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A General Introduction to Exile

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At the beginning of a conference, it is always helpful to define the key term in a provisional way. I will use «exile» to refer to the condition in which an individual or a community is either expelled or self-excluded from a place it considers home; upon whose affairs it remains focused; and to which it wants to return. I offer this definition even though I am aware that it has shortcomings and is not applicable to all past and present circumstances in which the term ‘exile’ was used. I use it in order to establish a shared concept about which we can argue together.

Each of the constitutive components of this provisional definition must be elaborated. First, it assumes that there is a geographical place in which and to which one belongs – the native land, the homeland, the fatherland, the *patrie*, the *heimat*. The notion of «belonging» is often problematic and requires extensive qualification, depending on the specific case of exile in question. Second, the causes of exile can be questioned. Even when the exile has left voluntarily, he or she feels that there was an involuntary, coercive element among the causes of departure. But others who have stayed behind and have demonstrated that it is possible to tolerate the ‘intolerable’ may disagree, and a substantial disagreement exposes that what is subjectively viewed as ‘exile’ by some may seem like mere emigration to compatriots. Third, there is in the term «exile» the component of an enduring pre-occupation with what happens in the home one has left. The exile follows events at home, may try to influence them, and usually lives in the hope and desire of return. In concentrating on the perspective of the exiled, as scholars usually do, we must not forget that their pre-occupation with the

homeland can take intrusive forms and may be regarded as illegitimate not just by the state the exile has left, but also the people who stayed behind and suffered (as is the case currently in Iraq).

Exile seems linked to individuals as «diaspora» is to collectivities. This is an inviting analogy, but we must immediately qualify it. While exile and diaspora are linked and overlapping concepts, especially in the Jewish case, they are not identical, for at least two reasons. First, in most cases exile tends to endure for no more than the lifetime of the individuals concerned, or for two generations, whereas a diaspora endures past the first two generation of dispersion. Second, exiles tend to remain relatively isolated from the society of asylum, whereas the diasporic condition involves greater integration into the host society; in modern times this relative integration leads to citizenship in politics and hybridity in culture.

As we develop our provisional notion of exile, we will quickly discover that the definitions of exile and especially the meanings attributed to it first by exiles themselves, second, by homelands, and third, by scholars, are numerous and subtly different from each other. They also change across time. As a result, all the situations denominated as «exile» now and in the past can never be encompassed by any single definition, such as the one with which I began. Finally, the juridical and political causes of many instances of exile are easier to encompass than even more widespread *sentiment* of exile. Only text-based and interview-based research can explore adequately the varieties of the sentiment of exile and the social, cultural and political consequences of that widespread sentiment.

There are always two ways to approach a concept such as «exile.» One is diachronic and historical; the other is synchronic and offers a snapshot of the situation of the concept as it is today. I will attempt to combine the two in order to explore and complicate our provisional definition. To do so, I will consider from a historical perspective three elements: the *linguistic terms* employed, the *concepts* they designated throughout history, and the actual social *phenomena* of exile represented by those terms and concepts.

Today, as at some points in the past, the term exile is often applied to individuals, whether they are political dissidents or artists. Indeed, because the last two categories are so often said to be in «exile,» nowadays the term marks a relative privilege. As the Canadian Armenian scholar Razmik Panossian says, «being an exile is sexy, whereas being a refugee or asylum seeker just makes you a figure of anonymous misery¹.»

1. Personal communication, 7 March 2003.

What was exile as a concept and practice among Jews, Greeks, Romans, and Armenians? For the ancient Hebrews, the concept, trope and image of exile was fundamental. It is not an exaggeration to say that it organized the Jewish people's understanding of itself. Eventually, the words *golah* (meaning a specific place of exile) and *galut* (the abstract condition of being-in-exile) came to dominate their understanding of exile, but this was not always the single term-concept that they employed. The notion of exile denominated by *golah-galut* becomes dominant only after the Babylonian Exile, the Galut Bavel (or Babel). Before that, in the Torah, aspects of the concept of exile are represented in a variety of ways. There is what linguists used to call a semantic field, a set of linked and overlapping terms whose boundaries shift, and which together cover a concept larger than post-Babylonian exile. This semantic field embraces the concepts of expulsion, loss of a home, scattering and captivity.

