Poetry in Exile

Czech Poets during the Cold War and the Western Poetic Tradition

JOSEF HRDLIČKA

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Content

Introduction

This book came into being over several years, during which time I clarified my view of the questions and issues that stood at its inception. These stemmed from two main areas. One was the study of lyrical poetry and the regular lectures I was giving on this topic to comparative literature students at the Charles University Faculty of Arts. From there stemmed questions regarding the writing of poetry outside the boundaries of a linguistic and cultural community. Exile, or so I believed, represents or may represent a context in which the fundamental and not always thematized prerequisites of a poem – especially its linguistic and cultural framework – are disrupted. I have tried to formulate these points in more detail in the opening chapter.

The second area of my interest was the poetry of Czech Exiles after 1948. It has not been thoroughly researched to this day, and no one had in any structured way posed the question how exile influenced the works of numerous Czech poets. Between 1948 and 1989, dozens of Czech writers published their poems abroad. To take just three anthologies *Neviditelný domov* [Invisible Home, 1954], *Čas stavění* [Time for Building, 1956] and *Almanach české zahraniční poezie 1979* [Almanac of Czech Poetry Abroad], these cover the poems of some sixty authors, with many others left out, for various reasons. It has to be said that the poems are often not of exceptional value, which makes exile poetry no different from 'home grown' poetry, but this fact is in a sense more noticeable within the body of works produced purely in exile. In any case, a number of interesting poets appear in the broad field of Czech exile poetry, some of whom have made a substantial contribution to the overall picture of Czech poetry in their time. Regardless of how these poets might be rated, they can be examined together, from the perspective of issues raised by the specificity of exile. This aspect was well captured by Milada Součková, when in a 1956 letter she mentioned Ovid and compared him to the poets of an anthology she herself had contributed to:

'He differs from the fifteen poets of the *Invisible Home* in that his is poetry writ large. But what he felt was identical, and there are a myriad parallels.'[1] We may with some justification doubt that Ovid actually expressed what he felt in his writing, as pointed out by a number of studies; his are rather rhetorical stratagems, which makes the alleged authenticity of his feelings highly questionable. After all, this notion also occurred to Součková herself. Yet the parallels do remain, even as regards the stratagems, albeit they need to be approached in the full recognition of historically quite distinct situations, both political and poetic.

A significant impetus, if not indeed the one that set my whole thought process in motion, was the study by Jean Starobinski, *Mémoire de Troie* [Memory of Troy]. In it he points out the significant motive force in the exile literature of European or Western culture, namely its close link to tradition. I have tried to develop Starobinski's ideas more specifically in my second chapter, *Shaded by Reminiscence*.

Czech exile poetry provides good material to test whether the theoretical questions we started from make any sense at all, and what answers to them individual poems do provide. The concept of exile in Western culture has since the 19th and up to the 21st century covered a broad range of meanings from expulsion to travels abroad, touching on various forms of exile as driven by geopolitical conditions, so it is not realistic to write one definitive book on poetry in exile, and cover particular poems in depth, yet keep the material and conceptual apparatus sufficiently coherent. In this respect, of course, any narrowly defined area of interest also brings its own limitations. In the case of this book, the boundaries are set by the political situation of the period discussed, as well as by how far prior traditions in Czech literature impinge. Boundaries also provide an opportunity to articulate with more exactitude what lies beyond them and to describe more precisely what the given material owes to its historical constellation, and where it retains a more general reach.

Nevertheless, this book is not primarily a historical study and certainly does not try to exhaustively map Czech poetry in exile during the Cold War. There are many poets I have only touched on, given too brief a mention of, or even completely neglected, although they ought to have their place in a chapter contiguously relating to Czech poetry: they include, among others – Antonín

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1   M. Součková: *Élenty*, p. 199, letter dated 20 January 1956 to Olga and Ladislav Radimský.

Brousek, Karel Brušák, Vladimíra Čerepková, Viktor Fischl, Tomáš Frýbert, Jiří Gruša, Ivan Jelínek, Jan Křesadlo, František Listopad, Milan Nápravník, Rio Preisner (also as an exile theorist), Jiří Volf, whose fate is little known, and more. My intention, which stems from the aforementioned starting points, was to describe the poetics of selected authors, and above all to try to articulate some more general conclusions about poetry in exile conditions.

The opening chapter sets out the vast scope in which exile can be talked about and tries to capture the relationship between exile and poetry. I find it important to consider, on the one hand, exile *de facto*, for which Ovid's elegies can serve as the model, and exile in the absolute sense, the idea that one is exiled by the very life one leads – in modern poetry, this pole is represented by Baudelaire's poem *Le Cygne* [The Swan]. Such polarity does not preclude the two poles being connected, or there being a range of positions between them. One significant element is also the relationship to the prior tradition of exile, which affects the given poetry in different ways. The other three chapters are devoted to comparative studies of topics cardinal to exile, at least as seen from the perspective of this book: the question of Exiles whose fate fades from memory; exile as sheltering and exile associated with the concept of Arcadia and, more generally, the idealized realm of poetry. In that section, prose could not be overlooked. The reason is obvious: exile in the Western world is intrinsically about narrative. I briefly come back to this question, and distinctions between exile poetry and storytelling, in the final chapter.

The second part of the book is devoted to Czech poetry. In the first chapter of this part I deal with the *Invisible Home* anthology, the flagship book about Czech exile in the 1950s. That is followed by three chapters focusing on the work of selected poets: Ivan Blatný, Milada Součková and Ivan Diviš. The last two chapters briefly discuss topics that are on the verges of exile in the narrower sense and point to a clear easing and a shift of emphasis at the end of the Cold War.

For foreign-language poems, and with very few exceptions, I have referenced the original and sometimes its Czech translation, and also present the original for selected prose and theoretical texts. Where no other translator is mentioned, the excerpt translations are by Václav Z J Pinkava, apart from Chapter 3, previously translated by Matthew Sweney.

At this point I would like to thank those who have helped me with advice and assistance. First and foremost, Justin Quinn, with whom I've had the opportunity to discuss the book as I went along and who encouraged me in a new direc-

tion many times. Furthermore, Michael Alexa, Peter Demetz, Lukáš Klimeš, Petr Král, Caroline Lederer, Benoît Meunier, Zuzana Nagy, Kristián Suda, Jan Šulc, Antonín Petruželka, Václav Z J Pinkava, Martin Pšenička, Robert Pynsent, Jan Rubeš, Vladimír Svoboda, Matthew Sweney and Jaromír Typlt. Last but not least, Anne Hultsch for numerous comments on the text, Klára Soukupová for many apt remarks and Adéla Petruželková for thoroughly editing the whole book.

My work has been supported by funding from several institutions acknowledged in the opening part of the bibliography. I thank the The Czech Science Foundation (GAČR) for supporting my work on this book.

Some parts of the book were published before it came out as a whole, in all such cases I edited and supplemented the texts for the book publication itself.

