THE EXPERIENCE OF EXILE THROUGH THE EYES OF CZECH WRITERS

by

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B.A., Charles University, Prague, 2003

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

Under Special Arrangements
of
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Fall 2006

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to demonstrate how the experience of exile was reflected in the work of 20th century Czech writers. It does so by way of an examination of the respective responses of Jan Drabek and Jaroslav Vejvoda to two historical traumas: the 1948 Communist Coup and the failure of the "Prague Spring" in 1968. It argues that while both Drabek and Vejvoda employ typical aspects of exilic literature in their work, each of them provides a different reflection on exile according to the distinct social and political condition of his time. By analyses of these responses to historical trauma, this thesis emphasizes the transition from the external, social, and political approach of Drabek to the internal, private, and strictly non political position of Vejvoda.

Keywords: exile literature; political emigration; Jan Drabek; Jaroslav Vejvoda; 1948 Communist Coup; 1968 Prague Spring

Subject headings: Czech fiction --20th century – History and Criticism; Exiles' Writings; Exiles in Literature; Czech Republic – Communism; Emigration and Immigration in Literature

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all Czechoslovak exiles who were forced out of their homeland during the Communist Era.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to all who have contributed to the writing and successful completion of this thesis. First of all, I am indebted to Samir Gandesha, my senior supervisor, under whose guidance many of the central ideas of thesis began to come together and take shape. I am grateful to Jerry Zaslove and Andre Gerolymatos, members of my supervisory committee, for providing unwavering support throughout my graduate studies. I would like also to acknowledge the help of Donald Grayston for his constant encouragement. I would also like to thank to Douglas Williams for often talking me through my ideas and tirelessly reading through drafts of the thesis. I am grateful to Trish Graham for her help with grammar and formatting. I am grateful to Christine Prisland, Wendy Sjolin and Vivian Blaker, whose administrative assistance enabled me to finish the thesis. I also acknowledge the financial assistance of the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Department of the Humanities for making available generous financial support. Finally, I owe the deepest gratitude to my husband, Petr, for constantly pushing me and for always providing me with inspiration. Without his constant support, this thesis would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval ii

Abstract iii

Dedication iv

Acknowledgements v

Table of Contents vi

CHAPTER 1 – EXILE AND LITERATURE 1

The Ambivalent Relation between Exile and Literature 5
Writing Exile: The Question of the Political? 8
The Historical Position of the Czech Writer 11
Exile in Twentieth-Century Czech Writing 16

CHAPTER 2 – JAN DRABEK AND THE 1948 COMMUNIST COUP 21

The Communist Takeover of 1948 21
Writers between 1945-1948 23
Jan Drabek (b. 1935) 25
Exile as Enlightenment 28
Unending Journey 31
The Call for Ethics 40
The Character of Drabek's Work 45

CHAPTER 3 – JAROSLAV VEJVODA AND PRAGUE SPRING OF 1968 48

Prague Spring of 1968 48
Writers of the Prague Spring 50
Jaroslav Vejvoda (b. 1940) 57
Disturbing to Awake 58
On Uprootedness and Homelessness 67
Eroticism: a Sign of Enclosure? 80
The Character of Vejvoda's Work 84

CHAPTER 4 – EXILE: POLITICS AND ANTI-POLITICS 87

On Exilic Relations 92
On Ethics.. 103
Conclusion 107

Appendix 110

Works Cited 112

Electronic Sources 120

CHAPTER 1 – EXILE AND LITERATURE

Since antiquity, exile has been a recurrent human experience and a part of literature. We may trace the experiences of several significant exiles such as Homer, Oedipus, and Ovid, for example, and see how separation from their homelands influenced their sagas. The Bible itself contains many accounts of exile.[1] While exilic literature is most commonly understood to be an expression of the painful aspects of exile, exile may also be perceived as a potentially liberating experience, leading to literature that is rich in meaning and challenging to the exile's native land and host country. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how the experience of exile has been reflected in Czech literature of the twentieth century.

Many intellectuals were forced into exile during the time of communist rule in Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989. Others, however, due to their opposition to the totalitarian regime, chose exile for themselves. During this period, there were two distinct historical traumas: the 1948 coup marked the beginning of communist rule in the country, while the 1968 Prague Spring attempted unsuccessfully to reform the socialist society. I will focus on two representatives of these periods, Jan Drabek and Jaroslav Vejvoda, and explore their reflections on their experiences of exile. While Drabek and Vejvoda were both natives of Czechoslovakia who fled from the communist regime, their expressions

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[1] The first pages of the book of Genesis reflect the expulsion of people from the garden of Eden. Both individual and mass expulsion—as a form of punishment and persecution—may be examined in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament from the expulsion from Paradise to the Babylonian captivity: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept at the memory of Zion. On the poplars there we had hung up our harps. [...] How could we sing a song of Yahweh on alien soil?" (New Jerusalem Bible, Ps. 137. 1-2, 4)

of their experiences of exile are unique their own right. In this thesis I will argue that while both Drabek and Vejvoda employ typical aspects of exilic literature in their work, each of them also provides reflections of exile which are distinct and mirror the specific social and political conditions of 1948 and 1968 Czechoslovakia.

