

***Mundus Totus Exilium Est:*
Reflections on the Critic in Exile**

(In Memory of Edward Said)

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Transnational literature presupposes displacements, border crossings, and translations (or, from the Latin root, the ‘carrying across’) from one site to another. Although literary works commonly represent their time and place, sometimes embodying an *ethos* or identity of its local or national condition, more frequently literature wanders across boundaries, utters foreign words and speaks in strange accents, defamiliarising things as it discloses to the reader novel ways of seeing, where even the most homey scene can become exotic, and the experience of reading not uncommonly involves metaphorical travels into foreign lands. In some respects, literature itself may be viewed as a form of exile. The literary critic, whose task is to make sense of all this, is thus engaged in another form of exile, moving beyond the familiar ‘homeland’ and into the mobile and uncertain circumstances of a transgressive literariness. A transnational, or perhaps postnational, approach to that task seems altogether appropriate. In the critic’s displacement, paradoxically, one finds that being ‘at home in the world’ means being a stranger everywhere in it, which is also to say, one makes oneself at home by embracing one’s sense of homelessness, at least with respect to literature and culture. For such a critic, the entire world is a foreign land – *mundus totus exilium est*.

In using this phrase, I am aware of performing a sort of rhetorical double-distancing, estranging its meaning from its own origins and projecting it into a world at large. Indeed, it is a quotation of a quotation, itself a metaphorical displacement reflecting the experience of exile itself, where one’s very language is no longer tied to its native soil, and new meanings proliferate across permeable and shifting borders. Written in an archaic, even ‘dead,’ language, the phrase offers new life to an idea that seems particularly timely in our own age, this ‘borderless world’ in the epoch of globalization, as jeremiad-shouting critics and starry-eyed cheerleaders alike now agree typifies our current condition. In its initial utterance by Hugh of Saint Vincent in the twelfth century, the phrase *mundus totus exilium est* put forward a philosophical position with respect to the *premodern* world, a worldly world seemingly at odds with a transcendental space in which the virtuous soul might properly feel ‘at home.’¹ In its iteration by Erich Auerbach in his 1952 essay ‘Philology and *Weltliteratur*,’ the phrase is quoted to make the point that the *modern* critic of literature and language must not be tied to any national ground, but must accept that that his or her ‘philological home is the earth; the nation it can no longer be’.² And, in my own return to the expression, in this third moment of what still might be called

¹ See Jerome Taylor, *The Didascalion of Hugh of Saint Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. J. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

² Erich Auerbach, ‘Philology and *Weltliteratur*,’ trans. M. and E.W. Said, *Centennial Review* 13.1 (1969), 17.

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postmodernity, I wish to register the meaning that both its original author and its philological patron assert: that, just as the ‘perfect’ exile – one for whom the whole world is a foreign land – is better equipped to make sense of the world, the critic must adopt the position of the exile in order to better understand literature, which itself is a principal means of making sense of that world.

The exile’s sense of homelessness cannot but be a source of great anxiety. Yet, as Edward Said has argued in ‘Reflections on Exile,’ the critical insight and perspective of the exile produce a ‘pleasure’ that may overcome ‘the grimness of outlook’ occasioned by the experience of actual exile.

While it perhaps seems peculiar to speak of the pleasures of exile, there are some positive things to be said for a few of its conditions. Seeing ‘the entire world as a foreign land’ makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimension, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*.³

Hence, the writer who remains ‘at home’ may not be able to see the same things, or see them in the same way, as the writer in exile. As I have argued in another context, the writer maps the world, producing a literary cartography that may offer a useful means of navigating the often chaotic or seemingly meaningless array of phenomena and experiences of the world.⁴ In the case of the exile, the cartographic project would appear to be all the more urgent, since the chaos or senselessness is compounded by a foreignness as well. But, as with Said’s reevaluation, the writer-in-exile is perhaps better able to produce this map by virtue of his or her ‘originality of vision.’ The critic who can ‘read’ these imaginary or figurative maps may also benefit from that originality of vision whose provenance is exile.

