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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Exile & Utopia International Symposium

March 13 and 14, 2024

Department of Literature, University of Trento, Trento, Italy

Organizers: Valerio Angeletti, Massimiliano De Villa, Massimo Rizzante

We invite scholars and intellectuals to contribute to a symposium centered around the interplay between exile and utopia in shaping a democratic and unified Europe. Drawing inspiration from the profound insights of renowned figures, including Walter Benjamin, Andrea Caffi, Erich Auerbach, and Albert Camus, the symposium aims to explore the relevance of these concepts in addressing the pressing challenges faced by Europe today and in the future.

Europe has encountered significant obstacles in recent years, including corruption and the alarming rise of nationalism. Against this backdrop, we seek to address a fundamental question: Can non-belonging and utopian ideals continue to serve as powerful drivers for developing and strengthening a democratic and supranational Europe?

This gathering will delve into the concept of exile as an opportunity for knowledge acquisition. It echoes intellectuals such as Sigfried Kracauer, Edward Said, and Carlo Ginzburg, who spoke "in praise of exile" to cite exile philosopher Leszek Kołakowski. By reframing exile as a means of renewing humanity, we will explore the transformative and revolutionary potential that arises from the concept of "movement as reaction." The aim is to uncover how these intellectuals and others were able to transform their forced displacement into a catalyst for personal and societal change.

Utopian thinking must necessarily encompass the notion of exile, as every individual who endures such a displacement does so with an unwavering belief in a better future. Exile and utopia are two inseparable sides of the same coin: while exile may disrupt one's sense of place, language, and identity, utopia can help minimize these losses and convert them into opportunities for personal development.

This conference will delve into the intellectual exchanges and influences that took place during the 20th century, shedding light on the significance of exile and utopia. This exploration encompasses a range of subjects, including Jewish concepts such as "Tikkun," "pariah," "redemption," and "messianism," as well as the emergence of libertarian socialism and its role in shaping the idea of a united Europe. Additionally, the conference wants to reflect on the productive interactions between exiled individuals and locals in the United States, exemplified by influential magazines such as *politics* and institutions such as The New School for Social Research. By examining these dynamics, we aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between exile, utopia, and intellectual thought during that period.

We welcome contributions that explore the following themes:

- Exile as a hermeneutic privilege (i.e., distance and proximity, big picture, exile and the original sin, estrangement, cultural hybridization, etc.).
- Libertarian thought between Europe and the United States.
- 20th-century nomadic thinking for supranational, utopian, pacific, and revolutionary intents.
- Utopian and revolutionary thinking in today's issues: human rights, technology, climate change.

While the list of notable writers, intellectuals and artists provided below is not exhaustive, it serves as a starting point for potential subjects of discussion at the conference:

Bertolt Brecht, Ignazio Silone, Gustaw Herling, Vladimir Nabokov, Carlo Levi, Hermann Broch, Nicola Chiaromonte, Albert Camus, Andrea Caffi, Walter Benjamin, Martin Buber, Ernst Bloch, Erwin Panofsky, Claudio Guillén, René Wellek, Renato Poggioli, Erich Auerbach, Hannah Arendt, Thomas Mann, György Lukács, Kar Löwith, Leo Löwenthal, Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, Marguerite Yourcenar, Milan Kundera, and many more.

Submission Guidelines: Please submit a 300-word abstract along with a short biography to exileutopia2024@gmail.com by **October 15, 2023**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by November 12, 2023. Full papers should be submitted by March 5, 2024. Some papers will be selected for publication in a special issue of an international journal (language: English).

Conference Details: The symposium allows 20-minute interventions in English, French, German, and Italian. Remote interventions are available for participants unable to attend in person. Date: March 13-14, 2024. Location: Department of Literature, University of Trento, Trento, Italy.

For any inquiries or additional information, please contact exileutopia2024@gmail.com.