

TRANS-EXILE: A METHOD FOR UNDERSTANDING EXILE AT ITS INTERSECTIONS ILLUSTRATED BY THE CASE STUDY OF ROSA CHACEL AND ÁNGEL ROSENBLAT

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This study introduces and explores the innovative concept of “trans-exile”, defined as the point where exiles intersect. The trans-exilic method, in contrast to traditional approaches that focus on specific spatiotemporal contexts, offers a perspective that reveals the interconnectedness of exiles beyond temporal and geographical boundaries. The article presents the three-step trans-exilic method—which consists of an identification phase, an examination phase, and an interpretation phase—and tests it through a case study. This case study draws on unpublished private correspondence and diary entries to explore the relationship between Rosa Chacel, a Spanish exiled writer, and Ángel Rosenblat, a Jewish-Polish exiled Hispanist. The trans-exilic method leads to the conclusion that Rosenblat’s support played a crucial role in sustaining Chacel in the early stages of her exile and in the initial steps toward returning to her country of origin, long before the movement to acknowledge exiled writers gained momentum in Spain. In this way, the trans-exilic lens reveals how Rosenblat, seemingly distant due to differences in country of origin and host country, can still be closely connected to Chacel and have an impact on her exile trajectory and professional career. The method provides a means of honoring and recognizing the memory of Rosenblat, a fellow exile who supported Rosa Chacel during key moments in her journey and who deserves a place in the image we construct of Chacel today. Ultimately, the method has demonstrated that trans-exilic interactions challenge traditional notions of networking in Exile Studies by revealing how exiles navigate and redefine the idea of community. Rather than adhering solely to conventional or mainstream frameworks of national affiliation with the country of origin or the host country, exiles forge alternative networks of support. Highlighting such communities offers a counter-narrative to dominant national versions of the story of exile.

KEYWORDS: trans-exile, Spanish exile, epistolary, Rosa Chacel, Ángel Rosenblat

Trans-exili: un mètode per entendre l'exili a través de les seves interseccions, il·lustrat pel cas de Rosa Chacel i Ángel Rosenblat

Aquest estudi introdueix i explora l'innovador concepte de “trans-exili”, definit com a punt d'intersecció dels exiliats. El mètode trans-exílic, en contrast amb els enfocaments tradicionals centrats en contextos espai-temporals específics, ofereix una perspectiva que revela la interconnexió dels exiliats més enllà dels límits temporals i geogràfics. L'article presenta el mètode trans-exílic de tres etapes—que consisteixen en: fase d'identificació, fase d'examen i fase d'interpretació—i el posa a

prova mitjançant un estudi de cas. L'estudi de cas es basa en la correspondència privada inèdita i fragments extrets de diaris per explorar la relació entre Rosa Chacel, escriptora espanyola exiliada, i Àngel Rosenblat, hispanista jueu-polonès exiliat. El mètode trans-exílic mena a la conclusió que el suport de Rosenblat jugà un paper crucial en el sosteniment de Chacel durant les primeres etapes d'exili i en els seus primers passos cap al retorn al país d'origen, molt abans que el moviment de reconeixement dels escriptors exiliats guanyés impuls a Espanya. D'aquesta manera, la mirada trans-exílica revela com Rosenblat, en aparença distant a causa de les diferències de país d'origen i país d'acollida, pogué connectar estretament amb Chacel i tingué impacte en la seva trajectòria a l'exili i en la seva carrera professional. El mètode proporciona una via per honorar i reconèixer la memòria de Rosenblat, un exiliat que donà suport a Rosa Chacel en moments clau del seu viatge i que mereix un lloc en la imatge que construïm de Chacel avui dia. En definitiva, el mètode demostra que les interaccions trans-exíliques desafien les nocions tradicionals de creació de xarxes en els estudis sobre l'exili, ja que evidència com els exiliats naveguen i redefeixen la idea de comunitat. En comptes d'adherir-se únicament als marcs convencionals o predominants d'afiliació nacional amb el país d'origen o el país d'acollida, els exiliats forgen xarxes alternatives de suport. Així mateix, aquestes comunitats ofereixen una narrativa a la contra de les versions nacionals dominants de la història de l'exili.

PARAULES CLAU: trans-exili, exili espanyol, epistolari, Rosa Chacel, Àngel Rosenblat.