Let us begin at the beginning. In Genesis, Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden for their sins. The verb forms used for their expulsion from their ideal home, *vayeshalkhehu* and *vayegahresh* (Genesis 3, 22-24), are variously translated in different English Bibles as «he sent them away,» «he drove them away,» and «he cast them out.» Thus, according to Jewish thought, history – indeed temporality and mortality – begins with expulsion, with being driven away from a Garden, an ideal type of existence, to which human kind yearns to return (as exiles will later yearn to return home). It is no accident that the place of the divine presence to which the faithful Christian can return after death is «Paradise,» an Old Persian word for «Garden.» The Hebrew text is at the foundation of the Christian view of history as an exile that can end with a return.

Elsewhere in the Torah, as for example in Genesis 11:4, the people of the earth come *together* to build the Tower of Babel in order to avoid what various translations of the text call being «scattered» or «dispersed.» The key verb form here is «*vayohphetz*,» a form of the verb «*hefitz*» and the noun «*foetz*,» which means the dispersion (modern Hebrew still uses another version of this term for «diaspora»). Already in the first fourteen chapters of Genesis, then, the concept of and the anxiety about expulsion, exile and scattering have an important place. Later, during and after the Babylonian captivity or exile, *golah* and *galut* become the terms most consistently used to describe the Jews as a people characterized by exile, and subsequent texts of the Prophets, such as Amos 1:6, also use the word. We encounter «*al haglotan galut shelemah*,» variously translated as «they carried away captive» and «they carried away into exile...» a whole community. Given modern history, it is ironic and worth noting that the people mentioned in

Amos as carried away into «exile» are not Jewish: they are the inhabitants of Gaza.

In the third century before the Christian era, roughly around 275 BCE, the Jews who translated the Hebrew of the Old Testament into Greek used the latter's term for dispersion, «*diaspora*,» to mean *galut* or exile. In doing so, they created a hybrid combination of paradoxical meanings that persists to this day. Though the Greeks were also a wandering people who settled everywhere along the Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts, they did not think of *themselves* as being either in diaspora or exile. The homeland cities from which the Greek settlers had departed called the new towns «*apoikeia*,» «from home,» but to the inhabitants of those towns, like Syracuse or Alexandria or Massilia, there seems to have been no sense that being away from home involved loss. «*Apoikeia*» was used as a synonym of the later Latin «*colonia*,» colony.

The contrast with the Jews is striking. For them, the condition of being collectively away from the homeland and settled elsewhere did in fact have a distinctly special meaning: the key fact was that they were no longer on sacred territory, near Jerusalem and the Temple. This sense of loss was inscribed as a historical burden and collective memory in Babylon, was brought back from there around 535 BCE. It was textualized, starting with the Biblical books of Ezra, Nehemia, and Psalm 137, and it became part of the textual inheritance of the Jewish people. The memorable lines of that Psalm capture the subjective pain and rage of exile well:

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

In the 3rd century BCE, the Jews of Alexandria in Egypt were asked by its Macedonian Ptolemaic rulers to translate their sacred book into Greek. They used «*diaspora*» (a form of which occurs in Thucydides and is used to describe the dispersion of the population of a defeated city) to describe «*galut*» and thus conjoined exile and diaspora. Yet the Jews who chose to use this word were not themselves a population actually coerced into exile. Rather, they were economic migrants who had voluntarily chosen a more prosperous life elsewhere, and who kept sending remittances to the Temple as a form of religious obligation. Throughout history we occasionally encounter this paradox of identifying voluntarily chosen, economically motivated emigration as an exile that is lamented. The textualized and subjective meanings assigned to «exile» can be autonomous of the material and objective conditions in which the exiles dwell.

