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Forms of Exile in Jewish Literature: Wandering vs. Inward Turn in the Aesthetic Ideas at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Formy wygnania w literaturze żydowskiej: wędrówka kontra zwrot wewnętrzny w estetycznych ideach początku XX wieku

Abstract

The paper published here is a part of a larger book on Forms of Exile in Jewish Literature and Thought (Twentieth-Century Central Europe and Movement to America), that will be in print with Academic Studies Press in 2021. The article consists of three parts. The first part covers the history of concepts of exile, such as ostracism, estrangement, marginalization or post-memory. The second part focuses on exile as "Expulsion and Wandering", i.e. the most basic meaning as well as the most typical phenomenon of Jewish history in Eastern Europe, i.e. a movement westwards in several waves starting on the break of 19th and 20th century. The third text focuses on a very different form of exile appearing in the same period, namely the "Aesthetic Revolt and an Inward Turn" in artistic thinking of the time, a type of internal exile.

Keywords: Exile, marginalization, aesthetic revolt, wandering Jew, expulsion, Joseph Roth, Stefan Zweig, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Hermann Broch, decadence, anti-Semitism, postmemory, Eastern Europe, Fiddler on the Roof, degeneration of values, Austria

> Behind the city! Understand? Behind!
> Outside! Across the dam!
> Life here is a place where it's impossible to live.
> A Jewish quarter . . .
> Thus is it not a hundred times better
> to become an Eternal Jew?
> Because for everyone who is not a swine,

a Jewish pogrom stews.
Life. It's alive only through renegades!
Through the Judases of the faiths!
Onto Solomon's islands!
To hell! To anywhere but
to life, which suffers only renegades, only
sheep for the executioner!
I trample the certificate permitting my right to my life
with my feet!
I tread it down! For David's shield!
Into the compost of the bodies!
Isn't it intoxicating that a Yid
did not want to live?!
A ghetto of chosen gatherings! Dam and ditch.
Do not seek indulgence!
In this most Christian of worlds
poets are treated as Yids!

— *Marina Tsvetaeva: Poem of the End, part 12, stanzas 7–12. Translated by Bronislava Volková*

Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, emigrés, refugees. In the United States, academic, intellectual and aesthetic thought is what it is today because of refugees from fascism, communism, and other regimes given to the oppression and expulsion of dissidents.
And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement.

— Edward Said: *Reflections on Exile*

It seems proper that those who create art in a civilization of quasi-barbarism, which has made so many homeless, should themselves be poets unhoused and wanderers across language. Eccentric, aloof, nostalgic, deliberately untimely . . .

— George Steiner

[I]t is part of morality not to be at home in one's home

— Theodor Adorno

The person who finds his homeland sweet is 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 place. The tender soul has fixed his love on

> one spot in the world; the strong person has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his.
> — Hugh of St. Victor (twelfth-century theologian)

A General History of Concepts of Exile

Exile is a very complex concept: it is multifaceted and has numerous implications. I have written about it in a personal way[1] in the past and I have also taught a class at Indiana University on this topic drawing on the unusually rich and interesting Jewish (predominantly German-language) twentieth-century writing of Central Europe. Ideas developed during these classes have served as a starting point for the present study. Exile has generated wonderful writing since times immemorial (Sappho, Dante, Comenius, Zola, Mann, Joyce, Becket, Solzhenitsyn, Conrad, to name a few outstanding examples). Twentieth-century European literature, however, plays a special role in the exploration of exile, due to the displacement of vast numbers of people because of the brutal totalitarian regimes that took over many countries for extended periods of time, the increasing ease of traveling great distances, and technological progress.

This study is primarily focused on the variety of meanings that the term "exile" can take on and the different angles from which it can be examined. It is a study that looks at the inner meanings of exile, the types of inner withdrawal due to a lack of acceptance by society of the intrinsic values of an individual, considering both the physical movement of a writer to another country and the background of such movement. Many kinds of authors from a number of different countries found themselves exiles, outcasts, and their work (especially the protagonists in their writing) reflects this. These authors contributed vastly different literary forms and created a large variety of thought patterns which all have a common thread.

The first part of the study deals with early twentieth-century issues and movement, while the second is focused on the Holocaust and beyond. I give the Jews a major role in this study for two reasons: 1) they had enormous cultural influence and were, in effect, the glue of Central European literature and thought; and 2) their long tradition of diasporic life and extraordinary persecution in the twentieth century arguably makes them the very embodiment of exile.