Trans-exilio: un método para entender el exilio a través de sus intersecciones, ilustrado por el caso de Rosa Chacel y Ángel Rosenblat

Este estudio introduce y explora el concepto innovador de "trans-exilio", definido como el punto en el que los exilios se cruzan. El método trans-exílico, en contraste con los enfoques tradicionales que se centran en contextos espacio-temporales específicos, ofrece una perspectiva que revela la interconexión de los exilios más allá de las fronteras temporales y geográficas. El artículo presenta el método trans-exílico de tres etapas —que consiste en una fase de identificación, una fase de examen y una fase de interpretación— y lo pone a prueba a través de un estudio de caso. Este estudio de caso se basa en correspondencia privada inèdita y extractos de diarios para explorar la relación entre Rosa Chacel, una escritora española exiliada, y Àngel Rosenblat, un hispanista polaco-judío exiliado. El método trans-exílico lleva a la conclusión de que el apoyo de Rosenblat jugó un papel crucial en el sostenimiento de Chacel en las primeras etapas de su exilio —particularmente en los primeros años de su exilio y en los primeros pasos hacia su regreso a su patria— mucho antes de que se impulsara el movimiento para reconocer a los escritores exiliados en España. De esta manera, la mirada trans-exílica revela cómo Rosenblat, aparentemente distante debido a las diferencias en su país de origen y lugar de refugio, pudo estar estrechamente conectado con Chacel y tener un impacto en su trayectoria de exilio y carrera profesional. El método proporciona una forma de honrar y reconocer la memoria de Rosenblat, que apoyó a Rosa Chacel en momentos clave de su exilio y que merece un lugar en la imagen que hoy construimos de ella. En última instancia, el método ha demostrado que las interacciones transexílicas desafían las nociones tradicionales de pertenencia al revelar cómo las personas exiliadas navegan y redefinen la idea de comunidad. En lugar de adherirse únicamente a los marcos convencionales o predominantes de afiliación nacional con el país de origen o el país de recepción, las personas exiliadas forjan redes alternativas, a menudo pasadas por alto, de apoyo y solidaridad. Estas comunidades ofrecen una contra-narrativa a las versiones nacionales dominantes de la historia del exilio.

PALABRAS CLAVE: trans-exilio, exilio español, epistolario, Rosa Chacel, Àngel Rosenblat.

Trans-Exile: Understanding Exile at Its Intersection with Other Exiles¹

In a recent study, I have defined “trans-exile” succinctly as follows: “Trans-exile is the point where distant exiles converge. It refers to the social, cultural, or political interactions and relationships among exiled individuals. Trans-exile is a transhistorical and transnational concept, encompassing the interactions between exiles, regardless of their spatiotemporal contexts” (Houvenaghel, 2025b). The “trans-” prefix emphasizes the fluid nature of exile’s legacy, highlighting how displacement experiences shape interactions between exiles across traditional spatiotemporal boundaries.

The concept of trans-exile represents a new perspective on exile and marks a significant departure from traditional Exile Studies, which have typically focused on exiled individuals within specific temporal and national contexts, primarily examining either countries of origin or reception.² The trans-exilic lens approaches exile from an alternative perspective, emphasizing the intersection between different exilic experiences. Trans-exile illuminates the complex network of interactions, exchanges, and collaborations that develop among exiles irrespective of temporal or geographical distances.

This concept encompasses a connection with what Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996), the Nobel laureate exiled from the Soviet Union to the United States, termed the “pedigree” of exile in his 1987 lecture “The Condition We Call Exile” (1991: 1). Brodsky’s conception of “pedigree” encompasses a lineage of notable exiles, including Ovid, Dante, Victor Hugo, Heinrich Heine, Theodor Adorno, Hannah Arendt, or Bertolt Brecht, while also extending to various forms of displacement, particularly economic migrants forced to leave their homelands seeking a dignified life and a brighter future.

In line with Brodsky’s view, trans-exile refers to the interactions between displaced individuals, both (political) exiles and (economic) migrants, whose lives or works intersect with those of other exiles or migrants. This concept, in my view, extends beyond those directly affected by displacement to include their descendants. The provisional definition of trans-exile is as follows: “Trans-exile denotes social, cultural, and political contacts and interactions

¹ This research was conducted within the framework of the Fenix Network for Research on Women Exiles and Migrants.

² Trans-Exile is not a commonly used concept in the study of the Spanish exile and its literary production. However, in the field of German Exilliteratur, there has been a movement to go beyond traditional national contexts in studying exile, advocating for a more transnational and transhistorical perspective (Bisschoff and Komfort-Hein; Benteler and Narloch; Kliems).

between exiles, migrants, and their descendants, from different spatiotemporal contexts” (Houvenaghel, 2025b).

