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Finding Josep Solanes: mobilizing the legacies of Republican exile in Spanish cultural studies

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ABSTRACT

Using the example of Republican exile Josep Solanes, this article argues how the category of exile and the reality of the Republican exile of 1939 can be mobilized for a political questioning of the meanings of “Spanish” in twentieth-century Spanish culture as defining and framing disciplinary areas. Still a very little known author, the article reconstructs the disciplinary fields, historical conflicts, personal encounters, border and language crossings necessary to assess Solanes’ work, the conditions of his radical intervention in the field of psychiatry, first in Catalonia and later in France and Venezuela, and how they framed his conceptualization of the experience of exile. The last part of the article, through a consideration of Solanes’ explorations of the exilic as a post-national condition, reflects on what could be the political and ethical conditions to recuperate a legacy that resists being inscribed in, or identified with, the nation. In an important way, this article should be read as an introduction to the very little known Josep Solanes that lays out the importance of his work and signals its potential for further research on new directions in the study of exile.

KEYWORDS

Josep Solanes; Spanish Republican exile; Psychiatry; Madness; Francesc Tosquelles

Within Spanish cultural studies, debates problematizing the category of “Spanish” as naming nationally defined and framed disciplinary areas have taken two main forms. One scrutinizes the legacy of hispanism as a form of cultural imperialism in Latin America, while visualizing these relations anew through the framework of a transatlantic geopolitical context. The other challenges the supremacy of Spanish as the category of choice to refer to the plurinational reality of the Spanish state and, as an alternative, activates “Iberian” as a framework capable of addressing this plurinationality, including Portugal, more horizontally. I have proposed elsewhere that the category of exile and the reality of the Republican exile of 1939 together open up a fertile alternative approach to a political questioning and critical interrogation of the meanings of “Spanish” in twentieth-century Spanish culture and Spanish cultural studies more

specifically (Balibrea 2007, Balibrea and Faber 2017). In this article, I want to illustrate the critical potential of this approach through the example of one Republican exile, Josep Solanes. Two areas will concern me here. The first relates to mapping the territories of exile. By historically reconstructing Solanes' exile, the article will expose the incongruity in attempting to pin down his work within ready-made categories of analysis. The reconstruction of disciplinary fields, historical conflicts, personal encounters, border and language crossings necessary to make sense of Solanes' work traverses, without fully residing in any of them, the categories of "Spanish", "Catalan", "Iberian", "transatlantic", "European", "Latin American", as well as the disciplines of medicine, history, literature, philosophy, anthropology. At every step, the task of the cultural studies practitioner advances by undoing its very limits. Who is Spanish? What are the disciplinary limits of culture? But while widely accepted geographical and disciplinary boundaries can be put under suspicion (how are they complicit in keeping Solanes' important contributions hidden for so long?), they are still needed to show how they overlap with each other as part of historical and power-knowledge discourses. It is in these frequently overlooked intersections that the fleeting, precarious life of the exile often coalesces and, consequently, where an argument for the relevance of their work can be built. My conclusion is that it is only by crossing conceptual boundaries, and in the trans-disciplinary, the pluri-national and the multi-lingual that Solanes' trajectory can be effectively grasped.

The other area of concern in this article is that of exile itself as posing a challenge to the category of nation/nation-state/country but equally to its adjacent category, identity, both encapsulated in the word "Spanish". Josep Solanes, like many other exile intellectuals and artists, wrote about his own condition. His major work in this area is the essay *Los nombres del exilio*,¹ a practically unknown book and, in my opinion, a major contribution of the stature of Said, Zambrano, Agamben or Claudio Guillén's theorizations of exile. Through a consideration of Solanes' explorations of the exilic condition, the article will ponder what might be the political and ethical conditions to reclaim a legacy of value for the recuperation of historical memory in Spain, but still that resists being inscribed in, or identified with, the nation.

In an important way, this article should be read as an introduction to the very little known Josep Solanes that lays out the importance of his work and signals its potential for further research on new directions in the study of exile.