The second chapter has been published in French:

À l'ombre du souvenir. Exil, littérature et exclusion du souvenir, *Revue de littérature comparée* 92, no. 1 (2018), pp. 3–17, transl. Benoît Meunier.

The third chapter has been published in earlier form as:

Exile and Shelter in the Work of Egon Hostovský, Vilém Flusser and Ivan Blatný, *Central Europe* (2020), DOI: 10.1080/14790963.2020.1758448, translated by Matthew Sweney.

Parts of the tenth chapter, here substantially reworked, were published as follows:

Emigracja i nomadyzm w czeskiej kulturze XX wieku. In Kiklewicz, Aleksander, Dudziak, Arkadiusz (ed.), *Nomadyzm i nomadologia: rozważania i analizy*. Olsztyn: Centrum Badań Europy Wschodniej, 2018, pp. 113–126, transl. Michael Alexa.

Jazyky v poezii exilu, *Svět literatury* 29, no. 60 (2019), pp. 55–63.

Josef Hrdlička

1. Poetry and Exile

Qui sait encore le lieu de ma naissance ?
Who only knows where I was born?
Saint-John Perse

Does it make sense to define exile poetry as other than just poems written in exile, but otherwise in principle indistinguishable from those written 'back home'? Is there such a thing as exile poetry, or is there no reason to contemplate a category of that kind? The question is often set within the more general framework of exile literature, and a fairly recent summary notes that *"key questions like the difference between exile literature and literature written in exile remain unsolved. Conferences and compendia aimed at defining an aesthetic of exile do not, as a rule, get beyond discussing whether the question is even valid."*[1] Indeed, is the combination of the two concepts – exile and literature, inappropriate, as Marek Pytasz suggests: 'they come from different areas, so we can find them a common denominator in the sociology of literature, in the description of literary life and literary culture, but struggle to do so in the inherent poetics'[2]; or is the experience of exile so exceptional that it is also reflected in the poetics? Underlying such questions seem to be the often varied concepts of exile and home, but also the antithesis between a non-exiled and an exiled author or poet, the first of which is supposed to represent a kind of normative state, while the latter is in a situation both extraordinary and likely to affect their work. If we stay with poetry, is such an influence so significant and can it manifest itself in poems in such a way that it makes sense to talk about exile poetry? On the

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1   A. Stephan: Introduction, pp. 9–10.
2   M. Pytasz: *Wygnanie, emigracja, diaspora*, p. 17.

other hand, wouldn't it be excessive to say that all poetry written in exile is 'exile poetry' in more than its external-origin sense? Or ultimately – isn't exile, with all the word's meanings, just one of the many themes that have attracted poets and readers? And is exile really some strange, symptomatic situation?

We can find arguments for, and against. In 1953, the publisher, poet and organizer of the post-February[3] exodus to exile, Robert Vlach, wrote to Věra Stárková, best known for her essays in exile magazines:

> Of course, you're not some 'poet of exile', and, I beg to ask, whyever should you be? Why should all poets in exile be exile-poets? Life isn't just about exile. Besides, the wind is turning, Exiles are settling down, regrets fade, and soon the exile-poet will become a pilgrimage curiosity … Don't even think about aiming for some kind of exile poetics! Be sure to stay true to yourself! There's no need to shy away from one's public, but you cannot chase after it. If you tried to write poetry about 28 October or 7 March or some such, that would be a truly unforgivable lapse – given who you are.[4]

Robert Vlach does, of course, see the poet at one with her life, assumes that her poems express her life or are significantly connected, but at the same time he says that exile is not a situation exceptional enough to completely drive one's life, and one's poetry far less so. Another Czech poet, Karel Zlín, writes in a poem ensemble called *Listy z exilu* [Letters from Exile] dated 1977:

> Zde září květy mimózy. Říkám: zde. Ale kde je to Zde?
> Vždyť mluvím-li rodnou řečí na tomto místě,
> jsem vlastně nepřítomen.
> A tedy nepřítomen Zde i Tam,
> píši svým blízkým.

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3   The 1948 Czechoslovak coup d'état.
4   The letter is in safekeeping with the estate of Věra Stárková in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature (PNP) and part of the typewritten ensemble *Setkání* [Meeting].

> Here the mimosa flowers beam. I say: here. But where is this Here?
> Why, if I speak my native tongue in this place,
> I absent myself from it.
> And thus, absent Here and There,
> I write to my loved ones.[5]

In this poem, by contrast, exile appears to be a substantial formative element of the poem's speaker – the exiled person is torn away from their language, which fundamentally changes their relationship to the place, as if their very existence was diminished and split by their dislocation. Similar motifs of an existence diminished (even until death) by exile, and the duality of the situational relationship are seen in Ovid's work, referenced by the name of Zlín's poetic cycle. But that takes us onto the field of poetics. Both poets create a certain type of speaker, whom we might call the 'exiled subject', who is expressive in this odd situation, speaking elsewhere (not being at home) and from abroad (writing letters), with their self-identity split between *here* and *there*, while also enabled to speak differently. The question of speech and the speaker or subject tends to be one of the fundamental elements by which poetry is defined in the modern era.

There can be no doubt about the influence of exile on poetics and their interrelationship, but it is certainly not a clear and simple matter, from either side. *Exile* and related phenomena and terms take on different forms and meanings at different times; and *poetry,* inasmuch as it relates to exile, is not just about portraying the harsh conditions of exile, but giving a particular notion of exile some poetic treatment. If we seek to contemplate poetry and exile, we need to consider the notions of exile that poetry portrays and poets work with, without needing to be true Exiles themselves.

I

The word exile appears in many treatises as more or less representing or summarizing a number of similar or related terms, such as banishment, emigration, displacement, exclusion, migration etc, as well as loneliness, withdrawal or

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5   K. Zlín: *Poesie,* p. 105.

'internal emigration', diaspora and colonization, which have different meanings, and most notably are often associated with very different social and historical contexts. Yet it is not uncommon to see a word being used in such an encompassing or paraphrasal way. To take an example, we find just such an aggregate concept of exile in Paul Tabori's *The Anatomy of Exile*. In the introduction he defines it as follows:

> The dictionaries define exile as forced separation from one's native country, expulsion from home or the state of being expelled, banishment; sometimes voluntary separation from one's native country. The state of banishment can also be one of devastation or alienation. Enforced removal from one's native land, according to an edict or sentence, penal expatriation or banishment, is another version.[6]

He then lists a whole range of synonyms that characterize historically, politically and geographically distinct manifestations of exile. Sara Forsdyke gives a working definition of exile as follows:

> Exile in the broadest terms can denote any separation from a community to which an individual or group formerly belonged. Exile in the strictest sense involves a physical separation from the place where one previously lived. In the modern era, however, we know of many cases of what is called 'internal exile,' in which an individual or group is removed from the immediate surroundings but not expelled from the country altogether.[7]