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[1] See Bronislava Volková, *Exil vnitřní a vnější*, "Listopad" 2004, p. 12–19; *Exile: Inside and Out*, in *The Writer Uprooted: Contemporary Jewish Exile Literature*, ed. Alvin Rosenfeld, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2008, p. 161–176; *Psychological, Cultural, Historical and Spiritual Aspects of Exile*, "Comenius, Journal of Euro-American Civilisation", 2014 1, no. 2, p. 199–212; *Exil: psychologický, kulturně-historický, duchovní*, "Český Dialog", May 2015, http://www.cesky-dialog.net/clanek/6774-exil-psychologicky-kulturne-historicky-a-duchovni/.

Twentieth-century Europe was clearly characterized by the movement of nations due to the horrendously oppressive regimes which destroyed the natural life fiber of the existing societies – and the Jews became the first and most prominent victims of this phenomenon.

In the course of studying the issue of exile, the breadth of this concept and the multiple implications it takes on led me to identify what I call the forms of exile.

Exile, in the most basic sense, means to be away from one's home country, while either explicitly being refused permission to return or being threatened with imprisonment or death upon return. It is a type of punishment closely associated with solitude and isolation. Sometimes it involves a whole nation or large group, which makes up a so called diaspora (a society within another nation, but away from its own); at other times it may simply concern individuals living in foreign environments.

Jews have been probably in the longest exile of this type (since 587 BCE; since 70 AD; after the rise of Islam in the seventh century; and again during the Crusades in the eleventh–thirteenth centuries). They fled to Western Europe, but were expelled from many countries there, only to be readmitted on payment to the local powers or governments later. From the Middle Ages onwards, they settled in large numbers in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland at the invitation of Casimir the Great in 1343; but their general situation improved only after the French Revolution when they were granted human rights. Mob violence was perpetrated against them in many countries. Pogroms were frequent in Eastern and Central Europe and culminated in the Nazi Holocaust, or Shoah, of the 1940s. Jews fared best on the whole in the Anglophone countries during this period, where they were able to achieve at times considerable status. However, a day after the State of Israel was recognized by the UN in 1948, the Arab-Israeli War began. The theme of exile appears already in Greek tragedy. It is closely connected with ostracism (Greek: ostrakismos), which was a procedure in the city-state of Athens in which any citizen could be expelled for ten years. While in some instances clearly expressed popular anger at the citizen was the reason, ostracism was often used preemptively. It was employed as a way of neutralizing someone thought to be a threat to the state or a potential tyrant. In general, the most common form of ostracism is refusing to communicate with a person. This, too, can take many forms. Refused communication, a person is effectively ignored and excluded from a given community. Such is the fate of both internal and external exiles.

This refusal of communication is an essential part of being an exile. Exile in a general sense means that an individual is not simply physically displaced, but is avoided or ostracized, due to not fitting into the prevalent moral and social values of their society of origin. In both cases what follows is social exclusion. This exclusion, like marginalization, can affect a writer's particular themes, as well as their artistic

decisions. Exile can result not just from being a member of a particular social or gender group, then, but also from adhering to certain aesthetics.

Internal exile is also a kind of withdrawal. The withdrawn author often depicts, with great acuity, the most significant, albeit hidden, diseases of society, as well as finding new perspectives. He is often harshly criticized, sometimes forbidden to publish altogether or, in less oppressive societies, simply ignored. This has an equally, if not more, detrimental effect. When a writer is persecuted, he often becomes regarded as a hero, someone with whom an oppressed nation can identify when it has no other recourse; and thus, paradoxically, such a writer may become central to the culture. In less oppressive regimes, however, the ostracized writer is left to his own devices and simply marginalized.

Exile can, however, also be seen as a form of estrangement, as Svetlana Boym points out in her article on Shklovsky and Brodsky[2]. Leo Spitzer adds another shade of meaning to the word "exile," when he recalls his childhood and the society he was a part of when in exile in Bolivia – namely nostalgia mixed with critical memory. He also speaks of the layered identities of people combining their culture of origin with that of their new adopted home[3].

