience of Italian intellectuals exiled in the United States (Camurri, 2010, 644-56).

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Notes

- 1 Among the classic works on this topic see: Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds, *The Intellectual Migration. Europe and America, 1930-1960*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1969; Henry Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change. The Migration of Social Thought, 1930-1965*, Harper & Row, New York, 1975; Lewis A. Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America. Their Impact and Their Experience*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984; Martin Jay, *Permanent Exiles. Essays on Intellectual Migration from Germany to America*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985; Dante Della Terza, *Da Vienna a Baltimora: la diaspora degli intellettuali europei negli Stati Uniti d'America*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1987.
- 2 B. Brecht, *Concerning the Label Emigrant*, quoted in J. M. Palmier, *Weimar in Exile: the Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America*, London, Verso, 2006, 1.
- 3 See S. Hughes, *The Sea Change. The Migration of Social Thought, 1930-1965*, New York, Harper & Row, 1975.
- 4 For a different point of view see John Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem. Report of a Survey*, London & New York, Oxford University Press, 1939.
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- 11 See *Refugee and reality: Feuchtwanger and the European émigrés in California*, New York, Rodopi, 2005.
- 12 *Caught by politics: Hitler exiles and American visual culture*, New York, 2007.
- 13 *Weimar on the Pacific: German exile culture in Los Angeles and the crisis of modernism*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007.
- 14 Derrida has criticized the so called idea of “mother tongue” in *Le monolinguisme de l’autre ou la prothèse de l’origine*, Paris, Galilée, 1996.
- 15 These typologies reproduce a division suggested by F. Neumann, “The Social Sciences,” in W. Rex Crawford, *The Cultural Migration. The European Scholar in America*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953, 16-17.
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- 18 Regarding the history of Italian physics see G. Battimeli and M. De Maria, eds, Edoardo Amaldi. *Da via Panisperna all’America: i fisici italiani e la seconda guerra mondiale*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1997 ; C. Bernardini, *La fisica italiana del Novecento*, Bari, Laterza, 2001; R. Maiocchi, *Gli scienziati del Duce*, Roma, Carocci, 2003, A. Gissi, “L’emigrazione dei ‘maestri’ . Gli scienziati italiani negli Stati Uniti tra le due guerre”, in A. Arru, D.L. Cagliati and F. Ramella, eds., *Donne e uomini migranti. Storie e geografie tra breve e lunga distanza*, Donzelli, Roma, 2008, 152-153.
- 19 On Fermi’s biography see G. Maltese, *Enrico Fermi in America: una autobiografia scientifica, 1938-1954*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 2003 and the latest biography by G. Bruzzaniti, *Enrico Fermi: il genio obbediente*, Torino, Einaudi, 2007. Regarding the reason of his exile see S.M. Di Scala, “Science and Fascism: The Case of Enrico Fermi”, in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, n°6, 2005, 199-211, where the author underlines that there is no connection between this choice and an antifascist view.
- 20 For more information on Salvatore Luria (1912-1991) see his autobiography *A Slot Machine, a Broken Test Tube: An Autobiography*, New York, Harper, 1984; P.G. Abir-Am, “The Rockefeller Foundation and refugee Biologists: European and American Careers of leading Rockefeller Foundation Grants from England, France, Germany and Italy”, in G. Gemelli, ed., *The Unacceptable, op. cit.*, 217-40.
- 21 Giuseppe Antonio Borgese (1882-1952), novelist, journalist, arrived in the United States in 1931. He taught at Berkeley, Smith College, and from 1936 to 1948 at the University of Chicago.
- 22 Renato Poggioli (1907-1963) was the most important Italian scholar of Slavic and Russian literature. He arrived in the United States in 1938 and began teaching at Smith College. From 1939 until 1946 he was at Brown and after at Harvard. See D. Della Terza, *Da Vienna a Baltimora. La diaspora degli intellettuali europei negli Stati Uniti d’America*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 2001, 127-56 and R. Ludovico-L. Pertile and M. Riva, eds., *Renato Poggioli: an intellectual biography*, Firenze, L.S. Olschiki, Firenze, 2012.
- 23 George La Piana (1878-1971), arrived in the United States in 1913. Three years later he began teaching at Harvard University.
- 24 Michele Cantarella (1899-1988) arrived in the United States in 1921, from 1929 until 1964 he taught at Smith College, strongly involved in the rescue of European scholars. See P.I. Rose, ed., *The Dispossessed. An Anatomy of Exile*, Amherst, 2005.

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À propos de l'auteur

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Droits d'auteur

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Résumés

This paper deals with exile in the 20th century and makes some suggestions for a reconsideration of this experience. The reasons for its peculiarity lie in a series of political, religious, racial and moral elements but when we speak of exile we are implicitly referring to substantially different experiences and phenomena: social exile, political exile and intellectual exile.

The historiography of cultural migration has been through new and important developments over the past twenty years, developments that have enlarged the field across the borders of where sector-based studies grew. The first phase of studies into intellectual exile was strongly conditioned by two classic interpretative paradigms: the acculturation paradigm and the paradigm of the impact refugee scholars had on American culture. However, the field of so called "Exile Studies" has widened remarkably in recent years extending to philosophy, literature, sociology and anthropology. This has provoked a series of negative effects, such as an excessive generalization of the concept of exile and the loss of the historical specificity of this phenomenon.

The author analyzes some features of the experience of Italian exiles in the United States starting from a comparative approach. His aim is to highlight major differences between various national cases (German, French and Italian). He concludes that the meaning of exile in the 20th century essentially indicates an experience of fracture, of displacement from the motherland, of alienation lived as a loss, of injury.

Portant sur l'exil produit par les dictatures fasciste et nazie du XX^e siècle, cet article propose des pistes pour reconsidérer le phénomène. Les grandes caractéristiques politiques, religieuses, raciales et morales qui l'ont causé ne sont pas suffisantes pour l'examiner. Le phénomène est multiple : il est nécessaire de distinguer exil social, d'exil politique et/ou intellectuel.

L'historiographie de l'émigration culturelle s'est beaucoup développée depuis une vingtaine d'années élargissant le domaine des bases nationales ou sectorielles où elle s'était originellement produite. La première phase des études sur l'exil des intellectuels a été fortement conditionnée par deux paradigmes classiques d'interprétation: la question de l'acculturation des chercheurs réfugiés et celle de l'impact de leur présence sur la culture américaine. Mais ce que l'on appelle aujourd'hui "exile studies" s'est considérablement étendu pour devenir une catégorie du langage littéraire, philosophique, sociologique et anthropologique. Ceci s'est traduit par une généralisation excessive du concept d'exil et une disparition de sa spécificité historique.

En plus de ces considérations historiographiques, et de manière comparative, nous analysons ici l'expérience des intellectuels italiens dans l'exil, soulignant des différences avec le cas de leurs homologues allemands et français. Les notions de fracture, d'aliénation et de perte de statut demeurent des caractéristiques fondamentales de cet éloignement forcé du pays d'origine.

Entrées d'index

Mots-clés : Exil politique, exil intellectuel, émigration culturelle européenne, « exile studies », perspectives comparatistes, réfugiés italiens

Keywords : Political and intellectual exile, European cultural migration, exile studies, comparative perspective, Italian case

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