This internal exile, let us add, can also in some of its forms manifest as a voluntary withdrawal from social or political life, without involving any geographical dislocation.[8] Most texts about exile focus on a certain historical period or a specific aspect of the issues, but we do also find attempts at a summarizing

6   P. Tabori: *The Anatomy of Exile*, p. 23.
7   S. Forsdyke: *Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy*, p. 7.
8   On the concept of internal emigration cf. E. Doblhofer: *Exil und Emigration*, pp. 221–241; R. Preisner: Na obranu německé „vnitřní emigrace" v letech 1933–45.

approach or at least a broader perspective.[9] The various forms of exile, migration or exclusion are undoubtedly significantly different, but when Paul Tabori was working on his book and asking various Exiles for their views, he also noted a generalizing, albeit personally involved attitude, which has its reasons:

> I do not consider it a happy solution to contrast the definition of the exile with refugee, emigrant, etc. – and for purely practical reasons. Of course, you can only include people who left because of the conditions dominating their countries – but these can be transpositional. That is, political, economic, or religious corruption or backwardness affect intellectuals far sooner than others. Moholy-Nagy, Vásárhelyi (Vasarely), for instance, did not leave Hungary because of an explicit political persecution – it was the country's backwardness, the Philistinism of the ruling classes that motivated them – and it was from this situation that the religious and political persecution to which you refer, developed. In other words: I would keep the "exile" expression, but would broaden its definition so that everybody could be included of whom one must speak in such a book.[10]

The rather simplistic attempt to regard exile in the broadest possible terms is, not only here, clearly politically motivated: to be mentioned in a publication about exile means not only some form of recognition, it is also to take one's place in collective memory and history, in that sense also mitigating one's exclusion. In poetry, this regard for collective memory manifests itself in a similar way. Even in the earliest written documents on exile we find testimony mingling with fiction and myth, and there comes a point when the expelled, the refugees or Exiles tend to reference or liken themselves to their predecessors, as links in one chain of history, irrespective of how their standing, legal status or political situations differ. In the Middle Ages, one of the paradigmatic examples is Ovid,[11] who in his turn compares himself to legendary archetypes, especially to

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9   The aforementioned book by Tabori; M. Tucker: *Literary Exile* seeks to sum up 20th century literary exile; J. Simpson: *The Oxford Book of Exile* presents an anthology of testimonies and documents about exile, categorized by selected exile aspects.

10   P. Tabori: *The Anatomy of Exile*, p. 35.

11   cf. R. Hexter: Ovid and the Medieval Exilic Imaginary; T. Ehlen: Bilder des Exils.

Odysseus, but also to Aeneas.[12] Of course, the intertextuality of exile does not confine itself to precise categories, and connects Ovid with say, John of Patmos, not distinguishing the historical context and overlooking the incomparability of Ovid's *relegatio* with political exile in the times of nation states. Even in modern times, Charles Baudelaire presents a complex catalogue of Exiles in his *Swan* poem and connects them with his own person and experience of exile in his own city, Paris.

Documents about different types of expulsion and exclusion date right back to the earliest days and are probably found in most cultures.[13] Paul Tabori cites examples of exile in primitive societies, but also exclusion in the animal world.[14] In ancient documents, the underlying mythical lore is important, and different forms of displacement are at the core of key legends: consider the tale of Odysseus, the numerous tragic heroes Oedipus, Iphigenia, Orestes and others. Sargon (2340–2284 BC), thought to be the founder of the Akkadian dynasty, arrived in a basket down the Euphrates, according to legend.[15] Likewise, the legendary founders of many Greek municipalities were Exiles or migrants; a similar story relates to the founding of Rome; and last but not least the Czech legend of the founding of the state features a migrant-founder (and colonizer). The counterpart of these Greek myths is the Old Testament story of the expulsion of mankind from Paradise, which, along with the legacy of antiquity has fundamentally influenced Western culture since the very beginning of Christianity. Although there was nothing uncommon about exile in antiquity, it was still seen as a mishap, along with other possible misfortunes,[16] while the myth of the fall of man serves-up expulsion as the all-encompassing prerequisite of the human condition.

One of the oldest known written documents about exile goes back to ancient Egypt. The story of Sinuhe dates from around 2000 BC.[17] Contemporary Egyptology regards the story as fiction, albeit earlier authors and more broadly

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12   cf. M. McGowan: *Ovid in Exile*, pp. 176–194 for Odysseus; J. Starobinski: La nuit de Troie, pp. 307–311 for Aeneas.

13   cf. e.g. P. Tabori: *The Anatomy of Exile;* J. Simpson: *The Oxford Book of Exile*; S. Forsdyke: *Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy.*

14   P. Tabori: *The Anatomy of Exile*, pp. 39–40.

15   see J. F. Gaertner: The Discourse of Displacement, p. 7.

16   E. Bowie: Early Expatriates, p. 50.

17   English translation and comment: M. Bárta: *Sinuhe, the Bible, and the Patriarchs.*

conceived works about exile looked upon it as a genuine autobiographical account.[18] In any case, Sinuhe illustrates the phenomenon of exile, and even in this early text we find the notion of self-identity broken by leaving one's homeland:

> My house is beautiful, and my dwelling is spacious.
> My thoughts, however, are in the palace.
> You god, who have ordained this flight for me,
> have mercy!
> Bring me back home!
> Surely, you will let me see the place
> where my heart dwells!
> For what is more important than to bury my body
> in the land where I was born?[19]

Since the archaic period in ancient Greece we find records of specific persons in exile, among them poets, orators, and politicians: Alcaeus, Xenophanes, Cicero, Ovid, Seneca. As a feature of its time, such exile is not to be regarded as anything exceptional, however, but a common aspect of political practice, a way in which the ruling party removed its political opponents: *the earliest known Athenian law, the anti-tyranny law dating to the seventh century, enjoined all Athenians to expel the tyrant from the community.*[20] *"Expulsion from their cities,"* writes Benjamin Gray, *"was a perennial risk for citizens of Greek poleis, from the Archaic period to Late Antiquity. This could occur in many different ways, of different frequencies in different periods. Citizens could be sentenced to formal exile by a court; forced to flee their city […] to avoid condemnation by a court or political persecution; driven out during civil war […]; or expelled from their city by an exter-*

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18   cf. M. Bárta: ibid., pp. 9–10. Sinuhe's story is considered authentic by P. Tabori (*The Anatomy of Exile*, p. 43ff.), in whose book one entire chapter is called Sinuhe's legacy, which strengthens the legitimacy of exile in the political subtext of the publication; or the first Czech translator František Lexa, who refers to the text as an autobiography (*Beletristická literatura staroegyptská*, pp. 111–112), translating it as Sinuhe's own biography and argues against the view that it is a 'made-up story', while regarding the tale as 'an account of actual events' (*Výbor ze starší literatury egyptské*, p. 272).