The trans-exilic approach examines these intersections of exile through three key stages: (1) identification, (2) examination and categorization, and (3) interpretation of interactions. The first stage, identification, examines a range of autobiographical materials produced by exiles such as diaries, interviews, essays, or autofiction. These sources offer insights into (often previously unrecognized) trans-exilic connections with other exiles, as well as their intellectual or artistic output and the places they have traversed. This identification phase includes gathering other information concerning the person(s), work(s), or place(s) involved in the trans-exilic interaction, and their significance.

The second stage of the trans-exilic approach delves into the dynamics of these relationships, focusing on how they were established, the specific actions they entailed, and the ways in which these interactions evolved over time. At this stage, sources that allow for the exploration of the development of trans-exilic relationships, such as private correspondence or memoirs, are analyzed in greater depth.

The second stage also includes the categorization of these contacts. Trans-exilic interactions can be categorized into two main types: direct personal interaction, on the one hand, and interaction on the representational level, on the other. The former occurs through lived experiences at a material level, while the latter takes place in representational spaces. In this stage, it is also examined whether such direct personal contact is predominantly a social, cultural, or political interaction. In many cases, these interactions combine features, such as being both social and cultural or social and political simultaneously. On the representational level, trans-exilic interactions may involve drawing inspiration from the lives, works, or significant places of both past and present exiles, to construct a text, an artwork or a fictional or imaginary world.

The third phase analyzes the impact of relationships between exiles. This phase looks into how these interactions influence the exiles’ personal experience and creative output. It explores how these interconnections reshape our understanding of the exiled person and how such bonds and communities may shed a different light on the exile’s trajectory and work.

Does this trans-exilic method work? What improvements can be made? After presenting the new methodology, I illustrate and test this framework through a case study. This analysis serves as a practical evaluation of the method. Following the case study, I return to the methodology to assess the framework’s effectiveness and to refine the approach.

Case study: Rosa Chacel and Ángel Rosenblat

Identification Phase: Rosenblat “was magnificent”

The Spanish writer Rosa Chacel (1898-1994) lived in exile after the Spanish Civil War for over thirty years (1940-1974), residing in Buenos Aires, Río de Janeiro, and New York. She maintained a deliberate distance from Spanish Republican exile communities. Traditional Spanish scholarship has consistently noted the absence of the conventional connections between Chacel and other Spanish exiles, marking her as an anomalous figure within this diaspora (Marías, 1969: 11). The critics’s view aligns with Chacel’s own stance, as, while in exile, she rejected identification with the Spanish Republican Exile community (Chacel, 2004: 552). Instead, she sought to integrate into the local literary circles of her host countries (Houvenaghel, 2020) or into other literary groups, such as the French Nouveau Roman with which she felt an affinity (Houvenaghel, 2022 and 2023). But what about her interactions with and connections to other exiles from different countries of origin and living in various countries of refuge? This intersection with other exiles is the focus of the present study.

While leafing through Rosa Chacel’s diaries from the final years of her exile, just before her return to Spain in 1974, I came across an interesting mention of someone named Rosenblat. In 1969, Chacel describes a visit by Rosenblat to Río de Janeiro, where she was residing at the time. She notes that Rosenblat “was magnificent” during his stopover on his way to Buenos Aires (Chacel, 2004: 514). The diary entry of February 28, 1969, portrays Rosenblat “as affectionate as always”, hinting at a longstanding relationship between them.

An examination of his biography reveals that Ángel Rosenblat (Poland, 1902-Venezuela, 1984) was himself a product of a double exile. A distinguished linguist of Polish-Jewish origin, he established himself as a preeminent scholar in Hispanic linguistics. Following his family’s forced migration from Poland, Rosenblat began his academic journey at the University of Buenos Aires, where he received his initial higher education. He studied alongside notable contemporaries like Amado Alonso within the Institute of Philology, where influential scholars such as Pedro Henríquez Ureña shaped his intellectual formation. Between 1931 and 1936, Rosenblat pursued advanced academic training across multiple European institutions: first at the University of Berlin and subsequently at Madrid’s Centro de Estudios Históricos, where he studied under the renowned Ramón Menéndez Pidal. Compelled by Argentina’s political turbulence, Rosenblat migrated later to Venezuela, acquiring citizenship in 1950. In Caracas, he established a distinguished academic career, directing the Instituto de Filología Andrés Bello at the

Universidad Central de Venezuela. His scholarly contributions were particularly significant in Venezuelan Spanish linguistics, where he compiled extensive lexicographic materials documenting Venezuelan linguistic variations. Recognized as a preeminent Hispanic scholar, Rosenblat specialized in Latin American variations of Spanish.