The early Greeks first spoke of exile as an individual condition, and they called it *phugas*, derived from the verb *pheugo*: to make a fugitive in the original sense of the term. It is already used in the *Iliad*, where it describes Tlepolemus, son of Heracles, who runs away from Corinth because he has killed a relative there (*Iliad*, ii, 664). Patroclus is also mentioned as having been *phugeh*, an exile who flees because of killing a man (xxiii, 85). For much of the early history of Greece, exile was either fleeing from the consequences of a criminal act and the social sanctions it elicited, or was imposed by a society that wanted to avoid a cycle of revenge killings. This notion was present among the Romans as well. They called the exiled man an *exul* and the condition of exile *exsilium*, a term whose origin is obscure. It may derive from *ex-salire*, to leap out, to flee outside the threshold or border of Roman land. Romans regarded expulsion (or escape) following certain crimes as just and also as helpful to the offender's family and society. Exile was an alternative to imposing the death sentence, enabled the exiled person's family to avoid their estate's confiscation, and also enabled the society to escape further vendetta and conflict. Since the return of the exile would initiate such conflict, they sometimes interdicted such return very strictly, on pain of death; at others, exiles could return after some time had passed.

In these examples, we see several persistent facets of exile: it is something that can be imposed on an individual, but also an individual can choose it, or is allowed to choose it, first by social custom and later by Law, because doing so avoids retributive killing and civil unrest, and restores peace. By Cicero's time, in 48 BCE, exile was regarded as so often beneficial to the polity that he argues, in *Pro Caecina*, section c, that *exsilium* is not a *supplicium*, a penalty, but rather like offering a form of sanctuary outside the boundaries of Rome to the guilty man.

Of course exile was also experienced as punitive. That is certainly the case with the first great literary exile, Publius Ovidius Naso or Ovid, whom the Emperor Augustus exiled in the year 8 CE to Tomis, present-day Constanza in Romania, where he died. Scholars have never agreed on the cause of Ovid's exile. The most common theory makes him the paradigm of the literary man viewed by the authorities as a social danger: in this view, the Emperor thought his *Ars Amandi* contributed to the decline of sexual morality in Rome. Some scholars think he was suspected of being involved in a political plot, and a few even think he was an adherent to peculiar religious rites². In exile, Ovid wrote elegies titled *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, which he hoped would function as petitions to the Emperor. In

2. These speculations enumerate some causes of ancient exile.

these we see him refer to himself both as *exul*, an exiled person (*Tristia* iv, 10, 73-4) and as someone subject to *fuga* (*Tristia*, ii, 132), the term which had long been used in Greece and by this period in history referred in both Greek and Latin to an exile that was ordered by political authority. Whereas later scholars looking at the ancient world could believe that exile as a result of ostracism was a «compliment,» as Grotius said, to one's actions and convictions in an immoral world, in Ovid we see only a profound sadness and nostalgia for home, for return to Rome. In him we have the paradigmatic exiled artist; we will return to such figures later, because they extend from Ovid to Dante, all the way to Solzhenitzyn or Milan Kundera, James Joyce or Victor Hugo, V.S. Naipaul and Edward Said.

The Greek and Roman vocabulary of exile interacted and influenced each other in Magna Graecia, the major early contact zone between Hellenes and Romans, in southern Italy. Eventually, Roman political exiles also spent time in Athens, and they could no longer be described by the conquered Greeks as *fugas* – since for them the term still retained a trace of its original link to crime. So another Greek term joined the growing semantic field of exile. The term was *exoria*. It can be found, in its verb form, *exorizo*, in earlier texts like Euripides' *Herakleides* (*The Sons of Herakles*, 2.5.7) and Plato's *The Laws* (8.74.a), as well as in Demosthenes, who speaks of *exoristos*, the expelled or banished man. The origin of *exoria* is *ex-horos*, which literally means beyond the *horos*, boundary stone, the edge. This is also the *hor-* in horizon, the edge of the visible. In the Christian era, after the long encounter with Rome, the Greeks begin to use this term regularly, and it passes into Armenian as *aksor*, a people that came to know exile and diasporization. It appears in the earliest Armenian texts of the fifth century CE, along with *gaghout*, the Armenian form of *galut*, borrowed directly from the Hebrew in the translation of the Armenian Bible in 428 CE. By contrast to these two terms, *spurk*, meaning «the dispersion,» which is now the dominant Armenian word and is a cognate of diaspora, is used rarely in early times. Its first use is in 1158 CE, but it remains rare until the 20th century.