The first chapter of this thesis outlines the phenomenon of exilic literature and introduces Czech exilic history. The second chapter focuses on the political events of the 1948 Communist Coup and the work of one of its literary exiles—Jan Drabek.[2] The third chapter examines the failure of the 1968 Prague Spring and the literary activity of Jaroslav Vejvoda. The fourth and final chapter compares the specific expressions of both authors, and provides an analysis of their work in regard to the political events of 1948 and 1968. The thesis contends that the major difference between Drabek's and Vejvoda's work lies in their unique perceptions of the historical traumas which sent them into exile: it emphasizes, above all, what I am calling the "external" or political attitude of Drabek in contrast to the "internal" or existential approach of Vejvoda.

Exile, as we know, is a condition in which the protagonist is no longer living, or able to live, in the land of his or her birth. Exile may be voluntary, deliberate, and intentional; it may be protracted; it may involve expatriate employment. Exile may, however, be enforced. Enforced exile is frequently the result of political revolution, intellectual dissent, or a natural disaster. Very often, exiles are the helpless victims of circumstances, such as protracted war, (let us note the contemporary émigrés from Lebanon and Iraq) but sometimes exiles are political figures, exiled because of their

[2] We should note at the beginning, that the spelling of personal names in this thesis does not make use of the full diacritical marks of the Czech language (for instance, "Drabek" is used instead of the more accurate "Drábek").

potential threat to the political interests of their opponents.[3]

The significance of exile has been stressed by Edward Said (Reflections on Exile 174) who believes that the twentieth century was a century of migration. He distinguishes between exiles of earlier periods and those of our own time by stressing the scale factor: "our age—with its modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers—is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, [and] mass immigration" (Reflections 174). Perhaps more than any other period in history, the twentieth century has witnessed an enormous flow of forcibly displaced people—from the Europeans who fled from the Nazis, to the more recent cases of Asians and Latin Americans who migrate to escape war, dictatorial regimes, and natural disasters. The migration of people seeking either better economic conditions, or political stability beyond their own country, thus reached approximately 22 million as of 1997.[4] Scholars of various disciplines consider exile to be a paradigmatic phenomenon of the twentieth century (Kokot 1). However, exile should not be perceived only in social, historical, or political terms; we need to also seek various other interpretations of exile, including, for example, intellectual exile. A traditional concept of exile—as an archetype for pain and

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[3] Interestingly, society in ancient Greece—an archetypal exilic culture—had no extensive prison system, and criminal justice knew of only two punishments for major crimes: exile or death (Claassen 9). Enforced exile was an acknowledged tool in criminal justice, as well as in politics. In the ancient world, exile was a major political tool, and as such, it was often employed by the powerful to reduce the power of their most feared opponents (Claassen 9-10). Today, international law no longer allows a state to deprive "unwanted" citizens of their rights by sending them away from their homelands, but it does acknowledge the right of potentially dangerous citizens to leave voluntarily and seek political asylum elsewhere, often to pre-empt imprisonment in their home country. Such exile is essentially still enforced (Claassen 9). While the contemporary meaning of exile may not explicitly denote political or criminal punishment—it is more often a decision made by the individual—this decision, however voluntary, may be grounded in political, ideological, professional, and personal persecution. In some cases, indeed, exile is understood as a form of intellectual and political resistance against totalitarian regimes, as was the case with refugees who fled from Czechoslovakia during the Cold War, for example.

[4] The UN Council for Refugees in December 1997 reported that world-wide some 22 million displaced persons have no hope of return to their home countries, and a further 25 million are internally displaced (qtd. in Claassen 1).

creativity—has been an integral part of human experience and may provide an irreplaceable background for our studies. However, in order to fully appreciate the complex nature of exile, the exilic experience needs new approaches, definitions, and case studies that may help us to better understand the phenomenon and its social implications.

As a very complex problem, indeed, emigration[5] can be examined from many various perspectives (Faber 11).[6] Although we acknowledge that exile is dealt with in a number of ways and disciplines, my focus will be on artistic representation of exile. To study and understand the human soul is to follow its natural expression in art, wherever the soul is essentially manifest—whether in music, fine art, drama, or literature.

Some controlling limitations on this thesis, nevertheless, must be established. Recognizing that the issue is particularly large and extensive, I will not pursue certain approaches to the subject of exile to the same extent as others. For example, I will not

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[5] While acknowledging that these terms are not identical, I will be using terms such as "exile," " émigré," and "emigrant," as well as "exile" and "emigration" as interchangeable in this thesis. There are several reasons for this: firstly and most importantly, it is inaccurate to label someone with a definite term that he or she might not agree with; secondly, some expatriates fall into several various categories (a person might be expatriate and émigré at the same time); and thirdly, English vocabulary does not provide a spectrum wide enough. Some scholars, such as Darko Suvin ("Displaced Persons") and William Petersen ("A General Typology of Migration"), tried to distinguish among the major exilic patterns more or less successfully, however, the terms have been used quite broadly since. Suvin, for instance, introduces a comprehensive typology of single versus mass emigration. He reflects on the driving forces, on the economic and ideological reasons, and on the chances of return for the exile ("Displaced Persons"). Similarly, this thesis seeks to research the intellectual and physical exile of an individual, rather than focusing on its sociological and psychological associations. We will thus follow the definition that Paul Tabori outlined in The Anatomy of Exile: "An exile is a person compelled to leave or remain outside his country of origin on account of well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion; a person who considers his exile temporary (even though it may last a lifetime), hoping to return to his fatherland when circumstances permit, but unable to do so as long as the factors that made him an exile persists (27)." Hence, although the terms may be used variously throughout the thesis, we should emphasize that this thesis focus is primarily on intellectual exiles—in contrast to economic emigrants and (mass) refugees.