Locating Josep Solanes

Having graduated in psychiatric medicine at the University of Barcelona in 1932, the professional life of Josep Solanes Vilaprenyó (Pla de Santa Maria, 1909 – Valencia, Venezuela, 1991) started under the best auspices. He was taught there by Emili Mira, holder of the first chair of psychiatry in Spain and a leading figure in the modernizing of Catalan and Spanish mental health disciplines. Mira, a distinguished doctor with a national vision, a Catalanist, a republican and a socialist, epitomized the progressive intellectual in early twentieth-century Spain, his civic commitment culminating under the Second Republic and dissolving into exile after its defeat in the Civil War. Mira thrived and came to prominence at a time when Spain was starting to become part of an international network of intellectual and artistic exchanges with Europe, the modern Spain of the *Edad de Plata*. Following in the footsteps of Ramon Turró and August Pi i Sunyer, Mira was well acquainted with the latest developments in the field coming from Europe, including the treatment of war neuroses during World War I, and was instrumental in introducing new clinical treatments based on psychoanalysis, phenomenology and physiology. Always keen to be at the forefront of debate and to disseminate new knowledge, he directed the leading journals *Revista Catalana de Psiquiatria i Neurologia* and *Revista de Psicologia i Pedagogia* (the latter with Joaquim Xirau) (Sáiz, Balltandre, and Sáiz 2005). As director of the psychiatric hospital Institut Pere Mata in Reus, he paved the way for a new conceptualization of the treatment of mental illness that inserted the patient socially into the district (*comarca*) through a network of local facilities. This *psiquiatria d'extensió* put Catalonia at the forefront of modern medicine in Spain, instituting practices that would become widespread across the Western world after World War II (Comelles 2008; García Siso 1992; Solanes 1947). Part of Mira's legacy was forming a new generation of eminent psychiatrists, Solanes himself but also the today much better known and acclaimed Francesc Tosquelles. A close friend of Solanes, their lives and professional developments ran closely parallel during the 1930s and 1940s. The nature and quality of Tosquelles' work will be invoked throughout my discussion to help illuminate Solanes' much less documented trajectory.

Solanes and Tosquelles worked with Mira at the Institut Pere Mata and Solanes also published in the previously mentioned journals. Like Mira, they were committed Catalanists keen to contribute to Catalonia's modernization in the context of the Second Republic, and POUM militants. Solanes was well connected in avant-garde circles, as proven by his involvement in the journal *Hèlix* in 1929. When the war started, Mira was appointed overall director of Psychiatric Services and Mental Health for the Republican army. Solanes and Tosquelles followed suit, heading mental services in Aragon, with Solanes from 1937, once

the POUM had been dissolved, taking charge of Psychiatric Services for Republican Spain's Central Army sector. Both went into exile in France in 1939.

Thanks to the connections that Catalan doctors had established from the 1920s with the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy at the Université de Toulouse (Martínez Vidal and Sallent del Colombo 2010, 141; Sabaté i Casellas 2006, 251), Solanes and Tosquelles were soon able to find jobs in French psychiatric institutions. Particularly providential for Solanes was the psychiatrist Maurice Dide (Mangin-Lazarus and Gineste 1990; Oliveros 2017; Tosquelles 2014, 109), who offered him positions where he had the opportunity to work with renowned physicians: Gaston Ferdière at the psychiatric hospital in Rodez; Paul Guirard and Eugène Minkowski in Sainte-Anne (Buqueras i Bach 1996, 39; Oliveros 2017). Between 1946 and 1949, until he left for Venezuela, Solanes worked at the Clinique Generale du Centre Saumery in Blois (Dosse 2010, 43; Miró Vinaixa 2016, 20; Oury 2008, 17; Rojas Malpica, de la Portilla Geadá, and Sedek León 2005, 37). Tosquelles, after a period in the Septfonds concentration camp for Spanish Republican exiles (Tosquelles 2014, 106), took a position at the hospital in Saint-Alban in central France, where he would stay for the rest of his professional career.