So in Armenian, as in Greek and even Hebrew, exile is a notion that first refers to individuals, not collectivities, remains distinct from diaspora, and appears much earlier than diaspora both as a concept and phenomenon. It is only in the post-Babylonian Jewish paradigm that exile becomes and remains a collective term equivalent to diaspora.

To summarize this complex protohistory of the term, exile can refer to individuals or groups. Exile can involve sending someone to a *specific* place, as in most Roman cases, or it can be a sentence to the exiled to wander *anywhere* outside the *horos*, or boundary of the state. It can be for

criminal offenses against the social body, or for political offenses against the state, and, as Ovid's important case tells us, it can single out the artist as a danger not to the nation's aesthetics, but to the preferred shape of its ethical and political life. Exile can be for a non-specific period of time, or for a specific period of time; it can extend to just a few years or the lifetime of the exiled person. In particular, Jewish exile as diasporic *galut* comes to be imagined as collective, not individual; localized or territorialized in several places, but potentially relocatable anywhere in the world outside Judaea-Israel, leading eventually to the image of the wandering Jew. Jewish exile is not for a specific time, but can last until the Messiah comes. In other words, the Jewish tradition imagines exile as the condition of its own human history. I emphasize the variety of these examples because when we regard exile as paradigmatically Jewish, we are not adopting the routine notion of exile that was available to other classical peoples; rather, we are making the exceptional Jewish case the norm. The ideological and dramatic power of this norm has endured in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, especially in devoutly Protestant countries.

The practice of exile first assumes massive proportions during the wars between the cities of ancient Greece, when it is still directed against individuals, but begins to acquire explicitly political motivations. We can get some sense of the extent of the practice from the fact that when in 324 BCE, at Olympia, Alexander of Macedonia ordered that all exiles from all Greek cities be allowed to return to their homes, there were 20,000 such people, a number larger than the free population of many a small Greek *polis*.

With the decline of the Graeco-Roman world, the practice also declined, to be revived in the Italian communes or city states of the medieval period. Dante and Macchiavelli were both exiles. Guido de Ruggiero argues that exile was peculiarly attractive to small states, because it enabled them to expel those vanquished in political and armed struggle, to appropriate their property and, as he puts it, «to insure the homogeneity of the body politic»³. However, in later years the most common practitioner of exile was not a small state but the empire of Russia's Romanov tsars. Starting in the 1820s, according to Ruggiero's estimate (689), the Tsars exiled around 2,000 people annually to remote parts of Russia and later to Siberia. By the end of the XIXth century, the number of those sentenced to such exile rose to 20,000 a year. In the Soviet Union, the concept of exile becomes difficult to apply, in my opinion: Trotsky can be thought of as an exile, but

3. *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Edwin R.A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson (eds.), 1937, Or. 1931, «Exile», 686-690, p. 688.

it is difficult to continue to think of the millions sentenced to labor camps as internal exiles.