Examination Phase

Intrigued by this brief mention of Ángel Rosenblat in Chacel's diaries and drawn by his remarkable journey as an exiled scholar, I pursued further research at the Archive of the Fundación Jorge Guillén. There, I uncovered an unpublished private correspondence (1949-1973) involving Ángel Rosenblat, his Venezuelan wife Carmen Helena Mendoza,³ and Rosa Chacel. Although the archive preserves these letters, only Rosenblat's communications to Chacel remain, with her responses missing from the collection.⁴ I also cross-referenced Chacel's diaries and found scattered references to Ángel Rosenblat, which collectively represent him, gradually building a portrait over the decades.

A Portrait in Fragments: Ángel Rosenblat in Rosa Chacel's Diary

Beginning with the image Chacel creates of Rosenblat in her diary (2004), she recalls how their friendship started in the early 1930s in Berlin. She describes him as always kind and thoughtful, noting that she even had the impression he might have been somewhat amorous toward her (234). The diaries also mention that he was one of the friends she met again in Paris in 1939, while staying in the same hotel and waiting for the opportunity to leave Europe and travel to Latin America. Later, during Chacel's exile, the diary entries depict Rosenblat as her correspondent. He gains presence in the diary through the letters she wrote to him—or planned to write—as well as the letters he sent to her.

Rosenblat's visit to Chacel in Rio de Janeiro in 1969 marks a turning point in their relationship. The visit is announced in the early days of 1969 (Chacel, 2004: 513), and Chacel recalls it in February 1969. In her reflection, Chacel paints a portrait of Rosenblat and his attitude toward her. According to Chacel, Rosenblat's approach shifts from an initially lecturing and critical stance to a more empathetic and supportive one. She believes that, after this visit, he

³ Regrettably, the spatial constraints of this article prevent me from addressing the contributions of Carmen Helena Mendoza, who frequently adds a brief paragraph at the conclusion of Rosenblat's letters. In this piece, I focus exclusively on Rosenblat's writings.

⁴ The preserved correspondence comprises a total of 18 letters written by Ángel Rosenblat to Rosa Chacel, spanning the period from 1949 to 1973.

understands what she truly needs. In her own words, she reflects on their evolving relationship, recalling that in earlier times, Rosenblat often took a “lecturing stance” and was “reluctant to understand” her reasons. Now, however, after his visit, “he has realized the situation and understood that I need something quite different from sermons” (Chacel, 2004: 514). Upon arriving in Caracas, Rosenblat’s adoptive hometown, Chacel recalls that he sent her a whole package of books and articles. She is deeply grateful and plans to write him a long letter (515). The portrait made here by Rosa Chacel shows that the distance between the two exiles, one living mainly in Caracas and the other in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, has been a difficult factor for their friendship and their mutual understanding.

Evidence of Rosenblat’s supportive influence on Rosa Chacel can be found in her diary of the year after his visit to Rio de Janeiro. On October 3, 1970, she wrote: “Today, a literary page from Caracas arrives, sent by Rosenblat, with a lengthy article about Spanish and Spanish-speaking literature. There is a highly appreciative reference to my work. Good, very good—one must continue” (2004: 564). This brief diary entry reveals how Rosenblat’s carefully chosen texts and supportive commentary provided Chacel with renewed motivation and confidence in her literary pursuits during her long exile, a challenging period of her career.

A second memorable encounter between Chacel and Rosenblat took place in the spring of 1971. In her diaries, Chacel mentions that Rosenblat had invited her to stay at his house in Madrid during a sabbatical (2004: 576). However, she writes that when she arrives, it is his daughter who meets her at the airport, as Rosenblat had suffered a serious cerebral stroke the day before her arrival and was taken to the hospital. Chacel’s close friend Dr. Fernanda Monasterio—a Spanish psychologist who had emigrated for a while to Latin America for professional reasons before returning to Madrid—was called to assist with his care and recovery. In her diary, Chacel also expresses great concern that Rosenblat may not be the same after the cerebral stroke and may not fully recover (578).

Letters to Rosa: Ángel Rosenblat in Pen and Ink

I now shift from the portrait Chacel paints of Rosenblat to their correspondence. Rosenblat’s letters to Chacel focus on three key aspects: his expression of personal warmth and friendship; his literary insights and support within literary circles; and his efforts to help Chacel reintegrate into Spain’s literary scene.