The different provincial French enclaves where these young Catalan doctors practiced in war-torn France and Europe in the 1940s put them at the forefront of treatment, intervention and reflection on psychological pathologies caused by extreme historical conditions. Paradoxically, these exile outcasts were in a privileged position to become the architects and catalysers of decisive advancements in psychiatry. They came from Catalonia very well prepared professionally, as I have already discussed. But they also came from Spain very well prepared politically. Catalonia and Spain had, like the rest of Europe, experienced the increasing social unrest and escalating confrontation that spread throughout the continent as a result of major events of the twentieth century's first decades – World War I, the Russian Revolution, fascism's rise to power – and that would come to a head for Spain in its Civil War. Mira, Solanes, Tosquelles – the first as a socialist, the last two as militants of Bloc Obrer i Camperol and later the POUM – were all politically educated and engaged (Mülberger and Jacó-Vilela 2007; Tosquelles 2014, 201). When Solanes and Tosquelles crossed the Pyrenees in 1939, they brought with them their experience at the Spanish Civil War front, which was highly specialized from a medical point of view but also defined ideologically by their fight against fascism (Labad Alquézar 1997, 237). The French context they found would replicate and broaden for the Catalan psychiatrists, known as the *psychiatres rouges*, the opportunities for medical and political intervention and for learning from the continuing crisis. In Toulouse, thanks to the supportive network provided by the Comité Universitaire d'Aide à l'Espagne

Republicaine, led by Camille Soula, they would soon be put in contact with the *Résistance* being organized against the Nazi occupation (Dreyfus-Armand 1999, 217; Martínez Vidal and Sallent del Colombo 2010, 141). I have already mentioned the help Solanes received from Maurice Dide, a very active member of the movement until he was caught and deported to Buchenwald, where he died (Mangin-Lazarus and Gineste 1990; Solanes 1945b). The hospitals where Tosquelles and Solanes worked were used to hide those being sought by the Nazis. Furthermore, France had since the 1920s sheltered numerous Jewish intellectuals fleeing Germany and Eastern Europe, some of whom had managed to restart their lives and continue to practice their professions. One of them was psychiatrist and philosopher Eugène Minkowski. Solanes had become acquainted with Minkowski's work via Mira in Reus, but now in France he had the opportunity to work side by side with him at the hospital in Sainte-Anne, as indicated above. Strongly influenced by Henri Bergson and Karl Jaspers, Minkowski argued that psychopathologies were to be explained through recourse to philosophy – specifically phenomenology (Urfer 2001). Thus, he interpreted schizophrenia as the result of subjective distortions in the patient's understanding of time and space. His method of phenomenological psychiatry worked by penetrating the structure of experience where the equilibrium between the subject and their environment, their attitude towards the surrounding world – what Minkowski, following Bergson, called the *élan vital* – had been distorted (Urfer 2001, 279). These ideas would be fundamental for Solanes' conceptualization of exile (Silva Rojas 2018) and he is likely to have seen them applied clinically while working in Sainte-Anne with Minkowski.

The radically political nature of the work that Tosquelles developed in Saint-Alban, during and after the war, has been well documented in recent years (Dosse 2010; Fundació Antoni Tàpies 2018; García Siso 1992; MACBA 2012; Oury 2008; Robcis 2016; Tosquelles 2014). His practice in Saint-Alban was transformative in postwar France: he adapted Mira's *psiquiatria d'extensió* to his later famous *psychothérapie institutionnelle* and *psychiatrie de secteur* (Tosquelles 2014, viii and *passim*), distributing and integrating patients into the community, and abolishing hierarchies between doctors, patients and refugees. He reformulated Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis to marry it with Marxism, and incorporated art and literature as therapeutic languages. Acutely aware of the oppressive power of psychiatry as an institutional discourse, he was committed to producing a practice capable of dismantling that discourse and of protecting and empowering the vulnerable. His work influenced in a major way the political and clinical practice of fellow radical psychiatrists Frantz Fanon, Jean Oury and Félix Guattari, and gained momentum in the anti-psychiatry

movement, a term coined by David Cooper but more famously led by the impact of Michel Foucault's early work on madness around 1968 (Galván 2010, 69-103).

As the bibliography shows, in France and Catalonia Tosquelles' ideas have undergone a well-deserved process of recuperation and reactivation, whether strictly in their clinical application or more broadly as an intervention in medicine with wider implications for culture and politics. While his biography always features prominently, for disciplinary purposes he is renationalized as a French author in the French- and English-language bibliography. Nonetheless, given that the stature of the thinkers he is associated with exceeds national paradigms and that their work is read in many languages and across disciplines, this provides "Tosquelles studies" with an entry point into more transdisciplinary, transnational and hegemonic discourses in the fields of cultural and social critique and philosophy. Cultural institutions in Catalonia like the Fundació Tàpies and the MACBA have explored this approach.