[6] The number of studies dealing with exile is astronomical, argues Sebastiaan Faber (12). This is not surprising, for exilic studies "offer all the elements that the Humanities and Social Sciences thrive on these days: marginality, border crossing, identity conflicts, hybridity, transnationalism" (Faber 12) as well as culture and politics.

approach the subject of exile from the post-Romantic point of view which sees exile as metaphor for alienation. Similarly, I will not dwell on exile as a spiritual separation, and will not write on modern politics and émigré conditions.[7] Instead, this thesis will focus on literary representations of exile, especially those representations in which exile is foregrounded as a form of narrative action. My focus is limited to the process of leaving one's country—both physically and emotionally—and therefore, I will not discuss the subsequent problems of assimilation, multiculturalism, and nationalism as experienced by the exile in the host country. Instead, we will follow the very personal experiences of exile as narrated by the authors themselves.

The Ambivalent Relation between Exile and Literature

The concept of exile forms an immensely powerful and enduring element in the tradition of western literature and the literature that grew out of the European experience. Foundational texts such as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* and the Scriptures deal with threats, separation, journeys, and homecomings. Exile viewed metaphorically, or literally, has profoundly influenced the relationship of innumerable storytellers, artists, and writers to their culture, and it has contributed to the ways in which they have expressed that

[7] Exile is, of course, not only a literal expatriation; it may also signify metaphorical or internal separation. Metaphorical exile is the Jewish and Christian idea of the condition of the soul longing for God, and the representation of spiritual alienation (Lagos-Pope 11, Codrescu 53). "How lovely are your dwelling-places, Yahweh Sabaoth. My whole being yearns and pines for Yahweh's courts, my heart and my body cry out for joy to the living God," cries the author (Ps. 84.1-2). The return to God, the ultimate goal of the Christian journey, is the legacy of Paradise lost. The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden can thus be seen as a basic archetype of flight and exile (Flight and Exile 27). The happiness people once experienced in the Divine somehow vanished and their subsequent life resembles exile. Christians, like émigrés, seek to return to a place of their origin. One may also distinguish between exile from one's native land, and internal or inner exile. Lagos-Pope (9) observes that the distinction between expatriation and internal exile has been recognized, and both have been practiced since ancient times. John Simpson (171), too, argues that many stayed exiled in their own country. It happened to the Aztecs and Incas, for instance, and through the colonial expansion of Europe into Asia and Africa. The difference is, however, that while exiles abroad are free—as far as the host country allows them to be—the internal exiles have no such freedom (Lagos-Pope 171). Our primary concern, nevertheless, is the physically exiled author.

relationship in their work (Ward xi). Exile is, of course, as old as written history, and probably as old as human existence itself. If we are to examine literature dealing with exile and emigration, however, we need to determine its boundaries. What is exilic literature? How can we characterize exilic writing? How shall we determine who is an exilic writer and who is not? What is the nature of this literature? Scholars differ in their approach, but here I will try to embrace the most common understanding of exile.

Martin Pilar ("O ceske exilove literature")[8] argues, for example, that there are two major approaches to the subject of exilic literature. The first, more general approach, is reflected in various textual manifestations of exilic life: books, newspapers, and magazines. The second, more narrow approach, looks at literature written by exiled writers, whether in their native or acquired language. Claassen (11), nevertheless, is more specific and argues that exilic literature comprises writings *about* exile and exiles (mythical, historic-graphical or factual), *on* exile (philosophical and moralistic or psychological), *to* an exile (comfort and advice) or *from* an exile (frequently pertaining to all of the above, but with a strong autobiographical aspect).

Faber (12), however, is critical of such a definition. The definition of exilic literature as all literature written in exile, Faber says, encourages both "reductionism and overgeneralization" (12). Although we agree with Faber (12) on the notion of risk of generalization, basic limitations still need to be determined for this research. Thus, the term "exilic literature" is used throughout this thesis to refer to literature written by exiles and, ideally, dealing with the conditions of exile. In the dimension of literature *from exile* as noted above, it seems all the previous components merge: the author tries to change

[8] All translations from the Czech texts are mine. Translation of titles, however, is provided only if it directly relates to the subject examined

the perception of his homeland, to influence the perception of the host country itself, or just share his or her own experience. These observations will be significant for our argument.[9]

As for the subsequent question of the exilic nature of particular authors, there is no academic consensus on which writers can be called exiles. While some scholars, such as Claassen and Culik, regard as exiles primarily those writers who are geographical exiles (Vladimir Nabokov, Milan Kundera), others, such as Simpson, also include the inner and self-exiled writers (Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka). Yet others may refer to writers who published their exilic memoirs and historical essays, but who are not generally regarded as novelists or poets (Josef Cermak, Jan Bouz, Antonin Kratochvil). Emigration often forced people to be creative, to identify new ways to reach other people and to pass on their ideas or ideologies.[10] This is especially true of some political-sociological essays and the hundreds of autobiographies written by parents hoping to pass memoirs on to their offspring. We recognize, of course, a relevant contribution of these works to the extensive field of exilic literature; today they provide an important set of