Physical exile implies a veritable loss: of country, birthplace, language, support, and belonging, and in all cases an absence of an engaged and responsive community and thus most importantly a loss of meaning and communication. Meaning and communication can be recovered in many cases or recreated in roundabout ways, but a sense of natural bonds has forever been destroyed. These bonds, however, I believe, are replaced by a heightened capacity for transformation.

We find a radical lack of setting or strong depiction of place (of birth, life, or death) most pronouncedly in such writers as Peter Weiss, Nelly Sachs, and Paul Celan. I can strongly identify with this, as the same phenomenon is an element in my own poetry – it is situated most often nowhere and everywhere simultaneously. This interstitial quality makes such writing both more universal and more abstract.

Exile leads to unusual productivity and original insights, which are often not readily received by the addressees of such writing, who generally view exiles as outsiders and often are unable to relate to their way of thinking. Exiles, in turn, typically create their own community based on the commonality of exclusion or persecution, not on intrinsic and cohesive closeness and shared interests of a primary kind. Their communal structures are tentative and vulnerable, usually highly temporary and typically an acute sense of isolation and loneliness is common to exiled authors.

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[2] S. Boym, *Estrangement as a Lifestyle: Shklovsky and Brodsky*, [in:] *Exile and Creativity: Signposts, Travelers, Outsiders, Backward Glances*, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman, Duke Uuniversity Press, Durham 1998, p. 241–262.

[3] L. Spitzer, *Persistent Memory*, [in:] *Exile and Creativity…*, p. 384.

This absence of a cohesive community, nevertheless, brings another inner transformation within the writer's psyche: they see through the illusions of communities often built on the bases of certain ideologies, nationalities, customs, blood bonds, and so on. As Hatja Garloff observes when she considers the post-Holocaust existence of Jews, an irredeemable dispersion is the very foundation of a diasporic community[4]. I would argue that this kind of definition of community implies in itself that a community as such is fundamentally based on the idea of the nation; however, the idea of nation is frequently very destructive and superficial too. Richard Königsberg notes the illusionary character of history and the perverse and absurd rights that nations assume[5].That said, what exiles lack in their community of origin, they can redeem in their potential openness toward a universal one. This gives them a tremendous freedom and breadth in their understanding of the world.

Leo Spitzer remarks that "desperate feelings of possible doom over trifles" is common among Holocaust survivors[6]. Some feel they made a lucky choice which led to their survival, others, as described in Marianne Hirsch's paper, feel for ever tied in their mind to the past, or of their parents' world, that they have never even experienced themselves, as it was destroyed forever. This is a well-known characteristic by now of the so-called "children of the Holocaust" perception of the world. The desperate feelings over trifles is a natural consequence of passing through experiences in life deemed as catastrophic trauma. They are a part of the post-traumatic psychological attitude. Here, memory is also an act of mourning filled with rage and despair. This memory and distance from a world destroyed and unknowable persists in the second generation, so called children of the Holocaust and Hirsch calls this memory "postmemory" namely a memory formed not by recollection, but by imaginative investment and creation. "Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are displaced by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that can be neither fully understood nor re-created"[7].

The children of exiled Holocaust survivors can never return "home", they remain forever marginal or exiled, as the cities to which they can return are no longer those in which their parents had lived as Jews before the genocide, but are instead the cities where the genocide happened and from which they and their memory have been expelled. The postwar generation thus lives in a void, an exile from identity, time, and space, orphaned from a world they never knew.

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[4] H. Garloff, *Words from Abroad: Trauma and Displacement in Postwar German Jewish Writers*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 2005, p. 4.

[5] See: R. Koenigsberg, *The Nations Have the Right to Kill*, Library of Social Science, New York 2014.

[6] L. Spitzer, op.cit., p. 384.

[7] See: M. Hirsch, *Past Lives*, [in:] *Exile and Creativity…*, p. 418–421.

Having lived in Communist Czechoslovakia, I can testify that there is another layer to this condition of post-memory, namely the sense of a lost world in a more general meaning of that word, a nostalgia for a world forever destroyed to us and never to be recovered or repaired. A double void of inner exile is thus present in the children growing up within their family's country of origin with the stories they have heard from their parents, or grandparents, about what life was like before it was snatched away by a totalitarian power.

Edward Said argues that

> "the exile exists in a median state. Neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another. Survival becomes the main imperative, and danger of getting too comfortable and secure constituting a threat that is constantly to be guarded against"[8].