In the last two centuries, the forms of exile have been so numerous, and scholarly explorations of those forms so frequent and of such variety, that even a survey like this has difficulty encompassing them in a few categories. Because of this difficulty, I am going to linger on one book, published in 2002, which is representative of contemporary scholarship in Britain and the US. The book contains 14 articles from specialists on a range of literary and cultural topics.⁴ Scholars in the Humanities and Cultural Studies like to extend terms that have a certain chic, like exile or diaspora, to unusual cases, and this book demonstrates that tendency. Susan Pearce, who writes about the way mummies were taken from Egypt and circulated in Europe, titles her fascinating article «Bodies in Exile: Egyptian Mummies in the Early Nineteenth Century and Their Cultural Implications» (54-71). She shows that mummies were commodities displayed in spectacles that included their melodramatic unwrapping, accompanied by a description of the grisly operations necessary to create a mummy, such as evisceration. Pearce offers a scholarly account of what she calls the «consumption» of a mummy spectacle. She argues that «exile» is an applicable term because it refers to a forced expulsion from home. Since the mummies were taken away from the proper home of the dead, their graves, they were in exile. Whatever one's sympathies, one can understand the reasoning. In popular political rhetoric, the bodies or bones of the dead can have a similar significance. Several Native American tribes have recently asked museums to return the bones of their dead so that they can be buried in consecrated ground on Indian reservations. Following this logic, long after national heroes die and are buried in exile, nations can rally and argue in revealing ways about the notion of bringing home, returning from «exile» and re-burying the bones of such heroes. Napoleon Bonaparte was such a figure. So was General Antranig, an Armenian hero of the struggle against the Ottoman Turks who was buried in Père Lachaise from 1927 until 1991 and then reinterred in newly independent Armenia. For both the Armenian diaspora and the people of the homeland, this reburial of the exile's body had not only considerable emotional meaning but also political significance.

In Ouditt's volume, which I have chosen as exemplary, the editor and others set out to discuss the manifold consequences and meanings of exile. For example, in some exiles the dominant feeling – manifested in

4. *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European Culture*, Sharon Ouditt (ed.), Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2002.

letters, books, and other forms of behavior – is nostalgia for the physical *landscape* of the homeland. Others experience exile as the loss of a place where one's *language* is dominant; we see this in writers like the younger Nabokov. Parenthetically, I should add that exile from one's native tongue matters not just to people of high culture, but also to ordinary people, for example the Portuguese, who have come to equate language with identity to an extraordinary degree, as a series of recent articles on the Lusophone diaspora shows (*Diaspora, Journal of Transnational Studies* 11, 2, 2002).

One of the most important topics covered in Ouditt's book is the relationship between exile and religion, both old and new. Lynne Long's article, «Spiritual Exile: Translating the Bible from Geneva and Rheims», (11-20), begins by reminding us that during the Renaissance and Reformation, «the Bible and religion were synonymous with social and political organization in Europe» (12). She shows how religious communities were sustained by going into exile or were created and re-created in exile. Specifically, she discusses how a community of conservative English catholic exiles who worked in Rheims in the 1580s, and a radical Protestant community that included Jean Calvin in Geneva between 1536 and 1553, created Bibles that redefined religious thought in their homelands. Here, the emphasis is on exile as a difficult, sometimes miserable condition that nevertheless enables what I have called elsewhere «the stateless power of diasporas.» Long's article discusses how often a religious community survives by fleeing into exile, and then is transformed in exile both by its own activities, by the new environment, and by often covert relations with the homeland. Here I would add that the radical Protestant Puritans who established the American colonies of New England were in this sense self-exiled from England, and thought of themselves as successors of the Jews. They understood that much of Judaism was produced as a result of captivity, exodus and exile during and after the time that many Jews spent in Egypt and Babylon, and often saw the England they left behind as a corrupt Babylon.