[9] Exile as a topic has been featured in narrative literature of various kinds from Homer onwards, and tales of exile and return feature in the biographies of many protagonists, and in Roman historiography. We may ask, whether it makes sense to group these diverse generic modes into a single unit (Claassen 13). Should this group be considered a single genre? Exilic literature is perhaps not a genre of the same order as drama or epic, yet it does form a topical unit, it seems. Approaches and challenges often deal with the same issues, such as searching for one's own identity in a new environment (Pilar "O ceske exilove literature"), the process of acclimatization, coping with immigrant difficulties, and raising political questions. Moreover, Claassen (13) insists that today the term "genre" is considered to be of less importance than the complex relationship between author, text, and reader. Claassen observes (13) that text is no longer considered to have status only as representative of a genre, but, it is designated in various ways as "either an autonomous unit that creates its own meaning, or as a system of signals that must be reconstructed anew by each reader, or must be decoded in order to find the authorial purpose, or which may be deconstructed to create meaning, or to find its inter-textual message" (Claassen 13). Formerly, exile would have been subsumed under epic (Homer), scripture (the biblical fall), or tragedy (as in Greek drama of the loss of home).

[10] Kettler (7) observed, for instance, that a number of German pre-war exiles hoped to influence events in Germany during their emigration. Later, some indeed did when they returned to positions of some prominence in Germany.

documents for historians. Writing, it seems, serves as one of the most fundamental expressions of the human soul and will perhaps flourish as long as humanity continues to suffer and rejoice. For the sake of this thesis, however, the literary interpretation of exile as the principal means by which writers deal with traumatic historical experiences constitutes our main focus.[11]

Writing Exile: The Question of the Political?

While most scholars generally agree on the traumatic and painful aspects of exile,[12] others emphasize the potentially positive and enriching experiences of it.[13] However insightful the two stances are, they both approach a question from an individualistic perspective, namely from that of the affected author. We know, however,

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[11] Interestingly, some scholars distinguish between the *literature of exile* and *migrant literature*. Their argument is primarily based on the perception of their own status and the possibility of return. Mardorossian (17), for instance, understands the difference between the traditional exile (one who is forced out of a community) and the migrant (one who in a relatively voluntary way departs with the possibility of return). At the same time, she introduces a new approach for contemporary critics and suggests that migrant literature emphasizes "the dynamic relationship between the past and the present" as well as "the impossibility of the return;" while the discourse of exile tends to "focus on what was left behind and the possibility of the return" (Mardorossian 17).

[12] In the Roman world, for example, exile and death were closely related, Claassen argues (11). Because exile frequently served as pre-emption of, or substitute for, the death penalty, it was often portrayed in literature as the virtual equivalent of death. Yet even in banishment, intimations of immortality often served to lighten some exiles' lot (Claassen 11).

[13] While exile may lead some to personal misfortune and humiliation, it may also mean access to some of the most creative and productive cities and cultures in the world (Thompson 501). Many authors have gained imaginative sustenance from exile, such as Ovid, Dante, Swift, Rousseau, Hugo, Lawrence, Mann, Brecht. Joyce, and Beckett (Seidel x). Many exiled writers perceive the value of emigration and detachment. Andrei Codrescu, for example, writes that freedom of spirit can be discovered only by leaving home (35). Edward Said (Reflections 185) also emphasizes the power of detachment and plural perception: "The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional." While borders and barriers are there to keep us safe, they may also often become prisons. Exiles, then, can play a prophetic role: they cross borders, and break barriers of thought and experience. It seems they liberate not only themselves, but all those who are listening to them. "If most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home," Said argues, then "exiles are aware of at least two" (Reflections 186). Moreover, to emigrate is to change, "to become 'Other,' different, plural," adds Patrick Ward (245). This plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, according to Said (Reflections 186). Ladislav Radimsky, too, believes that the exile's culture is "necessarily pluralistic" (73), and I would suggest this is the most precious value that exiles possess.

that exile is primarily a political phenomenon (Claassen 1, Vahabzadeh 166). Exile has always served as a powerful means that can influence individuals involved as well as political actions. Exile and politics thus form inseparable realities, as can be seen in the work of Czech authors.

The twentieth century brought about radical changes in the status of the writer in exile (Thompson 501). It is significant, and not coincidental, that among the most recent Nobel Prize winners for literature one finds several exiles (Lagos-Pope 7).[14] The situation of exile has enabled a relatively numerous group of writers not only to flourish as writers while living abroad, but also to exert a significant influence on their host countries. At the same time, by speaking of the experience of estrangement, psychological unrest, and emotional separation, they often provide the ground for a better understanding of the social and political situation in their native lands as well. Particularly in situations where totalitarian political systems strictly controlled official versions of their societies, writers became the unofficial spokespersons for their nations. In some cases, the international perception of particular political events would be regarded quite differently if not for those writers living and writing in exile:

> The victorious Catholic majority after the Battle at White Mountain would have appeared much more ethical if Komensky had not lived in exile. Russian rule in Poland would have gotten a better grade if Mickiewicz had not lived in exile. History would have been more forgiving to the ruling Ghibellines in Florence if the Divine Comedy had not been written in exile. Even Augustus would have appeared more majestic if Ovid did not write Epistulae ex Ponto and was a worse poet (Radimsky 13-14).