The exile also always sees things through comparison, from a double perspective, never in isolation. Furthermore, they often move away from centralizing authorities towards the margins, where they see things that are usually lost on people that have never traveled beyond the conventional and the comfortable.

Much literature concerning Central European territory, most notably interwar Czechoslovakia, has been devoted to German Jews, who had an important role as cultural mediators. They helped to bring important Czech writers and musicians into German cultural space via translations and popularizations. The best known was Max Brod, who was responsible for the world renown of Leoš Janáček, Jaromír Weinberger, Vítězslav Novák, Jaroslav Hašek, and Otto Pick, who in his turn brought attention to the brothers Čapek, František Langer, and Otakar Březina. Some of the writers belonging to Czechoslovakian mediators are Franz Werfel, Egon Erwin Kisch, and Willy Haas, for instance. These writers had supranational loyalty; they were creators of high culture and lived in a hybrid space between Czech and German culture, typically in Prague, which used its own dialect (Prague German) of the German language. At the same time, post- WWI nationalism (in response to the end of Austrian suppression) and antisemitism were growing in the country; and, of course, only a few decades later, Nazism swept Europe[9].

The question of identity is also intimately related to that of exile, given the fact that it has a close connection with the oppression of the individual by various social communities, growing bureaucratization, and globalization. As Adorno points out, "for

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[8] E. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, Pantheon Books, New York 1994, p. 49.

[9] See, for example, H. J. Kieval, *Choosing to Bridge: Revisiting the Phenomenon of Cultural Mediation*, "Bohemia" Band 46 (2005) p. 15–27.

many people it is already an impertinence to say I"[10]. The individual is oppressed and displaced. This loss of individuality is brilliantly portrayed in the Czech American exile writer Egon Hostovský's work (see below). Exile becomes an act, a way to assert one's own identity against that of a group or nation.

David Kettler poses an interesting question on the limits of exile[11]. While he contends that the study of diaspora and identity are nowadays more important than ever, he adds that "[t]here are also the perceived homogenizing effects of globalization that seem to be rendering the political concept of exile irrelevant. How can one be in exile in such a world? Perhaps exile is no longer relevant?" Twenty-first-century globalization does indeed appear to diminish the sense of exile, as it is much easier to belong to a less narrowly defined community (the idea of nation, for example, may lose its power), yet globalization brings with itself its own forms of oppression as it strips individuals of their identity.

One can be exiled not only from a place one considers home, but also from a time that seemed meaningful. Such was the case for Johannes Urzidil, for instance, who was forced to emigrate from his native land, which was subsequently permanently changed by WWII. Authors like Urzidil tend to create an imaginary home in their dreams and writing.

We shall now look in depth at the themes that twentieth-century Jewish writers, in their attempts to reflect on the condition of exile, address in their work-paying special attention to literary form. We shall focus in the main on authors who used German as their literary language and lived mainly in Eastern and Central Europe due to the fact that German was common among Jewish writers residing in these countries in the first half of the twentieth century. Those using Yiddish, Czech, Polish, Italian, and French will also be included. I analyze prose writers almost exclusively, as poets deserve their own study. Finally, it is important to note that the line of external exile we observe among the writers covered typically moves geographically and historically from the East to the West.

Exile as Expulsion and Wandering

The first topic that offers itself in the time frame and geographical location that this study focuses on, is the topic of expulsion and wandering, so significant in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This subject was first brilliantly examined in Joseph Roth's *The Wandering Jews* (1927). "Wandering" is, so to speak, the

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[10] T. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, Verso, New York 1978, p. 50.

[11] D. Kettler, Z. Ben-Dor, *Introduction: The Limits of Exile*, "Journal of the Interdisciplinary Crossroads" 2006, 3, no. 1 p. 1–9.

most basic, literal, common, and seemingly innocent meaning or manifestation of exile—although in its link with "expulsion" it already intimates something much darker. Expulsion is forced or voluntary, but in both cases it is a drastic human predicament and is undertaken only under extreme duress.