Finally, in the same volume, Yvette Rocheron (in Ouditt, 2002, *op. cit.*) offers an article titled «Paradoxes of *Hijrah* (Exile): Tales from Algerian Men in Britain,» (160-169). She studies eight Algerians who are *exiles* in that they have fled the frightening, often dangerous conditions of Algeria, and two of them clearly risk arrest if they return. But they are not only exiles. They are also *immigrants*, because of their manner of travel and settlement, and because of the way the British authorities view them. Some of them are quite settled immigrants, having already lived in Britain for two decades. Although the conditions of these men differ, Rocheron argues, they all manifest one characteristic of exile that we find in Odysseus, whom she considers the first and paradigmatic exile: a combination of loyalty to

and nostalgia for the homeland, alternating with episodes of forgetting the homeland and its call for loyalty. This combination of loyalty and forgetting is complicated by the fact that the ordinary Arabic word for migrant, *muhajir*, is linked for any pious Muslim with the *hijrah*, the journey of the Prophet Muhammad and his small band of loyal supporters from Mecca, where they felt persecuted, to Medina, where, in exile and in struggle against the homeland of Mecca, Islam assumed its full form. So in one sense exile *enabled* the religion itself. But Islam also advises Muslims to remain with the *umma*, the community of the faithful, where the religion is dominant, and not to emigrate. Using studies such as Abdelmalek Sayad's⁵, Rocheron concludes that this paradoxical Muslim conception of exile can make the migrants think of exile as «original sin»⁶.

I think it is worthwhile to spend so much time on Rocheron's article because it focuses shrewdly on the possibility that most exile is not a single, dominant condition that is easily visible or always foregrounded, as Milan Kundera's or Josef Brodsky's exiles, say, were constantly emphasized. Social theory is familiar with the way in which a particular social position or identity can be very much part of a person, yet the person does not wish to be named exclusively, or recognized consistently, through that identity. Sometimes he or she wishes that particular identity not to be noticed at all. Many Armenians in America sometimes claim *assimilated Americanness*; often they claim Armenian American *ethnicity*, and on some occasions they claim or manifest *diasporicity* as an element of their identity and behavior, depending on the situation. At others, they forget, neglect, and even deny one of these. In the case of Cubans in the US, some also claim the status of exiles, either consistently or opportunistically. Among many such populations, identities are explicitly voiced at some times and passed over in silence at other times; they are acted upon to demonstrate loyalty, or they are neglected in tactical wisdom. Yet these identity concepts are there, as «exile» may be lingering there in the identity of the Algerians Rocheron and Sayad write about. If so, it may be charged with a heavy burden of meaning, because the religious meaning of *hijrah* in the word *muhajir*/migrant cannot be hidden from the awareness of Arabophone Muslims.

I can not reflect at length here on governments-in-exile, which have been thoroughly studied by the Israeli political scientist Yossi Shain⁷. In an article on the Armenians in the volume he edited (Shain, 1991, *op. cit.*), I point out

5. A. Sayad, *L'immigration ou les paradoxes de l'altérité*, Brussels, De Boeck, 1991.

6. Sayad's Words, p. 20, cited in Rocheron, p. 162.

7. Y. Shain, *The Frontier of Loyalty: Political Exiles in the Age of the Nation-State*, Middletown, CT, Wesleyan University Press, 1989; Y. Shain (ed.), *Governments in Exile in Contemporary Politics*, New York, Routledge, 1991.

that governments in exile are frequently regarded with condescension; as an anonymous British diplomat has said, «they are cards, not players.» Yet, I argue, the interlocking elites that direct the institutions of certain diasporas such as the Armenian are, at some times and places, in effect governments *of* exile even if not recognizable as governments in exile. Today, in the case of the Tibetan government in Dharamsala in northern India and its Swiss and American diasporas, an elite can be both⁸. In some cases, as with the ANC residing in African states north of the border of South Africa during the 1970s, the elites can develop solidarity in exile. More often, political exile groups are fragmented and their collective prestige oscillates wildly. Such groups can claim broad legitimacy for brief periods of time, when they receive recognition from some host governments and receive loyalty from the exile populations, and perhaps also at home, but they tend not to be able to hold on to it, even when they inspire extraordinary sacrifices and devotion from a few followers. There are still other groupings of political exiles, for example the Iraqis today and the opponents of Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines in the 1960s and 1970s, who remain insignificant and fragmented for decades, but can assume a sudden importance due to a particular conjuncture.