The status of "Solanes studies", on the other hand, is much less prominent, despite the evidence that the two psychiatrists shared much in their radical approach to the profession. While it is often mentioned that Surrealist artists Tristan Tzara and Paul Éluard took refuge in Tosquelles' hospital at Saint-Alban, seeking protection from the Nazis (Robcis 2016, 212), it is not insignificant that Antonin Artaud, who was a patient in Solanes' hospital at Rodez during World War II, held the Catalan doctor in high esteem. This was the same Artaud from whose defiant schizophrenic artistic condition Deleuze and Guattari would take inspiration for their *Anti-Oedipus* (1983, 134-135). Rojas Malpica, de la Portilla Geada and Sedek León claim that Artaud dedicated his *Le théâtre et son double* to Solanes, and quote him as having said that Solanes "tiene ... la lucidez de uno de los corazones sufrientes más sensibles que jamás haya conocido" (2005, 37). This warmth of feeling and character description is corroborated in the letter that Artaud wrote to Solanes (Dikson 1973-1974) after having read the talk Solanes had given at the Centre d'Études Toulouse-Barcelone in January 1945, the basis of his first published piece on exile, "El clima de discòrdia de l'exili" (Solanes 1945c), published in French in 1948 as "Exil et troubles du temps vécu" (Solanes 1948). The clearly deeply felt terms in which Artaud addresses Solanes demonstrate their close friendship: "votre conference sur l'exil m'a fait beaucoup de peine, non de peine à lire, de peine a cause de ce qu'elle contient, mais de peine au coeur, parce que je vous connais et je vous ai cherché dans ce texte" (your lecture on exile caused me much grief, not grief in the reading, grief because of what it contains, but grief in my heart, because I know you and I sought you in this text) (Dikson 1973-1974, 61 and 62). The words reveal a non-hierarchical rapport between the two, far from a standard

doctor-patient relationship. Moreover, Artaud is sensitive to how Solanes is starting to write about exile as being generically akin to a mental illness, as “l’exil de l’âme” (exile of the soul), in a manner that reveals a very personal connection. In other words, he is diagnosing Solanes, who appears in Artaud’s words as being as fragile and damaged as he himself may have felt as a patient suffering from schizophrenia:

j’y ai senti à travers toute page et toute phrase une douleur, celle de l’homme qui a un mal sur lui et qui veut s’en débarrasser a tout prix mais sur qui le mal a été si puissant qu’il a paralysé même sa révolte profonde lui en a fait oublier l’épouvantable et desséchante acreté, et d’un révolté, d’un repoussé du coeur, a fait dans le temps un résigné, qui refoule sa peine, et ne peut meme plus en parler...

(I felt in every page, every phrase a suffering, that of a man under the weight of an illness he wishes to be free of at any price but for whom the illness has been so powerful that it has paralyzed him even to the depths of his revolt, made him forget its terrifying, withering acidity, and has, over time, made out of a man in revolt, in emotional recoil [...] a man resigned, who represses his grief and can no longer even speak of it ...) (Dikson 1973-1974, 61-62 and 62-63).²

While more research is needed on the types of clinical practices that Solanes was involved in while working in France, his publications of the early postwar period demonstrate how committed he was, as we know was the case for Tosquelles, to developing the approaches to the treatment of mental illness that both had learned in Catalonia as students, scholars and war doctors. Solanes’ article “La nova ‘psiquiatria’ d’Emili Mira” (Emili Mira’s new “psychiatry”; 1947)³ is the clearest example of this. Following Mira, he argues that “no és possible ... de destriar sinó esquemàticament, la normalitat de la malaltia.... costa ... de fer acceptar que no hi ha cap diferència essencial entre el *boig* i *el que té tota la seva raó*” (it is not possible ... beyond the schematic, to separate normality from illness... it is hard... to make people accept that there is no essential difference between a *demented person* and *one who has their sanity intact*; Solanes 1947, 446; emphasis in original). Solanes considers barbaric the belief that:

en perdre l’equilibri mental, es perd salut i humanitat. ... El gran escàndol [de l’assistència psiquiàtrica] es que el *foll* sigui encara considerat com un ésser a part, com

una vergonya desferra que, no posseint ja cap qualitat humana és només tributari del miracle ... o del oblit -succedani de l'exterminació. El fet de creure que el malalt mental és un estrany i que la condició humana ja no és la seva, és allò que fa que els hospitals de *boigs* siguin encara un món on tot és – o és suposa ésser – possible. I és, també, aquest fet, allò que permet al profà d'admetre indistintament la versió segons la qual el psiquiatra és un taumaturg i la que en fa un botxí, car si es considera el malalt mental com un reu sobre qui pesa la darrera de les condemnes, o bé cal redimir-lo amb els remeis del misteri o executar-lo amb infàmia i en secret.” (1947, 447; emphasis in original)

(in losing one's mental balance, one loses one's health and humanity. ... What is outrageous [in psychiatric treatment] is that it continues to regard the *mad person* as a being apart, a shameful reject that, no longer possessing any human quality, can count only on a miracle ... or on oblivion, a surrogate form of extermination. The belief that the mentally ill person is a stranger, alien to the human condition, makes hospitals for *mad people* continue to be a world where everything is – or is supposed to be – possible. Moreover, that belief allows laypersons to accept uncritically the view that the psychiatrist is a thaumaturge or the opposing view that makes him an executioner since, if the mentally ill are seen as convicts under a death sentence, the only options are to redeem them with mysterious remedies or to execute them secretly and dishonorably.)

We can see already in these early formulations how close Solanes is in his conceptualizations of the plight of those affected by mental illness to ideas of naked life and dehumanization, and of the mental institution as a repressive apparatus that acts as an ideological echo chamber perpetuating the status quo. Psychic suffering, he maintains, is to be understood “en funció de la personalitat individual i de la societat que el volta” (in relation to the personality of the individual and to the society around them; Solanes 1947, 449) and tasks himself with helping to eradicate the former (psychic suffering) by changing the latter (society) (Solanes 1947, 448).

Further research is also needed on the types of clinical practices that Solanes implemented once he left France for Venezuela in 1949, after accepting an offer from that country's Ministerio de Sanidad y Asistencia Social. He would spend the first two years directing the Colonia Psiquiátrica de Anare in Guaira, and then moved to Venezuelan Valencia to take what would become his permanent post for the rest of his career as director of the newly created Colonia Psiquiátrica de Bárbula (Rojas Malpica, de la Portilla Geada and Sedek León 2005, 37). Mention needs to be made here of a project that Solanes was instrumental in

implementing successfully soon after arriving in Bárbula, since it points once again to a consistency of approach analogous to that which has been well documented for Tosquelles in Saint-Alban. *Nanacinder. Vocero de la Colonia Psiquiátrica de Bárbula* (1952 – 1964) was a literature and arts periodical open without distinction to all personnel and patients of the Colonia, who participated as writers and graphic artists as well as in its material production (Téllez 2002, 9). The suggestive but otherwise meaningless title, *Nanacinder*, was created by a patient. The choice reveals a spirit of openness and respect for a language of freedom, where different interpretations or the renunciation of interpretation is accepted. Ascanio (2016) invokes Foucault's and Deleuze's concept of delirium to make sense of this language of madness that does not connect with an outside and, for that reason, is endowed with liberating potential. She speaks of *Nanacinder* as an “espacio libertario desde donde el loco inscribe su enfermedad, es decir su otredad psíquica y social, mediante la creación literaria o artística.” (2016, 71) In validating and promoting the creation of such a space and making it accessible in a non-hierarchical manner to everyone in the Colonia, Solanes was showing his ongoing commitment to psychiatry as a radical practice.