First of all, the fundamental aspect of Rosenblat’s correspondence with Chacel was the moral support, the understanding, and companionship he extended during her challenging years of exile. Despite her protracted periods

of epistolary silence, particularly in the early 1940s, Rosenblat consistently maintained communication, exhibiting an understanding of her hesitation to correspond. For instance, he demonstrated remarkable empathy towards her reticence, articulating in a letter dated February 19, 1950: "One constructs their own life and laments the absence of communication from others, as if they were inexorably bound to us, without acknowledging that they, too, are navigating complex personal circumstances. I sincerely hope that all recent events in your life have been favorable".

Moreover, Ángel Rosenblat consistently maintained Chacel close to his emotional core, including her in significant life moments. When preparing for his marriage, he wrote to her, intimating that his chosen partner, the Venezuelan Carmen Helena Mendoza, was likely someone she would have selected for him (April 15, 1949). Similarly, upon the birth of his first daughter, he involved Rosa Chacel in this momentous familial event, writing: "It is customary here, upon a child's birth, to *present* them to all friends and acquaintances. Carmen Helena and I offer you our Venezuelan Rosenblat offspring" (February 19, 1950). Furthermore, Rosenblat consistently extended invitations to Chacel, encouraging her to visit his home and travel to Caracas, always maintaining a warm and inviting tone. In a letter dated December 26, 1953, he playfully proposed a potential journey, proposing an exploration of indigenous beverages: "In any case, we must consider how you might undertake a journey through these lands. Have you ever sampled pulque or cocuy? These are indigenous spirits, comparable to vodka, though considerably more astringent. Does pulque or cocuy intrigue you? I suspect these beverages might not align with your more Greco-Latin palate. Yet, I perceive in you a genuine enthusiasm for novel experiences". The passage captures Rosenblat's characteristic mixture of humor and personal warmth.

In the second place, Rosenblat consistently encouraged Chacel to persevere in her literary pursuits, expressing enthusiasm for her creative work and urging her to publish despite the challenges of exile. Early in their correspondence, he inquired about her novels and expressed eagerness to read her writings: "I have not seen anything of yours published. Those novels you had in preparation, what became of them? I would love to read them" (April 15, 1949). He also involved his family in this literary engagement, humorously anticipating that even his young daughter would soon become one of Chacel's admirers. This genuine interest in her work was matched by critical engagement, as he and his wife read and commented on her books. While often highly appreciative, he did not hesitate to offer genuine, thoughtful critique. His response to her monumental novel *La sinrazón* (1960) exemplifies this approach. After praising the work as magnificent, he provided a nuanced critique: "The first part is formidable and highly novelistic; the last part is

equally so. The central section is very good, but less novelistic. Perhaps it is too slow, and you have accumulated many things in it—all excellent—but which you could have reserved for another novel. This is my opinion—please don't take it amiss" (December 3, 1960). This passage reveals Rosenblat's scholarly engagement with Chacel's work: respectful but sincere.

Rosenblat believed that Rosa Chacel's literary works could find an audience in Venezuela, his adopted country, though he acknowledged that this readership would likely be small and selective. In a letter dated December 24, 1954, he urged her:

You must send me your writings, as they could generate genuine interest here. There exists a discerning, minority audience that might appreciate your work, and I am increasingly convinced that Venezuela will play a progressively significant role in Hispanic-American literary discourse. The country is experiencing a period of remarkable developmental momentum, and I am thoroughly persuaded that it will ascend rapidly. While my influence does not extend to guaranteeing you a lecture tour, I can certainly facilitate access to a select, appreciative readership.

The passage reflects Rosenblat's intellectual optimism and his strategic efforts to position Chacel within the emerging Venezuelan literary landscape, demonstrating both his commitment to supporting her literary career in his own environment. Rosenblat also references the readership she has in Spain, aiming to encourage her to continue writing. In a letter dated April 13, 1971, he writes: "Yesterday, we passed through Valladolid again, and in *El Norte de Castilla* I came across an article that I am sending you. It made me very happy, as it is from your homeland. Clearly, you have your audience—you must nurture it". This statement highlights his effort to motivate her by drawing attention to her literary impact and the support she retains in Spain.

His support extended to encouraging her to overcome creative blocks: "Work, work! It's the only thing that defends us [...]" (December 26, 1953). Rosenblat's letters were filled with the encouragement that Chacel deeply needed. His humorous reflections on his own challenges, such as balancing his writing with the demands of fatherhood, were intended to lighten Chacel's burdens. "I hope to see you more optimistic in your work and with more creative momentum. Yes, the small difficulties! I understand them now too, when the kids invade my library or interrupt my sleep. I suppose yours aren't as small, but what great writer, even the most fortunate, hasn't faced small and great difficulties?" (December 26, 1953).