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[14] For example, Joseph Brodsky (awarded 1987), Elias Canetti (1981), Czeslaw Milosz (1980), Isaac Bashevis Singer (1978), Pablo Neruda (1970), Samuel Beckett (1969), Miguel Angel Asturias (1967), and Juan Ramon Jimenez (1956) (Lagos-Pope 7). There are also many other significant exiled novelists such as James Joyce, Milan Kundera, Thomas Mann, Klaus Mann, Vladimir Nabokov, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, and Franz Werfel,

Thompson (506), too, observes that some authors introduced an image of their homeland that would otherwise have not emerged in their host countries (Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, for example), while others influenced the host country's image of itself (Herbert Marcuse). Though East European writers such as Czeslaw Milosz, Milan Kundera, Josef Skvorecky, and Janusz Glowacki, have not influenced the self-definition of Western society to such an extent, they, too, do not correspond to the stereotype of an ineffective, alienated, and powerless writer in exile (Thomspon 505).[15] Hence, a certain historical shift might be observed: while the Romantic writers understood their exile as surrender and defeat, their twentieth century counterparts, it seems, have taken an active attitude toward their new milieu (Thompson 506).[16]

We may see that from antiquity through the modern age, exile has shaped the perception of the writer's homeland. The idea of exile, according to Patrick Ward (xi-xii), was strengthened in the last two centuries as more individualistic philosophies—deriving from Romanticism, nationalism, and liberalism—contextualized and shaped the discourses, patterns of action and reaction, and forms of oral and written communication available to cultures and writers. Moreover, the international reputation of a state, Ladislav Radimsky (13-14) suggests, has always been measured by its exiles. The more

[15] Czech literature, as many others, has matured thanks to its introduction in the West (Culik, "Exil jako otevreni mysli").

[16] Moreover, exile has given some writers an audience for which they could not have hoped for in the countries of their birth (Thompson 501). Instead of acting as a deterrent to finding an audience, it has converted their national readership into a worldwide one. It made their ideas matter in a way in which they could not have mattered at home. In the twentieth century, the helplessness of an articulate exile has transformed itself into its opposite—an exercise of power which was beyond his reach in his homeland, either because the homeland was small, obscure, or unfree, or because its inhabitants did not cherish the same values as the writer himself. The old adage about prophets not being honored in the country of their birth is applicable here. Living abroad has provided for some writers a distancing from the reader which has worked to make the story within the frame more compelling. For some writers, exile has proved to be an enhancement, concludes Thompson (501).

educated and sophisticated the émigrés were, the more shame fell on a country that forced them out.

I will show that in the work of Jan Drabek and Jaroslav Vejvoda political exile can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. Although I will argue that Drabek's portrayal of exile is political as opposed to the non-political reflection of Vejvoda, we must remember that a "unitary political cause does not produce unitary effects on the exiled" (Vahabzadeh 167). We will see that both authors used their potential to influence political, social, psychological, and ethical perception of their readership, either directly or indirectly. Yet before approaching the specific exilic waves of 1948 and 1968, I would like to examine the historical context of the Czech language and its writers.

The Historical Position of the Czech Writer

Exile has provided many artists with a unique source for their creativity, but the situation of writers differs significantly from that of painters, musicians, and actors. The writer's basic tools—text and language—make any change of location and language very challenging. How does relocation influence their writing? What role does language play in the exilic transition? How do writers deal with the trauma encountered when they are confronted with new cultures and languages? Do writers in exile usually write in their native language or do they adopt a foreign one?

One of the most striking linguistic challenges, indeed, is language itself. It is often language that sets groups of people apart from each other and defines them (Sayer 107).[17]

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[17] English, Sayer (107) argues, "is not spoken solely by the English and cannot therefore become a symbol of their national uniqueness. Only Czechs speak Czech as their mother tongue, and there have never been that many of them. It is their property alone, and it is in consequence a property that sets them apart from others."

For Czechs, it was the *Narodni obrozeni*, the Czech National Enlightenment of the nineteenth century that brought about a revival of the Czech language (Sayer 107). Definitions of the Czech nation, its people and its culture, were grounded, not surprisingly, in the distinct Czech language that had been long considered the "language of the poor" while German was the language of the educated nobility and the intellectuals. Czech writers naturally become the popular representatives of the nation. Later, language played a crucial role in the foundation of the Czechoslovak state in 1918.[18] However, post-war emigration proved to be a crucial test for many authors. Exiled writers had to face the fact that their language was not understood abroad. Moreover, the Czech exilic communities, especially after 1948, were not large enough for them to write only in Czech.