Frank Kermode has famously noted that, if the task of the poet is to ‘help us make sense of our lives,’ the critic is bound ‘to attempt the lesser feat of making sense of the ways we try to make sense of our lives.’⁵ If the poet or literary artist maps our world, then the task of the critic is also cartographic, involving not just map-reading, but the drawing and redrawing of lines on the maps, marking this or that figure or *topos* for further elaboration or modification, and so on. The exiles, émigrés, nomads, renegades, and refugees who create our literary maps also call for a criticism attuned to the spatial peculiarities of the conditions of exile. The critic must approach the whole world as a foreign country, and then map it.⁶ The experience of exile, then, requires the critic as well as the poet to create new maps, which in turn may transform the spaces that they attempt to represent.

³ Edward Said, ‘Reflections on Exile,’ in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 186.

⁴ See my *Melville, Mapping, and Globalization: Literary Cartography in the American Baroque Writer* (London: Continuum, 2009).

⁵ Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 3.

⁶ For an example of one such approach to the spatial peculiarities of literary texts, see Bertrand Westphal, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, trans. R. Tally (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

In 'Philology and *Weltliteratur*,' Auerbach reflects on the project of literary criticism in the postwar period, and he calls for a return, albeit under novel conditions, to a medieval conception of *terra aliena* in order to make a case for a postnational theory of literature. Given the recent events, Auerbach's desire to transcend the nationalisms of the early twentieth century is completely understandable, but his broader argument about the importance of a postnational literary criticism bears directly on our own twenty-first-century condition, in an era of globalization, with even more urgency. In his concluding paragraph, Auerbach definitively places the nation in a subordinate, and even defective, position with respect to the task of the principal task of criticism or philology. After discussing the study of world literature in his present moment, Auerbach concludes:

our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation. The most priceless and indispensable part of a philologist's heritage is still his own nation's culture and language. Only when he is first separated from this heritage, however, and then transcends it does it become truly effective. We must return, in admittedly altered circumstances, to the knowledge that prenational medieval culture already possessed: the knowledge that the spirit [*Geist*] is not national. *Paupertas* and *terra aliena*: this or something to this effect.⁷

Geist, 'spirit' or 'mind,' is not national, and neither can its literary and cultural products be so limited. Indeed, Auerbach suggests that, to the extent that one's mind does remain fettered to its native land, the critic cannot 'become truly effective,' as nationality may blunt one's critical acumen. Also, the relationship between *paupertas* and *terra aliena* ('poverty' and 'foreign land') designate the proper behavior of the critic: one should always behave as would a beggar in a foreign land – that is, with humility. For medieval theologians, the lesson is that one must not feel too 'at home' in a place lest one forget that the only place that really matters is not of this world. After two world wars, many understood that humility (especially with respect to the reckless arrogance of national identity) was again a supreme virtue. By returning to these premodern, medieval ideas in the context of twentieth-century criticism, Auerbach reinvents the concepts and supplies them with added meaning for a world desperately wounded by the effects of heightened nationalisms.

Auerbach gives the twelfth-century theologian Hugh of Saint Vincent (also known as Hugo of Saint Victor) a final word, quoting in the original Latin a few lines from his *Didascalion*, including the phrase used as my title in the final clause. Here is the same passage in Jerome Taylor's English translation:

It is, therefore, a great source of virtue for the practiced mind to learn, bit by bit, first to change about in visible and transitory things, so that afterwards it may be able to leave them behind altogether. The man who finds his homeland sweet is still the tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.⁸

⁷ Auerbach, 'Philology' 17.

⁸ See Taylor 101.

Auerbach then sums up, interpreting these lines from another epoch and giving them added significance for his own time: ‘Hugo intended these lines for one whose aim was to free himself from a love of the world. But it is a good way also for one who wishes to earn a proper love for the world.’⁹

Auerbach’s recasting of the concept – *mundus totus exilium est* – in the context of modernity offers a model for criticism in our own time as well. The critic must work through personal or cultural attachments to the native soil, detaching him- or herself from local prejudices and comforts, and engaging with one’s place as a foreigner or exile, who can thereby map such spaces critically without the distortions or myopia occasioned by undue familiarity. Auerbach’s own magnum opus, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, was written while he was living in exile in Turkey, and he indicates in his preface that the work would not have been possible, in the form it took, without such admittedly uncomfortable circumstances. The conditions of Auerbach’s exile (including such everyday matters as the availability of certain books, as well as more serious concerns, like the threat to his life and livelihood) explain the many limitations of the work, but these conditions also made possible the exhilarating sweep, the careful analyses, and the theoretical power of *Mimesis*. To the extent that the poet or creative writer maps a world for his or her readers, making sense of and giving form to our experiences, the critic who can approach the entire world as a foreign land can also create new and more effective legends, interpretations, and supplemental maps.