19   M. Bárta: *Sinuhe, the Bible, and the Patriarchs*, p. 20 (B, 155–160).

20   S. Forsdyke: *Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy*, p. 6.

nal invader […]. *In each case, exile entailed loss of security and status, devastating for those affected.*"[21]

Greek poets of archaic and classical times bring to their rendition of exile the significant impulse of their personal history, as opposed to epic legend and myth, though this may be stylized or partly fictional. Some of them (Solon, Theognis) illustrate the adverse or undesirable circumstances they have met with through references to exile. Others speak directly about their experience (Xenophanes, Alcaeus). For poets of the archaic era, exile is not a cardinal theme, given the audience of the symposia where their poems were aired were not interested in the exile topic as such.[22] Nevertheless these poets do cover some notable themes that are seen again in subsequent literary tradition. Solon speaks of forgetting his own language abroad:

> Into our home, Athens, founded by the gods,
> I brought back many sold unlawfully as slaves,
> and throngs of debtors harried into exile,
> drifting about so long in foreign lands
> they could no longer use our Attic tongue;[23]

Theognis also covers themes of homesickness, loneliness, but also changes of identity in exile:

> Never befriend an Exile for the sake of his prospects, Cyrnus:
> for when he
> goes home he is no longer the same man.[24]

Rome gives the topic of exile the differing topographical framework of a centralized empire, compared to the numerous Greek municipalities interconnected through diverse relationships. Exile from Rome means being forced to stay in some particular part of the empire, sometimes closer to the centre, at other times on the verge of it, yet all the while the exiled person is still tied

21   B. Gray: *Stasis and Stability*, p. 3.
22   cf. E. Bowie: Early Expatriates, p. 21, 43.
23   *Ancient Greek lyrics*, p. 85.
24   *Greek Elegiac Poetry*, p. 223.

to the centre.[25] When it comes to exile, we need to consider three authors in particular: Cicero, Ovid and Seneca. Cicero takes a view subsequently compared to the term 'internal emigration' (*innere Emigration*), coined during the Nazi Third Reich to characterize the attitudes of some intellectuals.[26] The distinctive figure here is Ovid, whose themes follow up Cicero and earlier Greek authors,[27] though he writes about his exile to an unprecedented extent; above all, his *letters* sent to distant Rome, which also formalize the theme of separation. Ovid's elegies have become a touchstone for later exiled poets, moreover his exile is, in the main, a literary matter – there is no corroborating contemporary evidence that Ovid was sent into exile, except for what we know through his poems.[28]

Plato's *Republic* opens an important chapter on poets and exile. Plato views the topic from the perspective of a community that rids itself of poets, seeing them as undesirables. According to Plato, good poets can dramatize all sorts of love experiences, angers or desires, thereby upsetting the social order that philosophers are there to instil, hence it is reasonable and fully justified for poets to be expelled from the community.[29] According to Eric Havelock, this dispute between poets and philosophers leads to a shift in accepted norms. With the coming of the written word, bards, who represented collective memory in a society reliant on oral tradition, lose their privileged role.[30] There are several important points here for our purposes: the poet has traditionally enjoyed respect, drawing on divine inspiration. Once a society comes to be soberly and methodically administered, the poet represents an irrational element, which the rational state seeks to expel beyond its borders. Plato thus brings to mind the eccentricity of a poet who expounds on matters of import to the community,

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25   cf. S. Goldhill: *Whose Antiquity?*, pp. 16–17.

26   see footnote 9 above.

27   cf. J. F. Gaertner: *The Discourse of Displacement*, p. 14.

28   In extremis, this leads to the hypothesis that Ovid was not in exile, that his elegies from exile are pure fantasy. This view is not generally held, but it is demonstrable that few of his exile poems reflect historical reality. For a detailed discussion of the issue, see: G. Williams: *Banished Voices*, pp. 3–8.

29   Plato: *Republic*, 606d–607d, 398a; cf. R. Barfield: *Ancient Quarrel*, p. 13.

30   cf. E. Havelock: *Preface to Plato*, inter alia p. 12ff., 305.

while at the same time flouting its norms.[31] A poet is useful for eulogizing the ruler, but if he crosses the line he can be sent into exile, like Ovid.[32]

The poet thus finds himself banished from his community, in *de facto* exile, excluded from community life, but also in an exceptional position, with the opportunity to speak in a different, *eccentric* way. According to Jonathan Culler, the poet stands apart from the social sphere he inhabits, not bound by its customs, or in opposition to them, undermining official discourse.[33] This stance is well illustrated by Propertius as he celebrates going to war, calls rousingly for combat and yet ostentatively declares that he himself will settle for watching from the sidelines:

> et subter captos arma sedere duces,
> tela fugacis equi et bracati militis arcus,
> ad vulgi plausus saepe resistere equos
> inque sinu carae nixus spectare puellae
> incipiam et titulis oppida capta legam!
> [...]
> praeda sit haec illis, quorum meruere labores:
> me sat erit Sacra plaudere posse Via.

and captured chieftains sitting beneath their arms, shafts from cavalry in retreat and bows of trousered soldiery, the horses oft halting at people's cheers, and leaning on the bosom of my sweetheart I begin to watch and read on placards the names of captured cities!
[...]

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31   The history of Czech exile brings an ironic parallel to Plato: in the 1970s and 1980s (at the time of the so-called normalization after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968), the regime tried in many cases to get rid of uncomfortable writers, forcing them to emigrate by various means. One such case was that of Jiří Gruša, who gave an interview in Switzerland during a legal trip to the West. Prior to his return, he was stripped of his citizenship, i.e. forced to stay in the West. cf. R. Cornejo: *Heimat im Wort*, p. 460 (her interview with Jiří Gruša).

32   Ovid cites two reasons for his exile, *carmen et error* (song and misconduct), the first one being taken to refer to his erotic poems.

33   J. Culler: *Theory of the Lyric*, p. 296.

> Theirs be the booty whose toil has earned it: enough for me that I can cheer them on the Sacred Way.[34]
>
> [transl. G. P. Goold]

Thus, at least from Plato onward, the poet theoretically stands some way apart from the State, and such exclusivity can quite easily turn into exclusion.

Simon Goldhill recalls the Greek authors between the first and third centuries A.D. who were active along the boundaries of the Roman Empire and shaped the concept of exile, where greater distance from Rome plays a positive role. They saw freedom as being opposed to the empire's core and as the opportunity to stand up for and express an intellectual position not subservient to political might. *"The philosopher must become an Exile from the norms of his society, an Exile* within."[35] They see exile as an initiation, taking a philosophical stance. The second motive force in their approach was the universality of Greek culture – the philosopher still finds himself within the boundaries of the empire, everywhere meeting with Greek tradition. In that sense, the intellectual is never in exile anywhere. On the other hand, as Goldhill adds, these authors find themselves in the twilight years of classical Greece and base their identity on a relationship with the past.[36] The tendency to a relativization of exile and the relationship to the past foreshadows Christian authors of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, while a nostalgia for the cultural past is brought back to life notably in the 19th century by Goethe, the Romantics and later on, Nietzsche.