Though the trauma of emigration is painful and particularly demanding for writers, it seems that writing in exile is neither a hobby, nor merely a means of emotional relief. Rather, writing often leads to self-knowledge – a knowledge that, in turn, makes assimilation in the new environment easier. While writers seldom stop writing in exile,[19] writers in exile must choose whether to continue writing in their native language or whether to adopt a new language. It might be illuminating to realize how many exiled authors adopt a foreign language so thoroughly that they start their literary work in it (Ludvik Askenazy, Joseph Brodsky). Does adopting a new language create significant problems for the writer in exile? Are they able to express themselves more freely in a

[18] "Manifesto of Czech Writers" protesting against Vienna's suppression of Czech public life emerged in May 1917 (Sayer 190), for instance. A similar role, as we will see later, was played by writers during the Prague Spring.

[19] Although such situations do occur, see Michal Karel, Karol Sidon.

new language? Does such a shift change their literary approach and method? Were they able to adapt to their new state of being in such a way as to develop to their greatest potential?

Many writers in exile keep writing in their native language. These are usually mature authors for whom it is too difficult to master a foreign language (Pavel Kohout), authors whose work centers around ethnic questions (Jaroslav Vejvoda), those whose work is politically motivated, those seeking to engage people from the old country (Pavel Tigrid), and poets (Pavel Javor, Jaroslav Hutka). Writers who switch to a new language, on the other hand, are those who knew the second language well enough before emigration (Vladimir Nabokov, Edward Said), young writers who grew up in a new country (Jan Drabek), and those who deliberately chose to forget their past and detach from the homeland to some extent (Milan Kundera, Libuse Monikova). Language and politics, moreover, have always been closely associated. Writers often influence their social and political environment in a significant way, as we will see further on in relation to the Czech events of 1948 and 1968.

The question therefore arises as to the relation of the Czech people and their writers. If Pilar (qtd. in Culik, "Literarni konference") argues that Czechs' affection for their writers is too exaggerated, it is perhaps due to the relatively short period during which the Czech language has been in use in literature—it was not until the National Enlightenment (which culminated in 1948) that Czech overtook German in the public sphere. This uniqueness, as well as patriotism, seems to ascribe to Czech writers a power that is not usual in other nations. It may seem only natural that a nation which spent several hundred years under the rule of German-speaking Austrians, several years under

the occupation of the Nazi Germans, and twenty years under socio-political pressure from Russians, perceived language—and literature—as a major form of self-defense. Writing, in its various forms, became a tool for expressing disagreement, opposition, and revolution, as well as encouragement, and national solidarity. Under such circumstances, Czech writers have been seen to have significant social, political and cultural influence, at least in comparison with most politicians of the last few decades (Benes 97-98).

Frantisek Palacky (qtd. in French, Introduction), a Czech writer of the nineteenth century, states that: "It is a matter of general knowledge that it was the Czech writers who, instead of letting the nation perish, brought it back to life, and gave it noble aims to accomplish." Later, in 1967, Milan Kundera, too, reinforced such perceptions:

> It is the Czech writers who were responsible for the very existence of the nation, and remain so today. For it is upon the standard of Czech literature, its greatness or meanness, its courage or cowardice, its provincialism or its universality, that the answer to the nation's existential question largely depends, namely: Is its survival worthwhile? Is the survival of its language worthwhile? These, the most fundamental questions at the roots of our latter-day nationhood, are still awaiting a definitive answer (qtd. in French, Introduction).

And yet later on, Kundera (The Art of the Novel 144) makes it clear that a novelist is neither historian nor prophet; rather, he is an "explorer of existence." If the historian is responsible for the interpretation of the past (Carr 26), then we may argue that the novelist is responsible for interpretation of the present. It could be argued that writers' public expressions on various social, political and ideological questions formed a "national heritage" in Czechoslovakia. Writers were, after all, common people. The nation could easily identify with writers who expressed, or at least seemed to express, their emotions, opinions, and attitudes. Perhaps in the midst of social change people feel more comfortable believing in their writers and intellectuals rather than in the political

propaganda of their politicians. It may well be that people are far more likely to trust their politicians, if they know and trust them firstly as writers who understand them. While this situation may constitute a general phenomenon that is to be found elsewhere, why and how was the particularly Czech situation different?

Czechs suffered under various rulers for several centuries. Due to Czechoslovak's size and land-locked position in Central Europe with large neighboring regions of Germans, Austrians, and Poles, Czechs often tried to avoid open battle. Instead, many intellectuals were inclined to writing and literary "fighting." Bohemia does not have many politicians in her history who are acknowledged as much as the writers. Writers—theologians, essayists, and novelists—met the demand of the people for "true" Czech leaders. For example, when the Battle of the White Mountain pushed hundreds of non-Catholics out of their country, their only weapon to explain, defend, and contest was their pen. When the oppression from the Hapsburgs reached its climax in the nineteenth century, several Czech intellectuals emerged and provided necessary psychological support for the Czechs.