Mobilizing Josep Solanes

I wonder as I research this author if his work can be mobilized in similar ways to that of Tosquelles, since their trajectories, at least until 1949, demonstrably share so much. After that moment, how does their integration into different, unequal national and continental discursive disciplinary networks – French and Venezuelan, European and Latin American – reshape their radical purpose in different ways? My hypothesis, which I am unable to prove fully in these pages, is that these geographical differences have adversely conditioned the reception of Solanes' work. He made a distinguished career in Venezuela (Buqueras i Bach 1996; Martín Frechilla 2008; Oliveros 2017; Rojas Malpica, de la Portilla Geda and Sedek León 2005), and it would be inaccurate to say that this has gone unacknowledged, but the Venezuelan and Catalan/Spanish scholarship tends to note his legacy rather than read it in depth. Additionally, his work on exile is treated in much of this bibliography as an aside with no consequences for his clinical work and bearing no relation to the conditions of his extraordinary training. Only recently have historians of philosophy (Silva Rojas 2018; Silva Rojas, Armijo Núñez and Núñez Erices 2015) and literature (Miró Vinaixa 2016) started to pay attention to his writing on exile, with the auspicious reprinting of *Los nombres del exilio* in 2016, under a different title, making his major contribution to this field accessible to a wider readership (see note 1). So, as part of the wider project of critical recuperation of Solanes' work for which I have been

delineating some coordinates in this article, I will conclude by making the case for mobilizing Solanes' work on exile as a critique of national disciplinary boundaries.

The Second Republic, the Spanish Civil War, and then the Second World War and exile are the defining moments for Solanes to come to terms with the crisis of subjectivity of his age. First, in becoming acquainted with the conditions of psychiatric patients in his discipline; then, in the fight against fascism, in Spain and in exile in France. The theatres of the mental institution and of war and its aftermaths confronted him with the loss of human status and citizenship due to madness, war, displacement or race. The mentally ill, the defeated, the red, the exile, the Jew, all those experiences of humanity at the limit are the subjects of Solanes' thought and practice and are to be understood as converging in this moment of crisis to become the defining categories of his work and life. Solanes the psychiatrist, the defeated Spanish Republican, the refugee, the exile knows a thing or two about subjection, about being on the wrong side of the state's laws. In his writing, as well as his practice as a psychiatrist, his concern is for the outcast, the marginalized, those under suspicion, those who need their internalized discrimination cured, their humanity reinstated, healed. Solanes' intellectual and ethical questions are always about such persons who are distrusted by authority. His interest in phenomenology reveals the same concern: it is the experience of the mad, the exile, the dispossessed that he wants to hear, their claims that he wants to voice. As Artaud perceived so insightfully in his letter, Solanes is both subject and object of his study of exile. His political approach to his professional object of study and practice – the mentally infirm – makes exploring the exilic condition a related endeavor. Like the experience of madness, that of exile is a liminal one, oscillating indecisively between opposing categories. As Solanes summarizes in the conclusion to his doctoral thesis: “l'exil fait découvrir, non pas discursivement mais expérimentiellement, d'une façon vécue, les frontières entre l'individu et le collectif, le normal et le pathologique, le profane et le sacré” (exile makes one discover, not discursively but experientially, through lived experience, the borders between the individual and the collective, the normal and the pathological, the profane and the sacred; quoted in Buqueras i Bach 1996, 41). Around the same time that, as we have seen, he takes to denouncing how the mentally ill are treated as a category beneath the human and beyond the reach of laws applying to the healthy, and therefore exposed to extermination, his first meditations on exile underline how those without the protection of the state are relegated to a new dimension where rights are lacking and anything goes:

L'exiliat és, des d'un cert punt de vista, un traspassat. No està fora del món però està fora del seu món. Havent-li arrabassat tots els drets, hom els hi ha concedit tots. "Tot està permès a qui tot està prohibit", ha escrit Victor Hugo parlant precisament de l'exili. (1945a, 11)

(Exiles are, from a certain perspective, those who have crossed over to the other side. They are not outside of the world, but they are outside of their world. All rights having been taken from them, all rights are granted to them. "Everything is allowed to those to whom everything is forbidden," Victor Hugo wrote precisely about exile.)