Of course, the conjuncture that created the largest number of exile governments in the twentieth century was the Nazi Reich, and the Free French under the leadership of Général de Gaulle is its most famous example. This historically very important exile government had a difficult time. Even though the British and Americans realized that this was the «embryonic government» of postwar France (Shain, 1989, 117), they only allowed it to function under the title of the French Committee of National Liberation. Though Britain and the US armed and financed it, they did not immediately recognize it as the *de jure* government of France; they could not, given both their interpretation of international law and the way they perceived their political interests. So they extended to it limited diplomatic status under the title of a «Committee» even as they allowed its representatives to travel with diplomatic passports. None of the other exile governments in World War II received better treatment.

In partly comparable situations, such as the case with the Cuban exiles of the Bay of Pigs, an infusion of cash and confidence from a host government tends to be very important. In 1961, the exiles in the Cuban Revolutionary Council, based in Miami, headed by Jose Miro Cardona, the former premier of Cuba, were encouraged to think and speak of themselves

8. See Ann Frechette, *Tibetans in Nepal: The Dynamics of International Assistance among a Community in Exile*.

as a group that would be «transformed into a provisional government once it had gained a military foothold in Cuba.» (Shain, 1989, quoting Wyden, 29). This kind of dream of returning to the homeland as a provisional government and then becoming the permanent legitimate government can endure until the last member of the exile government dies. For example, the Polish government in exile in London, which many states recognized from 1939 on, lost its last diplomatic recognition from the West twenty-four years later, in 1963, yet the surviving members of this fictional entity still claimed to be the true government of Poland for exactly fifty years, until 1989, when freedom came to Poland and made the exile government irrelevant. Of course there are times when the catastrophic failure of incompetent homeland governments can make a seemingly unimportant exile group or individual important – such was the case with Lenin in 1917 and the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. However, most political exiles have difficult lives that do not retain political significance over long periods of time. Their significance tends to be powerfully symbolic and emotional for a limited number of loyalists.

Like social groups in exile, governments in exile can only be understood through the investigation of multiple and simultaneous interactions. We might begin by recalling the structure of a Diaspora in a triangular relationship with hostland and homeland. With governments in exile, there are these and other factors as well. The internal dynamics of the group come first: how does the group represent its exile to itself, how does it understand its own condition? Almost always through intracommunal debate and strife, conducted in meetings and in media through the rhetoric of symbols and images. As Shain (1989, 1991, *op. cit.*) has argued, the exile leadership cannot afford to count on the continuing loyalty of its constituency; it must be engaged continuously in an attempt to mobilize the exiles, and this requires that it develops ways in which it can ask its followers for displays of loyalty. This, in turn, depends upon and influences how much support they can mobilize both from host governments and from the society left in the homeland. Finally, they must learn to manage interactions both with the international system of nation-states and, in antagonistic fashion, with the homeland government. The continual striving for loyalty from their people and for recognition from governments is challenging, requires huge sacrifices, and over the long run fails more often than it succeeds. That is why the governments *of* exile mentioned earlier – that is, the elites of long-surviving diasporas – are so impressive. They adjust to conditions of existence that most governments *in* exile do not recognize, to their detriment. In addition, of course, especially in the US and France, the organized diasporas have the advantage of being citizens who can lobby their governments. When Jewish and Armenian lobbyists approach the US

Congress, they do so as citizens, united in culture with their representatives or at least in possession of a hybrid culture that has many connections with them, and possessing the same right of lobbying and appeal as any other special interest group, be it ethnic or financial. Exiles do not have a place in this nexus, and that is what makes their operations so painfully difficult.