Concerning the assistance to push further her literary career, Rosenblat's letters reveal instances where he sought to alleviate Chacel's material difficulties by providing practical advice and opportunities. In Buenos Aires, where Chacel struggled with unpaid essays and translations, he suggested potential publications in Venezuela: "Here, you could publish things. I'm sending you the Literary Paper of *El Nacional*, which is better than *La Nación*'s supplement. You could start with a story or an article... Collaborations are paid here, and that could provide you with something from time to time" (December 26, 1953). Furthermore, when serious delays arose in the publication of one of her books, Rosenblat intervened by contacting, both by letter and by phone, relevant individuals in Argentina and Spain (February 18, 1971). His efforts included speaking with publishers and influential figures in the literary world to advocate for the timely release of her works.

Finally, Rosenblat's support was pivotal in enabling Chacel's return to Spain in the early 1970s. In 1971, he extended an invitation for her to stay in his home during his sabbatical in Madrid, creating a welcoming environment that eased her reintegration into the Spanish literary scene. Rosenblat's practical help extended even to financial offers; he proposed covering her travel expenses to facilitate her return to Madrid. His invitation was generous and practical: "If to make the trip you need money (for the fare), I can send it to you as soon as you say so. I would like to know the date in advance because my sister and niece may visit, and I want you to be at ease here" (February 28, 1971). Rosenblat expresses his strong support for Chacel's forthcoming visit to Madrid, fully aware of the significance it holds for her—a return to a literary environment where she can thrive. In his letter, he writes: "I am glad you will be coming soon. I am not anxious about specific dates; leave at a time that works best for you, whether late April or early May. Between us, nothing is set in stone. My hope is that you spend some time here and reconnect with your literary world" (March 18, 1971). His words reflect both his encouragement and his understanding of the importance of this opportunity for Chacel's creative reintegration. Rosenblat's invitation to Chacel is marked by kindness and an elegant sensitivity, as he connects the arrival of spring with the readiness of the country to welcome her presence. He writes: "The winter has been harsh (with a particularly difficult February), and now it rains almost every day. This promises a beautiful, blossoming May—how wonderful. In other words, everything is coming together in preparation for your arrival" (March 18, 1971). His poetic description of the seasonal transition reflects not only his warmth but also his anticipation of her visit as a renewal, both for her and the literary world she represents.

Rosenblat demonstrates a thoughtful sensitivity in preparing Chacel for her return to Madrid, acknowledging that the city she will encounter is not

the same as the one she left. Being cautious, he seeks to temper her expectations, ultimately aiming to make her stay more enjoyable by helping her navigate potential disappointments. He frames his message not as a discouragement but as a way to prepare her for the reality of a city marked by significant changes: "I hope your literary world comes back to life. [...] Madrid is in a difficult state—less welcoming and only a shadow of what it once was. Old friends remain, but each is preoccupied with their own multitude of personal problems. Of course, I don't say any of this to dishearten you but rather to prepare you. You can count on us for anything" (March 18, 1971).

Furthermore, Rosenblat also offers advice on establishing relationships with key figures in Spain to facilitate her professional advancement in her country of origin. In a letter dated February 18, 1971, for example, he writes: "I have attended the gathering at the *Revista de Occidente* a couple of times. About ten people are present, all quite pleasant and welcoming. I believe you should let go of certain things (is forgetting not always a form of liberation?) and build your connections with Pepe Ortega, who strikes me as very cordial and friendly". Rosenblat is referring to José Ortega y Spottorno, the son of José Ortega y Gasset and the director of *Revista de Occidente*, a publication originally founded by his father. This suggestion underscores his pragmatic approach to navigating cultural and intellectual circles, highlighting the potential of personal networks to support Chacel's reintegration into Spanish literary life.

After this significant Spring of 1971, Rosa Chacel began to gain recognition in her home country. Rosenblat was very happy for her and consistently advised her to make Madrid the center of her work. In a letter dated November 17, 1971, written to both Chacel and her husband, Rosenblat expressed his joy and encouragement: "I am delighted to receive your letter. [...] Rosa, I am glad you are working with enthusiasm and strength. I am convinced you will succeed. You have more than enough talent; you only need to truly desire it. I believe you are now on the right path. That I succeeded in helping you in some small way is a great satisfaction. Always forward!". In one of his final letters to Chacel, dated May 19, 1972, he continued to celebrate her growing success in Madrid. He wrote:

Your letter and your book have been a great joy—or two great joys. I am always happy about your achievements. Your 'Confesión' has finally been published, and I hope your other works will follow soon. I just received a page from 'Informaciones' with a very positive review about the publication of 'Icada. Nevda, Diada' (which I had already seen announced in 'Insula') and the reappearance of your 'Leticia'.