Joseph Roth (b. 1894 in Brody, d. 1939 in Paris), hailing from Ukraine and making it first to Berlin (1925) and later to Paris (1933), became well known for his essays (collected in The Wandering Jews), which were written in German. He grew up in Brody, a small town near Lemberg in East Galicia, in the easternmost area of what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire, now L'viv (Ukraine). The town had a large Jewish population at the time. Roth went to school in Lemberg, which was controlled by the Polish aristocracy despite the fact that the population was mostly Ukrainian (Ruthenian). Roth then moved to Vienna and Berlin, where he worked as an extremely successful liberal journalist for prominent newspapers (Neue Berliner Zeitung and Frankfurter Zeitung); and after Hitler became chancellor in 1933 he settled in Paris where he continued to be very successful, but became a heavy drinker. He died prematurely in 1939 at the age of forty-four, collapsing after hearing the news that the playwright Ernst Toller, another fellow .migr., had hanged himself in New York. Thus his life, not only his writing, reflects the East-West wandering of Jews and its often tragic conclusion.

The mass emigration of the Galician peasantry that Roth describes in his work, though, had already occurred in the 1880s – to imperial Germany and later overseas to the United States, Canada, and Brazil. This great economic migration lasted until WWI. After the war, Galicia was a victim of hostilities between Ukrainians and Poles, later occupied by Hitler, and then decimated by the Soviet authorities. These events led to mass killings, massacres, and large-scale deportations to Siberia.

When the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismembered and the map of Eastern Europe redrawn along ethnic lines, the Jews became technically homeless, as there was no territory they could point to as ancestrally their own. The supranational imperial state had suited them, as they could blend in as one of many nations and feel legitimate, at home. The cataclysmic economic crisis of 1929 brought another severe blow. Some began to look to Palestine as a national home, others turned to the supranational creed of communism. Nostalgia for a lost past and anxiety about a homeless future are at the heart of the mature work of Joseph Roth.

In 1932, in the preface to *The Radetzky March* (1932), Roth wrote: "I loved this fatherland. It permitted me to be a patriot and a citizen of the world at the same time, and among all the Austrian peoples also a German. I loved the virtues and merits of this fatherland, and today, when it is dead and gone, I even love its flaws and weaknesses"[12]. The Radetzky March is an elegy to the cosmopolitan world of Habsburg Austria, as seen by someone from an outlying imperial territory – a great German novel by a writer with barely a toehold in the German community of letters. While Roth indulged his nostalgia for his Austrian fatherland, his wife became mentally ill and when the Nazis took control of

[12] J. Roth, *The Radetzky March*, Granta, London 2002.

Austria she was murdered.

Roth rejected both fascism and communism; he proclaimed himself a Catholic and involved himself in unsuccessful royalist politics. His ambivalence toward Western civilization led him increasingly to draw on the heritage of Eastern European storytelling. When asked by a friend why he drank so much, he replied, "Do you think you are going to escape? You too are going to be wiped out".

In his essays, Roth masterfully depicts the experiences of expelled East European Jews – those who escaped the pogroms and misery in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and WWI, and who tried to carve out a life for themselves in one of the Central or Western European countries. Expulsion, for Roth, is a harsher version of exile. In this moving book, we learn how countries differed in their reluctant acceptance of These refuges and how difficult it was for the expelled to live anywhere. The book is written for Western readers who "feel they might have something to learn from the East and who have perhaps already sensed that great people and great ideas – great but also useful (to them) – have come from Galicia, Russia, Lithuania, and Romania", writes Roth in his introduction.[13]

According to Roth, the Jews have few choices, as they are desperately trying to simply survive:

> The Eastern Jew looks to the West with a longing that it really doesn't merit. To the Eastern Jew, the West signifies freedom, justice, civilization, and the possibility to work and develop his talents. The West exports engineers, automobiles, books, and poems to the East. It sends propaganda soaps and hygiene, useful and elevating things, all of them beguiling and come-hitherish to the East. To the Eastern Jew, Germany, for example, remains the land of Goethe and Schiller, of the German poets, with whom every keen Jewish youth is far more conversant than our own swastika's secondary school pupils[14].

Roth anatomizes Jewish life in Berlin, Paris, Vienna, and America, and also provides an idealized portrayal of their life in the Soviet Union, where he believes antisemitism has been extinguished by communism. At the same time, he blames Western European Jews for losing their Jewishness, tradition, and religion in an effort to assimilate and have a better life. He describes their sense of homelessness, the constant abuse by authorities, the poverty. He contrasts life in the West with that in the shtetl. Whereas the shtetl provided a strong sense of community due to Jews sharing a faith in God and a deeply rooted religious culture, the key elements of which were charity and education, the Jewish ghetto is mainly a part of a city, where Jews are forced to live together as a result of social, legal, and economic pressures. Roth talks about the magic rabbis, the

[13] J. Roth, *The Wandering Jews*, Norton, New York 2001, p. 2.