In the Middle Ages, thanks to Christian universality, the concept of exile is largely recodified. Thomas Ehlen delineates three meanings of exile in the Middle Ages – as a concept based on legal theory, as an exile paradigm based on the Ovidian pattern, and as the concept based on the Christian religious position. Christianity brings to Western thought about exile the theme of expulsion from Paradise as representing the human condition and St. Paul's notions of human life as 'exile embodied': *"Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord."* (2 Corinthinas

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34   Propertius: *Elegies*, pp. 230–232 (III, 4, l. 15–18, 21–22).
35   S. Goldhill: Whose Antiquity?, p. 18.
36   Ibid., p. 19. Martin C. Putna recalls a nostalgia for the golden age as s widespread phenomenon of late antiquity, cf. M. Putna: *Řecké nebe nad námi*, p. 12ff.

5:6) and as a pilgrimage on this earth and a desire to return home to heaven (Hebrews 11,13–16).[37] For medieval clerics, educated in Latin and often separated from home and family, Ovid represented a paradigmatic separation from Rome and the Latin language. Ralph J. Hexter speaks of nostalgia for Latin culture and Ovid's Rome,[38] which found expression among some medieval poets. This nostalgia for one's native or cultural homeland mitigates the view of the world as a place of exile, as articulated by the oft-cited Hugh of Saint Victor: *perfectus vero, cui mundus totus exilium est* [perfect is one to whom the whole world is exile].[39] In this sense, Ovid's life, as we know it from his exile elegies, has attained apocryphal reinterpretations, where the outcast is transformed into a pilgrim, seeking God.[40]

One key author of the late Middle Ages is Dante, who became one of the exile--poet archetypes for his followers, although exile in the narrower sense is not the main theme of the *Divine Comedy*. The opening verses of the *Divine Comedy* recall the image of human life as a pilgrimage, not being exiled, and for this pilgrimage Dante opts to be guided by Virgil, rather than Ovid, appropriately enough. The latter is of course also significantly present in the *Comedy*, albeit more as an author of the *Metamorphoses*.[41] Dante expresses no nostalgia for his native Florence. In the world of the *Comedy*, the town of his birth has a more complicated role: *"Florence, the far-away town, becomes for Dante a paradigmatic definition of a wicked town, and it may be considered both a historical and semantic counterpart of Ovid's Tomis. The pilgrimage of Dante […] goes from the deceitful (but concrete) homeland of Florence to the* Ciuitas Dei.*"*[42] Elsewhere, however, Dante also expresses his love for his birthplace: 'Where the lovely Arno flows, there I was born and raised, in the great city.'[43] In the fictional world of the *Comedy*, written while already in exile, the pilgrim Dante sees exile as a future

37   T. Ehlen: Bilder des Exils, p. 160.

38   cf. R. Hexter: Ovid and the Medieval Exilic Imaginary, pp. 223–225.

39   cf. ibid., p. 220; R. Tally: Mundus totus exilium est. In his treatise, Tally deals with Auerbach's concept of world literature and recalls his paraphrase of Hugh's words.

40   E. Zambon: Life and Poetry, pp. 24–25.

41   Ibid., p. 40.

42   Ibid., p. 29. cf. Par 31, l. 37–39.

43   Inf 23, l. 93–94, cf. E. Zambon: Life and Poetry, p. 30.

revealed to him by his great-grandfather Cacciaguida in the 17th canto of the *Paradise*. Here Dante writes of Florence as his 'dearest retreat'.[44]

Renaissance exile is reopened by the religious wars that impacted most of Europe and led to great popular upheaval for religious reasons.[45] In the Czech Lands, the commencement of that exile dates from 1547–48, when the protestant Unity of the Brethren was banned and its members were forced to convert, or go into exile.[46] Yet the main waves of Czech Protestant emigration fall into the period after the Battle of White Mountain (8 November 1620) and continue until the 18th century. This period, concluding with the Josephine Reforms and the permission to espouse other faiths (the 'Patent of Toleration' was issued in 1781),[47] coincides with the beginnings of the National Revival, but takes place in a completely different context, having very little to do with the exile literature of the 18th century, for the most part. The concept of exile in the modern sense of the word is closely linked to the growing role of national languages, the rise of nationalism and the emergence of nation states. Johannes Hofer brought in the key concept of *nostalgia* only as late as 1688, prior examples notwithstanding, and thanks to him, homesickness became a term in medical diagnostics for quite some time.[48] Charles Taylor writes about an uprooting, a *"great disembedding"* in connection with changing collective notions *"social imaginary"* in a post-reformist Europe, wherein the individual begins to play a substantial role. At this time, we see the birth of the idea that exile is something the individual can opt for. This makes questions like "Should I emigrate?" conceivable; at the same time, they *"arise as burning practical issues"*.[49]

Miroslav Hroch notes the three necessary conditions for the existence of nationhood: '…firstly, that it is a civil community of equals; secondly, that each or almost every one of these individuals is aware of their affiliation to the nation; thirdly, that the national community has experienced a shared history, has a 'destiny in common', whatever its particular political form may be'. These

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44   Par 17, 111, *"loco più caro"*.

45   cf. P. Tabori: *The Anatomy of Exile*, p. 76ff.; S. Hahn: Ausweisung un Vertreibung in Europa.

46   J. Pánek: Exile from the Bohemian Lands, pp. 35–36.

47   Protestant faith was permitted to only a limited extent and not including the Brethren, which was not re-established in the Czech Lands until the 19th century.

48   cf. J. Starobinski: L'invention d'une maladie, esp. pp. 261–262; H. Levin: Literature and Exile, p. 70.

49   cf. C. Taylor: *Modern Social Imaginaries*, p. 55.

conditions were not met during the period of religious migration, but the key aspect is the collective dimension of exile, notions about a community of Exiles, foreshadowing the later concepts of nationhood.[50]

In 1979, the philosopher Milič Čapek reprinted an extract from the longer Latin composition by Václav Klement Žebrácký in the exile magazine *Proměny* [Metamorphoses] under the name 'The Sigh of the Exiled'. Putting aside its dated poetic vocabulary, this emotive poem resonates remarkably with later poetry, in its sharp contrasting of life back home and an exile-transformed identity:

> Heu! olim fuimus, fuimus! fugimusque fugati
> Jam defloruimus, flos ut fuit ille caducus.
> Sunt pulsi Reges soliis Proceresque coacti
> diversa Exilia, atque alienasque quarere terras,
> incerti quo fata ferant, ubi sistere detur.
> Jam defuncta jacet Patriae spes omnis et Omnis.
> Gloria Czechigenum, libertas corruit alta.
> Religio effertur tumulo tumulanda perenni
> Et Pietas! Et Sancta Fides! Sequiturque pheretrum
> Libertas, duris per colla adstricta catenis!