Congratulations on everything. It is high time your books are recognized.

After examining Rosenblat's letters and Chacel's diary entries, I categorize their interactions as encompassing the two key dimensions of trans-exile: direct real-life personal interaction, on the one hand, and interaction at the representational level. Their real-life personal relationship reflects a sociocultural interaction, marked by meetings and letters where personal and professional dimensions intertwine. The representative level includes a fragmented portrait of Ángel Rosenblat in Rosa Chacel's diaries, scattered throughout the decades.

Concerning the interaction between these two categories, it is interesting to note that the depiction Chacel offers in her diary presents a different image from that found in Rosenblat's letters. The diary fragments suggest that Rosenblat's visit to Rio de Janeiro in 1969 made him understand her situation in exile. Her diary provides an evolving portrait of Rosenblat's behavior throughout their friendship, suggesting a shift from a more preachy, sermon-like attitude to one of greater empathy and support. However, in Rosenblat's preserved letters, starting with the first one from 1949, his patience, understanding, and care for Chacel are clear. He shows patience when she doesn't respond and perseverance by continuing to write and keep her close. Even his critiques and advice are delivered with caution, reflecting his supportive and thoughtful attitude toward her.

Interpretative Phase: "Having been able to make a small contribution brings me great satisfaction"

Before beginning the interpretative reflection, it is important to emphasize that for this case study, I worked mainly with unpublished letters (1949-1973) sent by Ángel Rosenblat to Rosa Chacel. This private correspondence, while technically accessible at the Fundación Jorge Guillén, remains challenging to obtain. This circumstance invites reflection. While the letters between Rosa Chacel and prominent Spanish Republican exiles such as María Zambrano or Jorge Guillén have been published, her equally significant exchanges with an exiled Hispanist of Ángel Rosenblat's stature and scholarly influence remain unpublished. This oversight reflects a broader tendency in academic discourse to confine the Spanish exiles' work and experiences within the framework of Spanish Republican exile. Such a perspective neglects Chacel's unique trans-exilic trajectory and its distinct characteristics, obscuring the more complex reality of her engagement with a wider network. Moreover, it complicates a fuller understanding of how her experience of exile and eventual return to Spain unfolded.

Bearing this in mind, I now move to the interpretative phase of this study. How did this trans-exilic interaction shape Chacel's personal journey and professional development? Rosenblat himself states its significance: "having been able to make a small contribution [to the return of Rosa Chacel to Spain's literary scene] brings me great satisfaction" (November 17, 1971). He uses the Spanish proverb "*contribuir con un granito de arena*" ('to contribute a little grain of sand'), acknowledging his modest yet meaningful role, first in supporting Rosa Chacel's well-being during exile and, after that, in advancing her career in the transitional period leading up to her return to the Spanish literary circles.

In the exile period, first, Rosenblat's humor, warmth, understanding, and support sustained Chacel not only through the challenges of exile. Then, turning to the transition toward Chacel's return, Rosenblat's act of hospitality in the spring of 1971 marked a pivotal moment in her journey. It facilitated her reconnection with Spain and paved the way for her permanent return in 1974. Through his warm and accommodating tone in inviting Chacel to Madrid, Rosenblat ensured that she felt fully supported and genuinely welcomed as she prepared for her return.

The thank-you letter Chacel and her husband wrote after her stay at Rosenblat's house in Madrid in spring 1971, to which Rosenblat replied, echoes some of their thoughts and expressions. It provides clear evidence of the profound impact his efforts on Chacel's state of mind and hope for the future. Beyond offering practical hospitality, Rosenblat's insight into Madrid's cultural and literary climate, coupled with his foresight and optimism about Chacel's potential to succeed in Spain, encouraged her to rebuild her career there—a goal she eventually achieved.

However, to fully understand the impact of Rosenblat's trans-exilic interaction with Chacel, studying the private correspondence and diary entries alone is insufficient. It is essential to consider the broader context by reconstructing a timeline of the support Chacel received from the literary circles in Spain, alongside that of Rosenblat.

Rosenblat's support began in 1949 and peaked between 1969 and 1971. His support in making her return to Spain possible was particularly meaningful given Chacel's earlier, disheartening attempt to resettle in the country during the early 1960s (Houvenaghel, 2024), a period when she felt distinctly unwelcome in Spain. Disappointed, she returned to Rio de Janeiro and did not come back to Madrid until Rosenblat's invitation.