[14] Ibidem, p. 5–6.

Yiddish theater, and the role of the cantors, all of which are elements of the shtetl that the ghetto has imported; but in the ghetto, Jews have only two possible careers – peddler and installment seller.

WWI brought many Jews to Vienna, as they were entitled to support there because their home countries were occupied; Berlin, on the other hand, was a city of transit for them, by and large; Paris was challenging because of the language, but life was better for Jews there, as they blended in better with the population, the city was more international city, and the police relatively benign; Spain was worrisome because of the medieval expulsion; and Poland imposed quotas in universities. Finally, although the quotas were small and more paperwork was required than for anywhere in Europe, North America meant freedom and a safe distance from past and present persecution,

Jews were antimilitaristic, as for centuries they had not been allowed to fight in an army. There was also little motivation for them to fight for a czar, kaiser, or country that gave them no rights. They were not even attached to their names, as those too had been imposed on them. They often also chose camouflaged names to fit in better.

The Jews of Germany at the time looked down upon Eastern Jews and did not want to associate with them. Eastern Jews were completely homeless and forced to move from one country to another. This created fear, suspicion, hatred, and alienation among the non-Jewish German population that the local Jews wanted to separate themselves from. Eastern Jews were forbidden to do many things and were subjected to many kinds of humiliation; and when Hitler came to power, the settled German and Austrian Jews who had gone through a long and painstaking process of assimilation, found themselves linked to the demonized Jews from the East, and found it almost impossible to imagine leaving the country to which they felt they belonged.

Zionism could not present a global solution to the "Jewish Question" and the host Christian nations of Europe were not mature enough to possess the internal freedom, dignity, and compassion for the plight of others to offer truly equal rights to Jews, who suffered for being different even if no longer identifying with the religion because of which they were being cast out. They no longer knew what it was that defined them. Roth was acutely aware throughout the 1930s that Europe's ethical values had been destroyed and that the continent was on the brink of a physical and moral apocalypse. He also knew that the destruction of the Jews would become a key issue in 1930s Europe.

The wandering and expulsion view of exile begins with Sholem Aleichem's

(b. 1859, Pereiaslav Khmelnytskyi, d. 1916, New York City) world-renowned book of stories *Tevye the Dairyman* (1894), written in Yiddish. Aleichem became well known for his description of Jewish life in his native Ukraine. After the 1905 wave of pogroms, he moved to New York and later to Geneva. Jerry Bock's musical *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), based on Aleichem's stories, was the first commercially successful English language stage production about Jewish life in Eastern Europe. It is, of course, an Americanized perspective, much lighter and more commercial than the Galician Maurice Schwartz's American film *Tevya* from 1939. In effect, Sholem Aleichem brought the Ukrainian Jewish world to the West.

Wandering, which is the consequence of expulsion or persecution is, in a very different way, also present in Stefan Zweig's (b. 1881 in Vienna, d. 1942 in Petropolis, Brazil) much later autobiographical work *The World of Yesterday* (1942) – a book about European cultural life. It is also about the continent's spiritual demise and the movement of its author from Vienna to Britain, to the US, and finally to Brazil, in order to escape the Nazis. In Brazil, Zweig ended his life in a double suicide with his wife, not being able to bear the destruction of Europe, of a world in which personal freedom meant the highest good on earth. Zweig's environment and style of thinking is that of an assimilated and acculturated Central European Jew, who belonged to the cream of Austrian society and felt secure, at home, and in a sense part of its establishment, unlike the poor Jews from the East European shtetls with nothing but their religious education, particular way of life, and hope for some kind of happiness in an unknown country. Yet, in the end, he too met the same fate of having to leave his home and culture in order to escape being murdered. In Europe, there was no country that would accept him and his journey led across the ocean.

Expulsion and wandering, so familiar to the Jews, became a common experience under the politically oppressive regimes that plagued Central and Eastern Europe almost until the end of the twentieth century. Cultural and political exile from Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other Eastern Bloc countries occurred in waves throughout the whole century. Expulsion was sometimes physical, at other times spiritual. Jews, including writers and intellectuals, abandoned their countries in search of freedom from psychological, cultural, and intellectual oppression long after WWII, becoming wandering Jews in the broadest sense of the phrase, adopting another home, and in many cases never truly being able to settle properly where they finally found themselves.