In *The Theory of the Novel*, Georg Lukács argued that the age of the epic coincided with integrated or ‘closed’ civilizations, in which ‘the starry sky is a map of all possible paths.’¹⁰ Still under the influence of Hegel and the Romantics, the young Lukács finds that the advent of modernity is marked by a profound break between self and world. Lukács gives this condition an evocative name, ‘transcendental homelessness,’ which figures forth the experience of living in ‘a world that has been abandoned by God.’¹¹ Indeed, the notion that a kind of homelessness typifies the modern condition is felt strongly by the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries. Martin Heidegger, for example, emphasized in *Being and Time* the existential condition of anxiety (*Angst*) was closely related to the experience of the uncanny (*unheimlich*), which itself is a pervasive feeling of ‘not-being-at-home’ (*das Nicht-zuhause-sein*).¹² Yet, not surprisingly, Lukács is not mourning the loss of some idyllic golden age, and he does not call for a return to the epic past: ‘the great epic is a form bound to the historical moment, and any attempt to depict the utopian as existent can only end in destroying the form, not in creating reality.’¹³

For Lukács, the ‘transcendental homelessness’ makes possible the novel, a form that gives form to the world, establishing (if only, and necessarily) a provisional construction of a totality that can help us make sense of the vicissitudinous experience of our lives. The novel supplies a cartography for the existentially displaced or lost human subject a way of comprehending this condition, establishing a ‘you are here’ in

⁹ Auerbach, ‘Philology’ 17.

¹⁰ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. A. Bostock (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971), 29.

¹¹ Lukács 88.

¹² See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 233.

¹³ Lukács 152.

a spatial milieu that cries out for guideposts, landmarks, paths, and the like. In Lukács's estimation, the ancient epic represented a world that necessarily *was*, a world grounded in fate and utterly changeless in its stable identities – 'Nestor is old just as Helen is beautiful or Agamemnon mighty.'¹⁴ By contrast, the novel represents a world that *may be*, a figural projection of a world that enables its inhabitants (along with its writers and readers) to shape their existence, create movements, and venture forth. 'The novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God,' and thus, in Lukács's view, the novel is the preeminent literary form for exiles, for those who wander and who map, for those who transform spaces into *places* (as Yi-Fu Tuan would have it) by moving across them, coming to rest, and taking note.¹⁵ Similarly, then, the critic, who takes note of these note-takers, adopts the vantage of the exile in order to see this new world anew.

If exiles, nomads, wanderers, or adventurers were already the archetypal subjects of a modern world abandoned by God, then the advent of modernism in the twentieth century enshrined them definitively. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the key modernist artists, and many of their critics, were themselves exiles of one sort or another. In another famous image of 'homelessness,' George Steiner notes that much of the great literature of the twentieth century has often been produced by those who, like Conrad, Beckett, or Nabokov, write in the foreign language of their lands of exile, rather than in a native tongue associated with one's homeland. 'It seems proper that those who create art in a civilization of quasi-barbarism which has made so many homeless, which has torn up tongues and peoples by the root, should themselves be poets unhoused and wanderers across language.'¹⁶

Similarly, Terry Eagleton's early study of 'English' modernism, significantly titled *Exiles and Émigrés*, notes that major literary artists of the period (with one exception) were not themselves English. As Eagleton puts it,

the seven most significant writers of twentieth-century English literature have been a Pole, three Americans, two Irishmen, and an Englishman. [...] With the exception of D.H. Lawrence, the heights of modern English literature have been dominated by foreigners and émigrés: Conrad, James, Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Joyce.¹⁷

Eagleton's explanation for this is that the tumultuous experiences of the early twentieth century made it impossible for the traditional English novelist to achieve a sense of totality, as English Romantics and realists had been able to do in earlier generations, and that the perspective of the outsider, the writer-in-exile, allowed for the proper 'originality of vision' (to insert Said's phrase here) to attempt to encompass a social totality at that historical moment. Eagleton adds that, by virtue of his working-class background, even Lawrence is a kind of outsider or exile with

¹⁴ Lukács 121.

¹⁵ See Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 161.