The National Enlightenment—with its radical linguistic and cultural shift—brought a real change in the nation that strongly influenced its self-perception. For instance, Alois Jirasek's (1851-1930) tales about the Czech past literally became textbooks of history for many years to come.[20] When the Austro-Hungarian Empire finally fell apart at the end of the First World War, the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 provided for the hope of an ideal, democratic, and—most of all—the Czech state. Although general literacy was quite high already during the Austro-Hungarian period,

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[20] Jirasek's historical novel Stare povesti ceske [The Old Czech Stories], for instance, became the new "Bible of the nation" (Sayer 191).

now it flourished, allowing more and more people to read and have access to literature. Yet in 1948, the establishment of communism suggested that a new form of opposition needed to be developed, and writing, once again, received enormous attention among common people. Written text, thus, formed the basis of political resistance.[21]

We have seen that the relation between writers and politics should not be overlooked. Indeed, exiled writers can often shape the international perception of their homeland. Writers in exile have been the most impressive witnesses to human experience (Levin 62). Obviously, the power of text was often important and played a key role in the state's politics, culture, and international relations. For instance, Drabek's texts, as we will see later, took such direction. Although his readers are not usually theorists of politics of international relations, Drabek speaks to common people in order to cultivate their understanding of social, political, and historical reality. Such understanding thus—to some degree—supports Radimsky's assessment of the significance of exilic writing: exilic writing not only has the power to entertain, but also to influence.

Exile in Twentieth-Century Czech Writing

As we have already suggested, exile, diaspora, and emigration have always been a part of the historical experience of states and nations. The Czech-speaking lands are no different. Occupying the central part of Europe, the Czech lands have long served as a crossroad in the region, which is how the Czechs perceive their lands, welcoming refugees from other countries and sending their own emigrants abroad. We know that

[21] Although our research focuses on the author-exiles, the situation of the authors who stayed at home deserves a brief notion too. Most Czechoslovak writers, French (57) argues, remained in Czechoslovakia and some of them withdrew into an inner exile, "maybe less permanent but no less tragic" (French 57). Some of them—Vaclav Havel, for instance—were able to publish their work through illegal (samizdat) or exilic publishers.

throughout human history, intellectual exile often had a religious dimension. As soon as heterodox figures emerged, they were often excluded by the church because their claims undermined the church's authority.[22] In the following, however, I will narrow down my focus and briefly examine the twentieth century history of the region, with particular attention to its exilic experiences. I will look at the diverse political circumstances that drove Czech writers out of their country, and then examine how this experience shaped the character of Czech writers in exile and their literary activity.

Generally, emigration from the *fin-de-siecle* through the First World War, and further, through the middle 1930s is marked, it seems, by a remarkable "pull factor,"[23] which is neither religious nor political in most cases. Economic considerations apparently dominated the exodus from Europe in this period. The turn of the century witnessed a large emigration from central Europe, particularly to North America, mostly for economic reasons.[24] Later decades, however, reveal more compelling material for our examination of Czech exile writing. From the perspective of exilic studies today, three particular time periods are important in the discussion of Czechoslovak exile. They are

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[22] Although The Battle of the White Mountain in 1620 was not the first political event of its kind, it was the most important in providing for a strong exilic movement. The victory of the Catholic majority over the Protestants marked the beginning of Czech intellectual exile. The Czech Republic, thus, may trace her historical significance to a few exiles who contributed to the Protestant movement—and literary contribution—such as Jan Amos Komensky (1592-1670), Pavel Stransky ze Stranky u Zap (1583-1657), Jiri Tranovsky (1592-1637), and Jiri Sarganek (1702-1743). Yet among the most significant exiles before the Reformation, however, Vojtech, Adalbert of Prague (956-997), should be mentioned. Vojtech was a bishop who was forced out of the country twice: firstly due to the difficult pastoral situation in pagan Bohemia, and secondly for the attack on his family led by the opposition nobility, the Premyslids, in 995. Vojtech, thus, might be considered one of the first intellectual exiles of the region. Here, we may also note the parallel between the religious heretics and political dissidents, especially in totalitarian states.

[23] A "pull factor," in contrast to a "push factor," has usually been described as a situation where a person is attracted to move from his or her homeland due to external motives—better economic conditions, job offer, appealing climate, etc.

[24] This, once again, raises the question of the exilic writer's character as discussed earlier. Is it possible to distinguish between intellectual and economic exile, after all? We know that people are multi-leveled individuals. Do not these aspects intertwine at some point in exile?

often distinguished by a year characterized by a significant political event or events, and are called emigrant waves.

Firstly, the year of the fateful Munich Agreement in 1938 included political, religious, and ethnic exiles from the Nazi rule; secondly, the Communist Coup of the 1948 forced the emigration of many of the bourgeoisie, democrats, and religious and political intellectuals; and thirdly, the failure of the Prague Spring in 1968 saw yet another wave of emigrants—disillusioned former members of the Communist Party, government officials, teachers, and writers.[25] It is obvious that each of these waves were defined by their own particular characteristics. It is especially important to regard each of them specifically and then to follow the particulars of selected writers during each period. Thus, in the following, I will examine the major historical and political events of each period and also explore their impact on those writers that later emigrated.

The Munich Agreement in September of 1938—by which Czechoslovakia was handed over to the Germans by her Western Allies—forced a high number of Czechoslovak citizens, both Jewish and non Jewish, to emigrate. The Second World War obviously caused a significant shift in the European population, as we know, and led to a new era of political, ideological, and racial exile.[26] If we look closely, we may identify

[25] It is not without interest, that all of them occurred in the year with a final figure of eight. Although this did not influence political and social perception of the events, nevertheless, it might have had some influence on the nation's perception of these three events and their mutual comparison—at least during the latter periods.