The wandering of the Jews was thus also pervasive in Eastern Europe – either through expulsion, economic hardship, or threats of violence – during the second part of the twentieth century, when numerous countries became dominated by the Soviet Union, long after the migration of the Jews from Galicia and from central Europe in order to escape certain death ended. This earlier wandering thus presents a stark image of the violence and destruction, as well as the moral decay, of twentieth-century Europe. Indeed, it is symbolic of the condition of modern man suffering from the oppression of his identity.

We have above outlined three periods and types of exile which took place in twentieth-century Europe. The first was the late nineteenth-century economic and cultural emigration of East European Jews from the Baltic, Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish territories, some of which constituted Eastern Austria, and from the Soviet Union at the end of WWI. Violence, on the whole, was the main motive for their wandering westwards. The second period was Jews fleeing the Nazis in both the East and West to the Americas during WWII. And finally, the third was the escape of Jews from the Soviets and their exile in Western Europe and America. These waves of exile (from Easter Europe) can be further divided into the period before WWI and the interwar period for the East European Jews, while for the Czechs – for example, after the 1948 Communist putsch and after the 1968 Soviet occupation. The exodus was virtually continuous. Where once it was antisemitism, it became a more generalized escape of many nationals from political oppression which singled out anyone with a differing opinion. In short, the Nazi regime opened the door for Soviet totalitarianism to dominate a great area of Europe until almost the end of the twentieth century.

Exile as Aesthetic Revolt and an Inward Turn

Having reviewed the external/physical wandering and exile that took place in the twentieth century, and is seen in its literature, let us now look at a very different form of exile – namely, an exclusive phenomenon we can also conceive of as aesthetic revolt and an inward turn. An early twentieth-century phenomenon, this inward turn characterizes artistic movements such as Symbolism, Decadence, and Dadaism, that is, forms of artistic expression that seek to withdraw from physical reality and that are directed at highbrow audiences. These movements also reject social norms. Now, of course, we wouldn't want to claim that these aesthetic revolts are merely types of exile

(their content is much broader); however, they do represent varieties of removal from everyday reality and from engagement with society and its dominant values. They embrace art for art's sake, occasionally employing extreme forms in order to attempt to discover a unique way to protest mainstream ways of thinking and operating.

Decadence, for instance, creates an artificial paradise in response to ugly, dreary industrial society, as well as against boredom, expected destruction, and against so-called progress and innovation. It is an aesthetic of religion, magic, and rituals. Symbolism, Decadence, Dadaism, and so forth, spread throughout Europe in one shape or other from the turn of the twentieth century until about the mid-twenties. Modernism and the avant-garde expanded the possibilities of artistic creation and perception to an extraordinary degree and they represent a number of ways of turning inward and away from society. They are not specific to Jewish literature, but in Vienna, which was a major artistic center at the time, they flourished in large part thanks to Jewish interest and support. Very often, these writers were visionaries expressing a premonition of the destructive forces that were soon to take over Europe.

Let us look at just a few examples.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal (b. 1874 in Vienna, d. 1929 in Vienna) is one of those whose work contains an intimation of the downfall and destruction of the Austrian Empire. He was Jewish only through his Jewish grandfather, Isaac Hoffman, who moved to Vienna from Bohemia and established himself in the textile business. Whereas Hofmannsthal was brought up Catholic (part of the family's attempt to assimilate), his wife was fully Jewish. Due to the spiritualizing aspect of his work and aesthetics, he was viewed, however, as a "Jewish artist". Both Zionists and anti-Zionists proudly designated him as a fellow Jew; meanwhile, the antisemitic press smeared him. He co-founded the Salzburg Festival, but the paper *Deutsche Volksruf*, for one, described his play *Salzburg's Great World Theatre* (1922) as "very much in the spirit of his race – everything is distorted by filth". Paradoxically, Hofmannsthal was known for antisemitism himself and worried about his own children developing the Jewish trait of "hyper cleverness"[15]. Interestingly, he did not become part of the elite circle of Stefan George. He believed that while art is the most important thing

[15] See: P. Reiter, *Bambi's Jewish Roots and Other Essays on German-Jewish Culture*, Bloomsbury, New York and London 2015, p. 152.

in the life of a creative person, it does not have such meaning for those who are unable to create.