Her recognition process in the Spanish literary scene began gradually and on a small scale in 1965, initiated by young Spanish writers of the *Novísimos* group such as Pere Gimferrer and Ana María Moix (Houvenaghel, 2021). It continued with reprints and new editions of Chacel's work in Spain by the end

of 1971, and during 1972 and 1973, leading to the Juan March scholarship that enabled Chacel, in 1974, to write her next book in Madrid.

Rosenblat, on the contrary, had supported her already during the most difficult years of the exile, well before the Spanish cultural community began to pay attention to its exiled writers. As a result, this trans-exilic bond with Rosenblat provided timely support during a critical period when exile demanded immediate action and solidarity, bridging a significant gap before Spain's official recognition materialized.

In conclusion, Ángel Rosenblat, who believed in Chacel during the darkest years of her exile and persevered in supporting her, was instrumental in shaping her trajectory of exile and return, and thus deserves a place in the image of her that we construct today, alongside other key figures. To exclude him would be to do an injustice to his efforts and to undermine the importance of his support. In this sense, the trans-exilic lens offers a way to honor and recognize the memory of this Jewish-Polish exiled Hispanist who stood by Rosa Chacel long before the movement for the recognition of Spanish exiled authors gained momentum in Spain.

Finally, looking back at the starting point of this study —Chacel's marginal position within the mainstream networks of the Spanish Republican exile—, it becomes evident that the trans-exilic lens provides fresh perspectives on her connections. This approach highlights how her network was defined by an alternative pattern of support, with Ángel Rosenblat emerging as a particularly significant figure. This network was shaped by the friendships and connections Chacel cultivated during her travels across Europe before the Spanish Civil War, as well as later during her exile in Latin America and the United States. While this case study focuses on a single relationship within her trans-exilic network, it exemplifies a recurring dynamic in Chacel's exile. Her engagement with exiles and migrants from diverse backgrounds —including the Greek exiled writers Nikos and Eleni Kazantzakis (Houvenaghel, 2024 and 2025b), the Hispano-Mexican writer Tomás Segovia (Houvenaghel, 2023), the exiled painter Carmen Parra, or the Russian exiled translator Vera Makarov (Houvenaghel, 2022)— serves as a significant source of support for her.

Conclusions

What has this case study taught us about the three-step trans-exilic method? Firstly, it has provided valuable insights into the functioning of the trans-exilic framework, particularly highlighting its specific characteristics and the areas requiring improvement in both its initial phase of identification and its final phase of interpretation. During the initial phase of identification, the findings highlight that even brief references can serve as crucial leads for

uncovering important trans-exilic relationships. Seemingly minor mentions in autobiographical sources can reveal unexpected depth and open pathways to unpublished materials. This phase, therefore, demands a detailed reading of autobiographical texts, underscoring the importance of close analysis in the first phase of the trans-exilic method.

The interpretation phase, by contrast, faces a different challenge—it requires not further zooming in, but rather zooming out. This case study highlights the need to recognize that the importance and impact of trans-exilic interactions are better understood when placed within a larger timeframe and a broader web of relations. To address this, the trans-exilic approach benefits from a broader reflection in its final phase, situating the exile's experiences within the context of the timeline of these connections alongside other contacts with the country of origin or the country of reception. Expanding the interpretative phase in this way allows researchers to offer a bigger picture and a more contextualized understanding of the significance of trans-exilic interactions.

Ultimately, the method has demonstrated that trans-exilic interactions challenge traditional notions of networking in Exile Studies by revealing how exiles navigate and redefine the idea of community. Rather than adhering solely to conventional or mainstream frameworks of national affiliation with the country of origin or the host country, exiles forge alternative networks of support within the challenging context of displacement. Highlighting such communities offers a counter-narrative to dominant national versions of the story of exile.

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CITED CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ÁNGEL ROSENBLAT AND ROSA CHACEL⁵

Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 15.04.1949, FJG RCH01/083

Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 19.02.1950, FJG RCH01/084

Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 26.12.1953, FJG RCH01/085

⁵ Source: Fundación Jorge Guillén (FJG), <https://www.fundacionjorgeguillen.es/>.

Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 24.12.1954, FJG RCH01/092
Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 03.12.1960, FJG RCH01/103
Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 18.02.1971, FJG RCH01/091
Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 13.04.1971, FJG RCH01/090
Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 09.04.1971, FJG RCH01/089
Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 17.11.1971, FJG RCH01/036
Ángel Rosenblat a Rosa Chacel, 19.05.1972, FJG RCH 01/101

