The No Man's Land Language of Exile Literature

نویسنده: دکتر محمود فلکی

تاریخ انتشار: 12 Mehr 2585 باستانی برابر با October 4, 2026 میلادی



In human history, writers of all eras and populations have had to spend large parts of their lives in exile. Whether Ovid in antiquity, Dante in the Middle Ages, Heinrich Heine in the times of the bourgeois revolution, or the Mann family, Bertolt Brecht, Anna Seghers, E. M. Remarque, Vicky Baum, Annemarie Selinko, and many more during the Nazi regime.

When "exile literature" is mentioned in Germany, many only think of German-language literature in exile during the Nazi era. Yet, this type of literature continues to be created in Germany and all Western countries, produced by exiled Oriental, Asian, or African authors. Refugees always lose a part of their own culture, the other part is internalized through socialization in the country of origin and remains an inseparable part of the ego. All displaced persons suffer in a state of cultural limbo, but for writers, the situation is more painful. The lack of language skills means the loss of communication. For authors, the loss of language is compounded by the loss of an audience. Without language skills, it is impossible to present works to a literary public. Poetry is now written in a language that no one understands except for the small group of emigrated compatriots who form their own ghetto.

In my experience, writers in exile go through four phases:

1. In the first "Phase of Disorientation", exile feels like a journey on which money, passport, everything was lost. Will a return to the homeland ever be possible? But there is hope that the displacement will not last long. The longer the stay in a foreign land lasts, the more disappointment and despair grow. The psychological suffering is immense; many are unable to continue their creative work. Some take refuge in alcohol and drugs. Authors often sacrifice aesthetic or poetic values for political necessities. Regarding this period marked by confusion and disorientation, M. Cioran says, for example, that exiled authors "publish their complaints, their screams, their unanswered cries for help." [1] In literary works, the anger of despair often prevails, a pessimistic view, as in the poem of the Persian lyricist: "a wounded pine on a sky of lead with a dead sun. ... I come from the field of lies from bitter greetings from sick hearts." [2]

2. In the second "Phase of Nostalgia", there is a certainty of having to stay in the host country for a long time or forever. A flood of memories overwhelms people. Longing and homesickness are stronger than ever. A more beautiful past is imagined. Scenes from childhood offer safe refuge to keep the self alive. Autobiographical narratives are written that deal with the past, especially the expulsion from the paradise of childhood. My novel *The Shadows* was created during this phase, in which the first-person narrator tries to solve the mysterious murder of his uncle and, through preserved portrait photos from his eleventh to fifteenth year, establishes a mysterious inner connection to his childhood. [3] Foreignness is the focal point of many poems. I, too, address foreignness in this phase: "I became a child again: Only on the wings of memory does one flee from strangeness". [4]

or: "A bird flies by, the moon stands still, like me. Is it also a stranger?" [5]

3. In the third "Phase of Self-Alienation", characterized by doubts about previous ideas and values, a confrontation with oneself takes place. Questions press: Who am I? Why am I even here? What happened in my home country? Was what I did right? Must I remain in the victim role? Who is actually the perpetrator, who is the victim? Was I a person who understood and would have built democracy and freedom? In this phase, from a cultural perspective, neither the original ego remains, nor does an entirely new individual develop. The works indicate that foreignness is linked to alienation from oneself. Novel characters no longer know themselves, perceive themselves as someone else, or transformed into a different being, as in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*:

"I am a raven. My left eye bleeds. My right eye bleeds. My right wing is broken, my left... What

has often occurred to me lately is that I dream I became a raven who is dreaming me, he dreams [that he became me." [6

Foreignness and the associated alienation are thematized as an "other I", a shadow, or an :enemy

An I is separated from me, that watches me like a ghost. I hate my separated I; I am afraid of it. [[7

Another sphere of this phase is language. On the one hand, separation from the mother tongue or language oblivion is thematized; on the other hand, the problematic relationship with the :foreign language in the host country

Today no word has accepted me Today I have called the water stone, the stone water. Today I" [have mistaken the leaves for the wind." [8

:"e.g., in my poem "No Man's Land Language

I am a word, that lost its sentence. Since my birth I am a traveler, who always landed in a no" man's land language. I am a word, that lost its sentence; a paradigmatic being, searching for its [syntagma. I am a signifier without a signifié." [9