His play *The Tower* (1925) is especially relevant to our study. It depicts the extreme abuse of a human being by another and suggests that, devoid of a Christian mission, modern life is hopelessness. The hero Sigismund imposes inner exile on himself, a chosen path of an individuality that refuses to participate in the ways of the world, claiming individual choice – rather that social conventions – as an ethical right. For the Neoromantic Hofmannsthal, this path ends in his protagonist's death. A free individual of superior consciousness cannot fit into a group, cannot obey its rules, and thus cannot continue living. He would have to live as an outcast, which is not an option for him. The play also shows the readiness with which a crowd can elevate an unknown individual to a God-like standing in order to act out its own aggressive and destructive instincts and have them sanctified. As Hermann Broch writes, "The Tower also implies Babel – in which it was no longer possible for anyone to come to an understanding with anyone else"[16].

Hofmannsthal's own fate was the inner exile of a poet with great ambition who could not reach a public – a public that had the level of his creativity and the depth of his insight, and thus could appreciate his unusual genius. The context in which he was developing and writing was Austria, which was decomposing due to its loss of ethical values.

This loss can also be seen in an epic form in the work of two other great Austrian writers of the period, Robert Musil (b. 1880 in Klagenfurt, d. 1942 in Geneva), writer of *The Man without Qualities* (1932) and Hermann Broch (b. 1886 in Vienna, d. 1951 in New Haven, Connecticut), writer of *The Sleepwalkers: A Trilogy* (1931–1932), both of whom were forced into exile after the annexation of Austria by Hitler. Musil spent many of his young years in Hranice, Moravia, where he studied, and later in Berlin. He had to escape eventually because of his opinions and his Jewish wife.

Broch's novel *The Sleepwalkers* (1932) covers essentially the same ground as Musil's *Man without Qualities*, namely the degeneration of values, even though they handle the subject very differently. Broch also portrays the entire epoch in *Hofmannsthal and His Time* (1948), which he wrote at the very end of his life in New Haven. Here he shows his contemporary as someone who has

[16] H. Broch, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and His Time*, University of Chicago, Chicago 1984, p. 95.

stood, in a vacuum, against the epoch which he describes as "a complete collapse of the old value system, which dissolved piece by piece"[17]. The collapse of Austria, for these authors, was a poignant prelude to, and had ramifications for, the twentieth-century West's ethical collapse and the apocalypse that followed.

Strikingly, none of the writers mentioned in this section have ever found wide audiences and are read only by select and sophisticated readers. Both Broch and Musil ended their own lives abroad – the former in Switzerland, the later in the US. Their writing ranges from Expressionist to Modernist, but one thing that is constantly present in both is the disappearance of morality and the concomitant disintegration of society. All three of the above writers are now regarded as Austrian cultural giants, but they could not integrate into the mainstream due to the sophistication of their work, their intensity of feeling, and the depth of their thought. They tower over the mediocrity of the cultural life of the era.

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Streszczenie

Prezentowany artykuł jest częścią książki pod tytułem „Formy wygnania w literaturze i myśli żydowskiej" (Dwudziestowieczna Europa Centralna i migracja do Ameryki), która będzie przygotowana dla wydawnictwa Academic Studies Press w 2021 roku. Artykuł składa się z trzech części. Pierwsza część obejmuje historię pojęć wygnania, takich jak ostracyzm, wyobcowanie, marginalizacja czy postpamięć. Druga część skupia się na wygnaniu jako „wypędzeniu i wędrowaniu", czyli najbardziej podstawowym znaczeniu i najbardziej typowym fenomenie historii Żydów w Europie Wschodniej, czyli ruchu na zachód w kilku falach rozpoczynających się na przełomie XIX i XX wieku. Trzeci tekst skupia się na bardzo odmiennej formie wygnania, która pojawiła się w tym samym okresie, a mianowicie „Estetycznej rewolcie i zwrotowi do wewnątrz" w artystycznym myśleniu o czasie, jako rodzaju wygnania wewnętrznego.

Słowa kluczowe: Wygnanie, marginalizacja, estetyczny bunt, wędrowny Żyd, wypędzenie, Joseph Roth, Stefan Zweig, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Hermann Broch, dekadencja, antysemityzm, postpamięć, Europa Wschodnia, Skrzypek na dachu, degeneracja wartości, Austria