His article "Els remeis de l'exili" (Cures for Exile) closes with Socrates' plea to the exile: "Desposeït dels deures del ciutadà, que exerceixi els de l'home" (Dispossessed from the duties of the citizen, let them exercise those of men; 1945a, 15). And this will in the end be Solanes' proposal, the lesson learned in exile, the cure found for exile as a mental illness. While the whole of his work on exile can be defined as an anthropological study describing this collective and individual experience over time and across cultures, his conclusion, in his last elaborations on the topic in his doctoral thesis and his book *Los nombres del exilio*, is to recommend renunciation of any idea of patria and citizenship. The cure, the *remei* to the pain caused by exile, is to avoid national identification and, instead, to inhabit whatever land one finds oneself in as part of the planet:

le nouveau-venu s'intégrera d'autant mieux dans la nation qui le reçoit s'il peut voir en elle non pas seulement un succédané de patrie, un état serré parmi les autres, mais un pays ouvert au monde, une fenêtre sur le monde, un belvédère d'où pouvoir saisir la face inédite de la planète et le visage inconnu de ses habitants. Et la société dans laquelle il aimera se fondre sera celle, jeune ou rajeunie, qui lui semblera être en rapport étroit avec le devenir, la liberté. (quoted in Buqueras i Bach 1996, 41)

(those who have just arrived will integrate better into the nation that receives them if they can see in it not just a surrogate fatherland, a state embraced amongst others, but a country open to the world, a window onto the world, an observatory from which to grasp the untold surface of the planet and the unknown face of its inhabitants. And the society into which they will want to integrate will be one that, young or rejuvenated, will seem to them closely attuned to becoming, to freedom.)

Solanes' culminating reflection at the end of an investigation that had been in the making for over forty years is a call to flee the sovereignty of the nation-state, proposing as an ideal a life of non-interpellation. Solanes advocates a model of existence beyond the community, of needing no community other than one that does not have an exterior, and only in that sense choosing to embrace being part of the commons – a commons where the mechanisms of exclusion for being different are rendered redundant. Solanes calls this way of confronting exile that of the specimen that chooses to be non-marked and in so doing renounces identity: “Representar una nación es siempre, de un modo u otro, ser su embajador; representar la Humanidad, la Naturaleza, no es sino constituirse humildemente en *specimen*. [...] Se es representativo porque se es común.” (2016, 265; emphasis in original)

I am aware that this idea is problematic from a political point of view. It does not offer any suggestion as to how this is to be achieved, personally or collectively, but remains at the level of a phenomenological experience available to the exile, one that Solanes has come to prefer. It is at best a utopia. And yet, I want to argue that Solanes' specimen, if turned around, if looked at from the point of view of the nation whose call the specimen has stopped desiring, poses a political challenge to those of us invested in recuperating Solanes' legacy while speaking, explicitly or implicitly, from nationally-bound disciplines. We are dealing with what is at once part of and different from “us”, a quality that defines Solanes with respect to the categories (not a comprehensive list) of “Spanish”, “Catalan”, “Venezuelan”, “Latin American”, and that by extension applies to the entire Republican exile cultural corpus. To account for Solanes' legacy on his own terms, from his own acknowledged place, inescapably means rejecting national identity labels and claims to possess any label in exclusivity. And this is the lesson of the exilic condition encapsulated in Solanes' specimen: by asserting the will not to be interpellated, it forces us **Spanish cultural studies practitioners** to confront how national and nation-building mechanisms are inscribed in the very structures at work in the act of recuperation, urging us to remain vigilant with regard to the limitations, distortions and symbolic violence that those structures produce.

Notes on contributor

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Notes

¹ Solanes worked on the topics covered in *Los nombres del exilio* for many years, and his publications from 1945 onwards offer variant versions of his arguments, with the variations often being minimal. He wrote on exile first in Catalan, then from 1948 in French, and from the early 1950s also in Spanish. *Los nombres del exilio*, published posthumously in Caracas in 1993 by Monte Ávila Latinoamericana, is the text of the doctoral thesis he completed in 1980 at the Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, entitled *Le noms de l'exile et l'espace de l'émigration: étude anthropologique*. In 2016, the book was reprinted in Spain by Acanalado with a different title, *En tierra ajena. Exilio y literatura desde la "Odisea" hasta "Molloy"*. In this article I will be quoting from this edition as it is the one currently available but will refer to the book by the title given by the author himself in its original edition.

² I have slightly modified Dikson's translation here.

³ All translations of quotes by Solanes from the original French or Catalan in this article are my own.