> Woe, oh, we had lived, truly lived, the banished Exiles we are.
> Our heyday has passed, as what once blossomed doth wither and fall…
> Kings unseated were expelled and leading men
> driven to all parts of the world looking for a new homeland
> not knowing where fate would take them, where to find their home.
> All hope for a homeland extinguished, and the glory of the Czech tribe,
> noble freedom lies trampled.
> Faith destined to be forever buried is being expunged
> with piety and holy fidelity, and behind the bier, heavily shackled
> under the yoke, Liberty makes her way, disgraced![51]

50   M. Hroch: *Na prahu národní existence*, p. 8.
51   Klement Žebrácký: Vzdech exulantův. Klement's poem is referenced by Otakar Odložilík in the foreword to the exile poetry anthology *Zahrada v zemi nikoho* [Garden in No Man's Land, 1955]: The Poet's Way, pp. 12–14.

Milič Čapek clearly finds an expression fitting for his time in the poem, and without hesitation connects it with the idea of nationhood: 'The author was so full of sadness and pain over the national tragedy that he put into it [i.e. the poem] a telling passage, which I wrote down, and which has already been translated by Dr Fišer. The historical analogy is too evident for us to regard this fragment as just a documentary piece of history; the sadness of today's exiled poet over our national humiliation is as profound as that of his spiritual brother three centuries ago.'

Klement's Sigh is close to the genre of Czech songs for which Jan Malura coined the term 'exile lament'.[52] Yet there are also evident differences – Klement builds on humanist learning, makes use of secular imagery, writes in cultured Latin and represents the lonely intellectual, while exile lamentations are based on the tradition of Czech religious songs and are based primarily on images from the Old Testament and tied to the exile community. It is characteristic that Klement also expresses his homesickness in the plural, showing the collective dimension of exile and belonging to a community, albeit an entirely imaginary one. As he sees it, the former community has been dispersed all over the world and feels tied to its past homeland, lamenting the past it has lost. While the Czech lamentations likened exile to the Old Testament exodus, by their very function in the religious community they were directed more to the present.

> aj, my vyhnanci rajští
> po zemi putujem,
> pro hřích bídám oddáni,
> pracně se kvaltujem,
> nic v světě nejsouce
> než podruzi tvoji,
> vždy se k smrti nesouce,
> kde cil komu stojí.

> ▪

> oh, we Exiles from paradise
> the earth we trek,

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52   cf. J. Malura: *Písně českých exulantů*, pp. 184–204.

for our sin to woes wedded,
strife-hurried there and back,
in the world no worth having
than as thy cotters mere,
ever to death we're heading,
each one's end clear.[53]

The collective dimension and similar references to the Old Testament can also be found in the lengthy epic poem by Martin Kopecký, which depicts the fates of Czech Exiles in Saxony and Brandenburg in the first half of the 18th century.

W roku tisjc sedum set
Třicet a druhého
Dne desátého Řjgna
Tak gmenowaného,
Spolu se shromáždjce
Pjsně gsme zpjwali
W srdečných modlitbách
Na cestu se dali.

Opět nové soužení
Na cirkev připadlo
Že sme všem lidem byli
Za nové divadlo.
Pany za plotem klečic
Žalostně spívaly
(jak slavná krále nevěsta)
Však všecky své těžkosti
Na Boha vkládaly.

Tu nevědouce z místa
Kam zas jíti máme

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53   J. A. Komenský: *Duchovní písně*, p. 347; the editor Antonín Škarka calls the attribution to Comenius utterly dubious.

Nemajic v světě místa
Jen k Bohu voláme
Aby on nás retoval
Nám hříchy odpustil
A mnohých pánů srdce
K nám zase naklonil.

Za námi byl nepřjtel
Panj Henersdorfska
Užiwagjc fortele
Byla wjc nehezká
Pánům, panjm a stawům
Nás osočovala
Hroznými rebelanty
Lžiwě w psanjch psala.

Ti páni gako hory
Nám po stranách byli
Že sme se uchýliti
Na stranu nemohli
Museli sme skrz moře
K Berlinu se pustit
Ač wody wysušené
Nemohli nám škodit.

In the year one thousand seven hundred
Thirty and two, the same,
On the tenth of October
The month of that name,
Together then assembled
We sang our songs full-hearted
In heartfelt prayers
On our way departed

Once more new tribulations
Our Church did befall

That made all people see us
As minstrels, players all
Maidens knelt behind fences
Sad laments singing
(just as that famed King's bride)
And all their difficulties
To God's will bringing.

We aimless, without notion,
Which way now to go
No worldly destination
Called God, to let us know,
That He may yet redeem us
Forgive us our sins
Melt many noble hearts
Find us a place therein.

Chased by our enemy
Of Henersdorf the Lady
With use of force unyielding
Unpretty though it made her
To Lords and Ladies, Nobles
She denounced us, accusing,
Calling us roguish rebels
In letters false, abusing.

Those Lords like mountain ranges
Flanked our way, whereupon
We could not change direction
We had to go straight on
We had the sea to go through
Toward Berlin to get
Yet dried-up were the waters
And harm us they could not.[54]

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54   H. Rössel: Der "Schwanengesang" des Martin Kopecký, pp. 310, 316–317 (strophes 77, 137–140).

Goethe's *Italian Journey*, undertaken by the writer between September 1786 and May 1788 was a prelude to the ideology and figurativeness of 19th century exile, though he wrote the book about it based on his diaries only much later, starting in 1813; it was first published in 1816.[55] Goethe perceives Italy as the cradle of European culture and comes to Italy as if it were his homeland, distant in space but also in time. When in the closing part of his travelogue he bids farewell to Rome, Goethe compares himself to Ovid, departing Rome: 'And how I could not recall Ovid's elegy at these moments, for he too was banished and was about to leave Rome on a moonlit night. *'Cum repeto noctem'*– [when I recall that night] his recollection far away at the Black Sea, where he was sad and miserable-kept recurring to me, and I recited the poem, which in part I remember exactly. But actually, it only interfered with and hindered my own production, which although undertaken again later, never came into existence.'[56] Goethe introduces his travelogue with the words *Auch ich in Arcadien!,* evoking Italy as an idyllic or idealized place. The book is thus framed in antithesis to Ovid's poems, in which an idealized and distant Rome compares against the icy wasteland of Tomis.

The theme of a lost or distant homeland that we find in the earlier period takes a new turn with Goethe, and is taken further by the emerging Romantic period – the 'Outcast' still harkens back to an idealized homeland yet also manifests as an individual, "*ego* in Arcadia".[57] The topic of the lost homeland and the poet-as-exile is echoed by numerous leading poets of the 19th century. The figure of Ovid remains central to this imagery, being regarded as the archetype for the modern poet excluded from society. The motif is given graphical form by Delacroix in his famous painting Ovid among the Scythians in 1859, just as Baudelaire references Ovid in his influential poem, *The Swan*.[58] In Czech

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55   With regard to the genesis of the *Italian Journey* cf. J. W. Goethe: *Italienische Reise* II, p. 1072n. Also cf. M. Putna: *Řecké nebe nad námi*, pp. 25–64; J. Starobinski: *La nuit de Troie*, pp. 323–326.