¹⁶ George Steiner, *Extraterritorial: Papers on Literature and the Language of Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), 11.

¹⁷ Terry Eagleton, *Exiles and Émigrés: Studies in Modern Literature* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 9.

respect to the English tradition. Although Eagleton's use of the term 'exile' is largely metaphorical – 'I am concerned not so much with the work of 'literal' expatriates, but with the 'social' exiles'¹⁸ – his point is similar to Steiner's: the writer-in-exile is more capable of understanding and representing the modern social condition than a native writer who feels 'at home' in his or her world.

If this be the case for high modernism, in the era of monopoly capitalism in the age of imperialism, then how much more so in the postmodern condition in the age of globalization. The cartographic aspect of literature and criticism becomes all the more urgent in an age when national identities and borders blur, and the shifting zones of metropolis and periphery become thoroughly entangled, through technology, industry, and culture. Fredric Jameson, in making his case for an aesthetic of cognitive mapping as a means to counteract the fundamental sense of placelessness or displacement in the postmodern condition, has pointed out that, in the era of modernism, it was already nearly impossible to coordinate one's existential situation with the realities of a global network of often invisible interrelations.

At this point the phenomenological experience of the individual subject – traditionally, the supreme raw material of the work of art – becomes limited to a tiny corner of the social world, a fixed camera view of a certain section of London or the countryside or whatever. But the truth of that experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place. The truth of that limited daily experience of London lies, rather, in India or Jamaica or Hong Kong; it is bound up with the whole colonial system of the British Empire that determines the very quality of the individual's subjective life. Yet those structural coordinates are no longer accessible to immediate lived experience and are often not even conceptualizable for most people.¹⁹

This leads to the paradoxical situation in which 'if individual experience is authentic, then it cannot be true; and if a scientific or cognitive model of the same content is true, then it escapes individual experience.'²⁰ Although not necessarily responding to the same conditions, Jameson's point complements Eagleton's, insofar as the seemingly 'inauthentic' presence of the exile is better able to square the circle by attempting the totalizing representation afforded by that originality of vision.

Of course, not all 'exiles' are the same. As Said points out, distinctions need to be made along this exilic continuum linking 'exiles, refugees, expatriates, and émigrés.' Whereas an exile may have been banished, he or she maintains a kind of nobility, 'a touch of solitude and spirituality,' whereas the 'refugee' conjures up the image of helpless throngs, 'large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance.' At the other end of the spectrum, expatriates are generally voluntary foreigners, who like Hemingway or Fitzgerald choose to stay in a foreign land. 'Expatriates may share in the solitude and estrangement of exile, but they do not suffer under its rigid proscriptions.' Similarly, the émigré may be anyone who has moved, voluntarily or otherwise, from one's native land to a foreign one, but

¹⁸ Eagleton 18.

¹⁹ Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 411.

²⁰ Jameson 411.

the experience of exile varies greatly among émigrés. For example, many European settlers of Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas ‘may have once been exiles, but as pioneers and nation-builders, they lost the label “exile”’.²¹

‘Exile originated in the age-old practice of banishment. Once banished, the exile lives an anomalous and miserable life, with the stigma of being an outsider.’²² Think of Dante, banished from his beloved hometown of Florence, *sub poena mortis*, and forced to lead a nomadic life. Such experience undoubtedly colours not merely the representation of the world, but the poet’s very perception. In Auerbach’s astonishingly bold rereading, the author of the ‘divine’ *Commedia* becomes the poet of the secular world, the worldly world (*die irdische Welt*). From his privileged perspective as a poet and critic in exile, Dante projects a vision of an otherworldly sphere that nevertheless functions as damning critique of his very real world of the fourteenth century. As Auerbach notes, ‘in truth the Comedy is a picture of earthly life. The human world in all its breadth and depth is gathered into the structure of the hereafter and there it stands: complete, unfalsified, yet encompassed in an eternal order.’²³ An exile in body and spirit, Dante projects a sense-making order – a transcendental map – that constrains and makes meaningful the chaotic, displaced, and rambling experience of daily life in which the whole world is like a foreign land. The joy and precision of the work of the exile-poet nevertheless also gives evidence of the pain, humiliation, and even righteous anger that accompanies the anguished homelessness of exile. As Said marvels, ‘Who but an exile like Dante, banished from Florence, would use eternity as a place to settle old scores?’²⁴