No survey of exile can be complete without reference to culture and to the exiled artists who loom large in the collective imagination of the West, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Artists are often among the most symbolically important exiles, and exile can be important to art. The Polish exile Joseph Conrad wrote one of his major novels, *Under Western Eyes*, in English as a study of Russian exile politics, and the film *La Guerre est finie*, directed by Alain Resnais and scripted by Jorge Semprun, remains one of the most perceptive depictions of unproductive struggle in political exile. I recall crying the first time I saw it as a young man in 1964, because I could see in the middle-aged Spanish Communists it depicted, living in French exile, the old Armenian exiles I knew in my youth, my father's older comrades, living in the Middle East.

At this moment in the United States, if I took a survey and asked my students and faculty colleagues to name famous exiles, the figures that would be named would be the Dalai Lama, Edward Said, the Palestinian American scholar whose *Reflections on Exile* and other essays have been very important in the past two decades, and James Joyce. Like Joyce, Said was able to avoid the simplistic sentimentalization of exile. Exile, he writes, «is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience⁹.» «True exile,» he continues, is «a condition of terminal loss,» so «why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture?» (173). Especially, I would add, of modern scholarship? Said's achievement in making exile an important topic in literary and cultural studies is striking because in the United States, a country that has had very few exiles, he has made exile not the mark of lost, parochial, sad people silenced by the pain of loss, but of eloquent cosmopolitans. Because it is not possible here to discuss many important exiled artists and intellectuals, I will focus and draw upon Said's own work to expand this observation.

Said quotes the medieval scholar Hugo of St. Victor: «The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.» (Said, 2000, *op. cit.*, 185). Said has successfully argued that, like Hugo, the exile must not reject his native land, must retain

9. E. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 173.

his powerful attachment to it, and yet must find the moral and intellectual strength to work through and beyond that enduring attachment to an engagement with the world as home. This is, ironically, what many Jewish intellectuals once achieved, among other great exiles. It is an achievement that is easier for intellectuals and artists than shopkeepers and farmers uprooted from home.

Today, exile is «a long standing trope of ethnic and religious identity¹⁰», and in the US, under the influence of the concept of *galut*, it is often understood as a form of diaspora. It should not be. In closing, I would like to give two reasons for this. The first comes from a speech that Martin Peretz gave on 20 January 1994 to a group of American Jews in Manhattan. His talk was titled «Diaspora but not exile: American Jewry and the Triumph of Zionism.» Peretz, who was once a colleague of Henry Kissinger as a professor of political science at Harvard, and who owns the *New Republic*, an important weekly, is a Zionist who wants to tell his fellow Zionists that a fundamental idea of Zionism has to be changed. American Jews, he says, are in Diaspora, by which he means that they think of themselves as having an identity that is multilocal and transnational, involving Israel as well as Jewish populations elsewhere. But American Jews are not in the condition of galut-exile. They are *at home* in America; there is no more demeaning exile as Zionism understood that term. I heard that same claim recently at a conference at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Poitiers in 2000, when an American Jewish woman, a scholar, chastised an Israeli scholar, saying: «You keep talking of Israel as the Jewish home. You must understand that I am a Jew and that Israel matters to me a great deal, but it is not my home. America is my home.» That is the feeling that must be juxtaposed to the true exilic feeling, for which home is never the temporary hostland.

I will end by emphasizing that point, by conveying the deep and almost arrogant pain of the exiled artist, through a poem Leon Felipe wrote after he and many other Spanish artists fled Franco's Spain in 1938. It is addressed to those who had not chosen exile:

Hermano ... tuya es la hacienda...
La casa, el caballo y la pistola...
Mía es la voz antigua de la tierra.
Tu te quedas con todo
.....
Mas yo te dejo mudo, mudo!
Y como vas a recoger el trigo
Y alimentar el fuego
Si yo me llevo la cancion?

10. Maera Y. Schreiber, *PMLA*, March 1998, 113:2, 273-285, p. 273. USC.

Brother, the estate is yours,
And so are the house, the horse, and the gun.
But mine is the ancient voice of the land.
You are left with everything.
But I am leaving you speechless, speechless!
And how are you going to harvest the wheat
And feed the fire,
If I am taking the song with me?