56   J. W. Goethe: *Italian Journey*, pp. 447–448. J. W. Goethe, *Italienische Reise* I, p. 596, *Bericht April.*

57   As regards the Arcadia theme and the shift from moralizing to sentimental reading cf. E. Panofsky: Et in Arcadia ego, p. 319; and comments in J. W. Goethe: *Italienische Reise* II, pp. 1168–1170; J. W. Goethe: *Italienische Reise*, p. 539.

58   Baudelaire himself wrote admiringly about the Delacroix painting, Ch. Baudelaire: *Œuvres complètes*, p. 760 in 1859 in letters about the Paris Salon 1859.

poetry, self-comparison to Ovid in exile is made by Jan Kollár[59] and going on to the beginning of the 20th century, we find Jaroslav Vrchlický striking a similar note:

> Jen vyprostit se! To je zákon všeho,
> co k žití schopnost má a k světlu chce.
> Tím kvílil starý Ovid u Skythů
> na pustém břehu moře Černého,
> tím kvílí stejně básník moderní
> v měst pustém ruchu, vřavě, hlomozu.

> Just to make one's escape! That law is universal,
> for all things living, yearning for the light.
> Just like old Ovid at the Scythians
> on the Black Sea, its most forsaken shore,
> just so laments the poet of today
> in urban barren rushing, uproar, din.[60]

On this basis the 19th century notion that a poet is an outcast in his own country, regardless of where he is actually located, took shape. This image of the 'cursed poet', as Verlaine put it, is presented prominently by Baudelaire in his poem *Bénédicton,* opening his *Fleurs du Mal,* 'Flowers of Evil'. Towards the end of the century, Nietzsche, with a nod to Romanticism, typifies the human condition with this nostalgia: 'One is no longer at home anywhere...,' he writes in late fragments published under the title *Will to Power*.[61]

For 20th century intellectuals, this starting point, only underlined by the factual state of exile, takes on a dual form. Many Exiles find their separation from home hard to bear, and their writing is marked by nostalgia in various guises. The major anthology of Czech exile poetry published in the mid-1950s, takes the telling name *Neviditelný domov* [Invisible Home].[62] Conversely, the loss of

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59   J. Kollár: *Básně*, p. 191 (*Slávy dcera*, sonnet 332).
60   J. Vrchlický: *Já nechal svět jít kolem*, p. 30.
61   Quoted by S. Goldhill: Whose Antiquity?, p. 1.
62   *Neviditelný domov: Verše exulantů 1948–1953*, Peter Demetz, ed. (1954). The polemic contrast to the book comes in the anthology *Čas stavění* [Time for Building]. *Básně českých exulantů* [Poems

one's home becomes a core characteristic and a motive force. In 1944, Theodor W. Adorno, referring to Nietzsche, states: 'It is even part of my good fortune not to be a house-owner', Nietzsche already wrote in the *Gay Science*. Today we should have to add: it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home.'[63] George Steiner sees the basic stance of Modernism precisely in migration, and sees Nabokov as a paradigmatic author.[64] Both tendencies are present throughout the Cold War, the first of them dominant chiefly in the 1950s, whilst from the late 1960s a second, 'nomadic' tendency comes to the fore, as theorized by some Western intellectuals (Kenneth White, Gilles Deleuze, etc.),[65] but also the (geographically speaking) very trans-national philosopher of Czech origin Vilém Flusser, who belongs to the war and post-war emigration wave, or indeed the writer Věra Linhartová.[66]

II

Even a brief and selective overview shows the historical diversity of exile. Its modern-day meanings started to take shape largely in the 19th century in the context of nation states and nationalisms,[67] and also during this period the word exile covered a whole range of meanings from travels through political exile to metaphorically symbolizing the human condition. It is difficult to think of exile poetry strictly historically, to say nothing of the fundamental difficulties with such delineation, because the different meanings are sometimes only loosely related. However, the link between them remains the use of the word exile, and a conscious referencing and linking to the exile theme. Poems and poets thus create a continuum of different meanings of exile and a joined-up historical network of meanings and depictions. The poetry of exile also forms a certain core, founded on the putative duality of that situation. Ovid sets his

of Czech Exiles], foreword by Antonín Vlach, 1956. For the period context cf. M. Přibáň: *Prvních dvacet let* [The First Twenty Years], pp. 194–198.

63   T. W. Adorno: *Minima moralia*, p. 39.

64   G. Steiner: Extraterritorial.

65   cf. K. White: Esquisse du nomade intellectuel.

66   see Chapter 10.

67   cf. e.g. S. Goldhill: Whose Antiquity?; E. Said: Reflections on Exile.

exile in a mythologized topography, built on the contrast of an idealized centre of the Roman world, and its antithesis, the extremity of Tomis.[68] Similarly, Ovid mythologizes himself as a poet-outcast, and subjects the addressees of his letters to this confabulated situation. Baudelaire's *Swan* refers to a number of mythical characters, and presents Paris in hyperbole as an imaginary place that changes faster than do human memories of it:

> Paris change ! mais rien dans ma mélancolie
> N'a bougé ! palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs,
> Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie,
> Et mes chers souvenirs sont plus lourds que des rocs

> Paris changes! but naught in my melancholy
> has stirred! new palaces, scaffolding, blocks of stone,
> old quarters, all become for me an allegory,
> And my dear memories are heavier than rocks[69]

[transl. William Aggeler]

Baudelaire more than anyone else perceives the exile as a person living mainly in their imaginings and memories, or rather their illusions and memories prevail over perceived reality. As has been mentioned, Ovid's elegies are very questionable as to their veracity, it is practically impossible to read them as a record of actual events. At the same time, however, there is a consensus that Ovid was indeed in exile. Baudelaire's verses are psychologically unverifiable, yet we read them as the poet's testimony about his situation. Both the *Swan* and Ovid's elegies are worthy of being read as 'true testimonies' rather than as works of fiction.[70] They are not, however, actual description of reality, but a testimony in which *the imaginary* is reality in hyperbole.