But the bitterness of the anguished exile is in the end displaced by the remarkable acumen that accompanies the critic-in-exile’s perception, as Dante’s divine performance attests. Said notes that exiles occupy not so much a *privileged* position in the society or culture in which they find themselves (and, of course, the irony associated with the word would be quite pronounced), as an *alternative* position.²⁵ That is, they can see in ways that non-exiles perhaps could not, and this allows for a powerful form of criticism. Said’s exemplar in this regard is Theodor Adorno, whose flight from Nazi Germany eventually made possible one of the century’s most potently original critiques of mass culture, industrial civilization, and rationalized or administered society. As Alex Thomson has noted, Adorno’s own time in exile in North America profoundly influenced his peculiar brand of cultural criticism – including, of course, the critique of *culture* itself – even as it caused him a great deal of pain. But in his distance from his native soil and in his often unpleasant encounters with an all-too-foreign civilization, Adorno refined his critical force.

Adorno’s idea of cultural criticism is certainly stamped by his experience in the United States, but what he learns is not to reject that which is outside his idea of culture; rather the opposite, he seeks to make space in his thought for that which might come from the outside. American democracy may be the

²¹ Said, ‘Reflections’ 181.

²² Said, ‘Reflections’ 181.

²³ Auerbach, *Dante: Poet of the Secular World*, trans. R. Mannheim (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 133.

²⁴ Said, ‘Reflections’ 182.

²⁵ Said, ‘Reflections’ 184.

mere equivalence of everyone without hierarchy. Unlike many of Nietzsche's heirs, including Heidegger and those American Nietzscheans who follow Leo Strauss, who see this as the triumph of herd mentality over aristocratic virtues which make true dwelling on the earth impossible, Adorno hopes for a rather different sort of future, neither home-coming or disaster, but something more like the release from the dialectics of culture altogether.²⁶

Of course, one could hardly call Adorno's return to Frankfurt after the war a 'homecoming' in a traditional sense, as postwar Germany was nothing like the country of his youth or the *Reich* that he had fled. In many respects, Adorno remained an exile, and a proponent of a kind of intellectual or critical exile, throughout his life.

The experience of exile also helped to confirm Adorno's suspicions concerning the jargon of authenticity, with its quasi-romanticism of home and homeland that carried with it the discernible stench of fascism. Adorno knew that one cannot 'go home again,' and – observing that the rustic ideals of Heideggerian thought found their real-world counterparts in the data showing 'the worst atrocities in the concentration camps were committed by the younger sons of farmers' – Adorno averred that the 'spirit' longing for this mythic homeland 'hires itself out as the lackey of what is evil.'²⁷ The desire for home, whether in terms of nation-state or of native land, carried with it a dark particularity that invariably casts others into the shadow. In Adorno's view, the duty of the critic is to be always *not at home*, to feel one's estrangement even in one's putative homeland. As he put it in a phrase also quoted by Said, 'it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home.'²⁸

Adorno's embrace of exile, or his refusal to find any value in the nostalgic or positive imagery of home or homecoming, is related to his view of the critic in general. The critic must maintain a defamiliarising distance from the culture, as well as from the society or social relations represented in works of culture, such as art and literature. This requires a double-distancing, as the critic is separated from both the arts and from the subjects established in the arts. From this outside-the-outsider's perspective, the critic may engage with the dynamics of culture and society ... critically. This is in no way the romanticisation of the critic as a kind of Baudelairean *poète maudit*; on the contrary, for Adorno, this alienation of the critic is essential to the function of criticism, as crucial to his or her work as the use of mathematics is to the physicist.

Many of the critics I have been discussing are, of course, not only theorists of exile, but themselves exiles, in various ways. As noted, Erich Auerbach, expert in 'the worldly world,' was forced to flee his native Germany and wrote what is generally considered his magnum opus while living in Turkey, before emigrating to the United States after the war. Edward Said, whose very name registers the English-Arabic border-crossings and a sense of being 'between worlds,' was born to Christian parents in British controlled Palestine, lived in Jerusalem and Cairo before attending school in Massachusetts, Princeton, and Harvard, then becoming a Columbia professor.

²⁶ Alex Thomson, *Adorno* (London: Continuum, 2006), 31.

²⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. K. Tarnowski and F. Will (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 26–27.

²⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), 39.

Theodor W. Adorno – who dropped his Germanic last name ‘Wiesengrund,’ reducing it to a middle initial, and adopted his Italian mother’s maiden name (although of Jewish descent, Adorno’s father was a Protestant and his mother was Catholic) – shifted from Frankfurt to Vienna and back, from Berlin to Oxford and back, and on to New York and Los Angeles, before returning to a postwar Frankfurt transformed. Georg (or György) Lukács was born in Budapest to a prominent Jewish family, studied in Berlin and Heidelberg, served in the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic before fleeing to Vienna where he wrote *History and Class Consciousness*, moved to Berlin before relocating to Moscow in 1933, then returning to his ‘hometown’ only after the war, where he became involved in that region’s entanglements in the decades that followed (including a brief deportation to Romania for his part in the failed revolution of 1956). Steiner notes that Lukács’s own wanderings, from Budapest to Berlin then onto Moscow, made him an exile as well, not just in his person but also in his writing: ‘German is Lukács’ principal language, but his use of it has grown brittle and forbidding. His style is that of exile; it has lost the habits of living speech. More essentially: Lukács’ entire tone, the fervent, at times narrow tenor of his vision, mirror the fact of banishment.’²⁹ Indeed, Steiner himself is a ‘grateful wanderer,’ who was born in Paris to Viennese Jewish parents, emigrated to New York in 1940, studied in Chicago, Paris, Oxford, and has taught in many more places still. ‘Trees have roots and I have legs; I owe my life to that.’³⁰

There are also those ways in which a critic might be exiled without leaving home. As Gilles Deleuze has pointed out, ‘the nomad is not necessarily one who moves: some voyages take place *in situ*.’³¹ Indeed, for all of their physical movements, one could certainly make the argument that many European Jewish intellectuals, writing in French or German or English in countries that are largely non-Jewish if not downright anti-Semitic, are participating in a form of minority discourse that is itself akin to the language of the exile. Similarly for a Hungarian Marxist writing in German in Moscow, or for a Palestinian-born secular Christian Arab writing in English in New York. As Deleuze and Guattari argue in their book on Franz Kafka, the Jewish writer of German literature living in Prague, this creates a ‘minor literature’ using a ‘deterritorialized language’ within the larger literary tradition.³² The critic, in viewing the entire world as a foreign land, also may make nomadic movements, deterritorialisations and reterritorialisations, in drawing and interpreting the literary maps produced by poets, novelists, and other writers.

Concluding my reflections on reflections on exile, then, I return to the site at which I began. In the lesson of the twelfth-century philosopher quoted at the outset, recall that while the ‘tender beginner’ find his own country sweet, and the ‘strong’ can feel at home in any land, only for the ‘perfect’ individual is the whole world like a foreign land. As Said points out, Hugh of Saint Vincent ‘twice makes it clear that the

²⁹ George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 329.

³⁰ See Myra Jaggi, ‘George and his Dragons,’ *The Guardian* (17 March 2001). Retrieved 10 April 2010.

³¹ Gilles Deleuze, ‘Nomad Thought,’ trans. D. Allison. *The New Nietzsche*, ed. D. Allison (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1977), 149.

³² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. D. Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 17.

‘strong’ or ‘perfect’ man achieves independence by *working through* attachments.’³³ It is not enough to simply reject one’s love of country, but to press on through the love and loss that characterizes the condition of exile in order, eventually and with effort, to embrace that condition. It is a process, and not necessarily a smooth or easy one. Perhaps this accounts for why the struggle takes so much time, and often finds itself fulfilled only later in life. Said, referring to Adorno who is in turn referring to Beethoven (another double-distancing), notes that the ‘late style’ of an artist indicates its own form of exile: ‘a moment when the artist who is fully in command of his medium abandons communication with the established social order of which he is a part and achieves a contradictory, alienated relationship to it. His late works constitute a form of exile.’³⁴ So too with the critic, who strives to become intimate with culture while also maintaining a profound distance, becoming an alien presence in the most homely places, wherever such places may be. *Mundus totus exilium est*. As Auerbach had asserted, the critic who would have a proper love for the world’s literature must also view the entire world as a foreign land.

³³ Said, ‘Reflections’ 185.

³⁴ Edward Said, *On Late Style* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), 8.