4. In the fourth "Phase of Self-Discovery", exile can be overcome: Engagement with the society and culture of the host country is the beginning of new attempts at identity, in which one's own self and past events are subjected to a critical examination:

In us live the dead, who sneak out of our ancient memory. [10] ▯ ▯ ▯ My suitcase is full of earth, [whose disgusting weariness fills the sense of smell of the years. [11

Looking at one's own interior in this way leads to seeing the world with different eyes. A modern understanding of openness, maturity, lawfulness, and individuality is owed to Western societies, which is not possible in the countries of origin under centuries-long despotic rules combined with a closed religious worldview. If the state of alienation is processed in a fruitful learning process with the new culture, exile can be overcome in this phase. I understand this overcoming as the moment when one succeeds in creating a new identity and building a new poetry upon it. The process of integrating one's own identity into the cultural and social parameters of the new homeland is a painful procedure essential for survival, which not all exiled writers go through; many stagnate in the phases of nostalgia or self-alienation. The four phases of exile are reflected in my texts. In the final phase, content innovations and linguistic-stylistic changes develop. Here, the cultural influence of the host country and its language intensified in my literary work when I

started writing in German. This development was not linear and without problems because the German language is an adopted language for me. Lion Feuchtwanger describes that "one can learn to express oneself in a foreign language; the ultimate emotional values, the foreign intonation cannot be learned." [12]

Nevertheless, writing in a foreign language can lead in a different, new direction, which enriches the work. My Persian poems are more picturesque than those written in German. Here, the structure of the language and the distinctiveness of words and their meanings take effect. In my experience, grammatical errors can create interesting images, such as the use of articles in the title of my poetry collection "Das letzte Gedichtband" and in the following poem, in the last verse of which I do not use the dative ("dem" in "aus dem Wind") and thus steer words and meaning in a different direction:

A naked woman rides a white horse on the edge of the eye river. She collects past from wind.

In Germany, exiled writers are predominantly perceived as politically oppressed people and protesters, i.e., as political objects, without their artistic abilities being recognized under literary criteria. A tradition from the era of the East-West confrontation, in which authors from Eastern Europe were seen in the West as symbols of the political struggle against totalitarian systems, which Milan Kundera, for example, sharply criticized at the beginning of his exile life. Despite all developments and changes, exile literature always has something peculiar in itself, which grows out of its inherent original culture. Therefore, this type of literature can enrich domestic literature through innovations.

The situation of exiles and the cultural diversity generally associated with migration presents itself to me through the botanical image of fruit tree grafting: onto one domestic variety, many different ones can be grafted. The different varieties of fruit will then have a common trunk and the same roots; if all goes well, they can cross-fertilize and something new emerges.

E. M. Cioran: *Dasein als Versuchung*. Übertragen von Kurt Leonard. Stuttgart 1983, S. 67 [1]

Esmail Nooriala: *Seh peleh ta schokuh*. London 1991, S. 89. Übersetzung von mir (M. F.) [2]

Den Roman *Die Schatten* habe ich auf Persch verfasst (1997), er wurde von Behzad Abbassi [3] ins Deutsche übersetzt und erschien im Sujet Verlag-Bremen (2003), 2. Aufl. 2013

Mahmood Falaki: *Klang aus Ferne und Felsen*. Sujet Verlag, Bremen 2008, S. 39 [4]

M. Falaki: Ebd. S. 38 [5]

(.Mhmoud Massoudi: S*oratalghorab*. Stockholm 1996, S. 74. Übersetzung von mir (M. F [6]

Mirza-Agha Asskari (Hg.): *Anthologie* (*Gedichte von iranischen Lyrikern im Exil*). Stockholm [7]
(.1992, S. 157, Übersetzung von mir (M. F

(.Reza Farmand: *Entezar*. Stockholm 1989, S. 106. Übersetzung von mir (M. F [8]

Mahmood Falaki: *Klang aus Ferne und Felsen*. Sujet Verlag, Bremen 2008, S. 44 [9]

Mani: In: *Baressi-ye ketab* (Book Review). Nr. 4, Los Angeles, 1990, S. 359 [10]

Ebd; S. 302 [11]

Lion Feuchtwanger: Arbeitsprobleme des Schriftstellers im Exil. In: Hans Mayer (Hg.): [12]
Deutsche Literaturkritik. Band 4; Frankfurt a. M. 1983, S. 200