In both cases an important premise of poetry is present: in the poem, the poet's voice is that of a public beneficence, the designated progenitor of poetry. It matters not what exactly Charles Baudelaire felt during his walk, but how the

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68   cf. G. Williams: *Banished Voices*, p. 8ff.
69   Ch. Baudelaire: *Œuvres complètes* I, p. 86.
70   Käte Hamburger uses the term *Wirklichkeitsaussage* in this context. cf. Culler's discussion on the issue, *Theory of the Lyric*, pp. 105–109.

poet Baudelaire expresses some human condition, in a poem. When the first edition of *The Flowers of Evil* came before the courts, Baudelaire was to feel at first hand that, at least in some ways, the poet was still perceived as a public property. The state of exile is symptomatic of this role. The poet is usually connected to a language community and thus in a broader sense also tied to a place, or at least such contact is implicit. Exile, on the other hand, creates often insurmountable distance from both the place and the community and does not allow these relationships to be fulfilled in the usual way. This is what Ovid builds upon in his elegies, wherein places and people represent basic thematic and structural elements. The elegies overcome this two-form distance – they re-establish contact with home and friends, and take Ovid back to Rome, in his mind. Baudelaire's case is different: the poet has not physically left Paris, but experiences a sense of alienation, which he seeks to overcome through construing an imaginary and aesthetised society of Exiles. In Baudelaire's case, the term exile describes how the poet stands apart in modern society. Ovid's elegies seen as nostalgic poems of *de facto* exile on the one hand, and Baudelaire's *Swan* as a metaphorical exile, to represent one's status in the world and in society on the other hand; these are the fundamental bi-poles of exile poetry. There are common points of distance from place and society in both prototypes of exile poetry, in the one case physical, in the other psychological, or existential.

However, the world of the imagination is not exclusively bound up with an exile theme. From a certain point, an *unspecified context* is characteristic of most poetry, as William Waters writes, the poem is not tied to a particular situation, but the context *"as part of its imaginative structure"*[71] is a matter for the reader's imagination to update. Exile poems add to the imaginative context with spatio-temporal distance. For Ovid, Rome is not the setting of the poem for the reader to update, but a place related-to from a distance. Similarly, Viktor Fischl writes of Prague in his *Prague Walks* cycle:

> Na jedné z tisíců procházek
> městem, z něhož jsem odešel,
> na jedné z tisíců procházek
> městem, jež nikdy neodešlo ze mne

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71   cf. W. Waters: *Poetry's Touch*, p. 9.

> On one of thousands of walks
> through the city I had left,
> on one of thousands of walks
> through the city that never left me[72]

In can in many cases be hard to differentiate between the fabulated as *imagined* and as *imaginary*. The collective designation 'we Exiles from paradise' in the song attributed to Comenius may at some point act as a 'fabulated society' in the spirit of Anderson's theory of *imagined communities*,[73] while in the *Swan* the community of Exiles is imaginary in the stronger sense of a personal imagination making up something missing. Similar distinctions, whilst not clear-cut, can be traced to places like *Arcadia* on the one hand, and a *home preserved in memories* on the other, which can easily turn into the *imaginary homeland*, to quote Salman Rushdie.

Baudelaire's *Swan* and Ovid's elegies bring out some telling aspects. The characteristic distance creates the specific standpoint of the excluded poet, an aspect relatively new in Ovid's case, which in addition to the thematic plane also impacts the poem's structure. In addition, this exile theme tends toward a certain isolation, manifested by the repetition of motifs and allusions. The defining thematic and structural elements at the heart of exile poetry are place, community, language and intertextuality. The intertextual dimension of exile is closely associated with the imaginary world: the reference framework for the exile poem is not only the outcast's actual situation, but quite often more to do with the repertoire of motifs drawn upon. If we can say that the exile is characterized by a self unsettled by distance and exclusion, the poem allows the reforging of a new, cultural identity based on the literary exile tradition.

III

A distant home can become the subject of nostalgia and lament. Loss is often compounded with a superstructure: the exiled subject more or less deliberately

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72   V. Fischl: *Krása šedin*, p. 9.

73   cf. B. Anderson: *Imagined communities* following-on from Taylor's concept of *social imaginary*.

reconstructs a lost or disturbed identity tied to their home and creates a new spatial constellation, changing their relationship to the language and the community, and superimposing this structure onto the real world, creating notions about places, but also places that are completely imaginary. Nostalgia and constructivism also work in the opposite direction, and can shape an imaginary exile situation, a sense of exclusion from society, alienation from the present or nostalgia for an unattainable past. These two perspectives have to some extent a different genesis, but very often meet and complement each other down the ages of cultural history, mutually exchanging motifs.

Exile is connected with two places, *here* and *there*, whereby the speaker is physically located here, but still there in thought. *"An exile is someone who inhabits one place and remembers or projects the reality of another,"* writes Michael Seidel.[74] Martin C. Putna differentiates the topology of exile into a relationship with three lands:

> Russian exile literature works with the theme of a 'land triad': A 'Lost Land' – recalling an unreachable and subjugated homeland, often accompanied by pondering what to do to make the land accessible and free again. A 'Foreign Land' – reflecting the exile situation, sometimes centred on the exile's inability to adapt to the conditions of the host country (most often some 'inhuman' huge city), sometimes generalizing exile into a universal human experience. A 'Novel Land' – a contrasting positive slant on some aspect of the country the exile is living in or travelling through, inspiration drawn from a new reality.[75]

The proffered categories are only elementary possibilities for categorizing the material, the various poets and poems present a number of other standpoints through which exile topology can be nuanced.

The fundamental counterweight that brings a desire for home, a nostalgia, can be found in the oldest written documents (see the quote from the tale of Sinuhe). Ovid brings the contrasts of an uncultured place and extreme climate

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74 M. Seidel: *Exile and the Narrative Imagination*, p. ix.
75 M. Putna: *Česká katolická literatura v kontextech 1945–1989*, p. 252. Putna introduced this typology in his earlier anthology *U řek babylonských* (M. Putna – M. Zadražilová, ed., 1996).

here in Tomis, as against cultured Rome, as a relationship between the peri-
phery and the centre:

> Frigora iam Zephyri minuunt, annoque peracto
>   Longior antiquis visa Maeotis hiems,
> [...]
> Iam violam puerique legunt hilaresque puellae
>   Rustica quae nullo nata serente venit,
> Prataque pubescunt variorum flore colorum
>   Indocilique loquax gutture vernat avis;
> [...]
> Quoque loco est vitis, de palmite gemma movetur:
>   Nam procul a Getico litore vitis abest;
> Quoque loco est arbor, turgescit in arbore ramus:
>   Nam procul a Geticis finibus arbor abest.

> Zephyrus lessens the cold, now the past year's done,
>   a Black Sea winter that seemed longer than those of old
> [...]
> Now laughing boys and girls gather the violets
>   that grow, un-sown, born of the countryside:
> and the meadows bloom with many flowers,
>   and the song-birds welcome spring, untaught:
> [...]
> and the shoots that lay hid, buried in the wheat furrows,
>   show through, unfurl their tender tips from the earth.
> Wherever the vine grows, buds break from the stem:
>   but vines grow far away from these Getic shores:[76]

[transl. A.S. Kline]

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76   *Tristia* III 12 (13), 1, ll. 1–16. [cf. https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/OvidTristia
      BkThree.php#anchor_Toc34217030]