[26] For instance, the rise of National Socialism in the 1930s in Germany and Central Europe contributed to a large emigration of intellectuals, mostly Jews (Morewedge 102). Among the most significant—and literary active—are Thomas Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger and the members of the Frankfurt School: that is, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Siegried Kracauer, who later became significant author-exiles and their comprehensive writing—not only concerning exile—has been studied extensively. Jerry Zaslove argues, however, that in a case of Kracauer, for instance, exile played the decisive role for "everything he [Kracauer] wrote was in some way a snapshot of being an exile, or approaching exile, or thinking about the exile condition" (Zaslove, "The Reparation" 140).

several key figures of this mass emigration. As far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, many significant politicians and journalists emigrated before or during the Second World War.[27] Emigration during the Second World War, however, will not be specifically examined here. Given its extensive size, significance, and international impact, the Second World War needs to be studied separately. For the sake of our research—and its connection to 1948—nevertheless, we believe this period of the twentieth century has its own space in this study. For even before the Second World War was over, the world's leading politicians warned against the rising power of the Russian Bolshevism and communist doctrine. Czechoslovakia, an immediate neighbor of the Soviet Union, was not spared, and due to the Cold War a new type of émigré was introduced soon after the war, best characterized perhaps as bourgeois, democratic, intellectual, and literary.

As for the relations between Czech emigration and literature, Antonin Mestan, an exiled writer himself, gave an insightful lecture on the topic in 2000 in Prague. Mestan (53) argued that there are not many works concerning the Czech exilic life between the years of 1948 and 1989.[28] The question arises as to whether this was caused by the fragile psychological state of many Czech writers in exile, and whether they were trying to

[27] A Czechoslovak Government-in-exile, for instance, soon founded its office in London and under the supervision of former president Edvard Benes, worked on the restoration of the republic, taking particular care of post-war borders, finances, economy, and international diplomacy. Ladislav Feierabend, Hubert Ripka, Tomas Masaryk, Prokop Drtina, Vladimir Krajina, Jaroslav Drabek, and a diplomat Josef Korbel—the father of former American Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright—may be noted here.The Korbels—as many others—returned to Czechoslovakia after the war but emigrated again after the Communist Coup of the 1948 (Albright, Madam Secretary 23). Madeleine Albright, due to her later career, is considered one of the most significant Czech exiles ever to influence global politics. There was another group of exiled politicians based in Moscow during the Second World War and they—like the government in London—worked on the post-war political settlement. Their political approach, of course, was strongly influenced by the Communist ideology and strategy and later contributed to the Soviet control over Czechoslovakia. Among the most influential writers from the war period, Zdenek Nemecek, a Czechoslovak diplomat, should be mentioned.

[28] Mestan observes, nevertheless, this is not a case specific to Czechs; German, Polish, and Russian exiles also tended to be hesitant about writing about their emigration experiences in this period (Mestan 53).

distance themselves from the trauma of exile by focusing on alternative and less troubling themes (Mestan 53). In the following chapter, however, it is to those Czech writers who *did* indeed approach the topic of exile in the 1948 and 1968 periods that I will turn to, in order to explore how their situation of exile is reflected in their writing.[29]

[29] Yet before we approach the case studies of 1948 and 1968 we should briefly specify our sources, see Appendix.

CHAPTER 2 – JAN DRABEK AND THE 1948 COMMUNIST COUP

The Communist Takeover of 1948

Communist rule in Czechoslovakia began with the political takeover by the Czech Communist Party in February 1948, and initiated for the main post-war emigration in the region (Marrus 348). While following the historic path of exiles from the East to the West, hundreds of thousands of people from the Soviet Union or Soviet-dominated countries left their homes, seeking asylum in Western Europe or elsewhere. Many of them left for the first time; many for the second; nevertheless, most of them left for political reasons—they feared being trampled by communist persecution. Marrus (348) argues that, unlike most exiles in the Nazi era, Czech exiles were not expelled from their former domicile. Generally, they emigrated illegally or in flagrant contravention of government policy, and then they found themselves unable to return because of the likelihood of persecution at home (Marrus 348).

The communist takeover in Czechoslovakia, nevertheless, occurred relatively slowly. The east-ward direction of postwar politics was determined by the disappointing experience of the Munich agreement[30] and the German occupation during the war. Also, the fear of Germans played its role, when, in the elections of 1946, the Communist Party won thirty-eight percent of the total vote (Janos 314). Still, the cooperation of the

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[30] Janos (314) argues that it shows a "deep sense of disappointment with the West, whose major powers – England and France- had abandoned Czechoslovakia by signing the Munich accord of 1938 with Hitler's Germany."

communist and democratic parties seemed acceptable between the years of 1946 and 1948. The turning point of the February 1948 Coup resulted in the communist government seizing total political power; this, however, jeopardized the position of many democratic politicians and intellectuals, and led to immediate emigration movements. As Marrus (353) observes, following the communist takeover in Prague, about 5,000 people left Czechoslovakia for the American zone of Germany, and about 10,000 entered Austria. In all, some 50,000 Czechs quit their country before these borders, too, were closed (Marrus 353).[31]

As soon as the communist government was established in February 1948 emigration became rather difficult.[32] The late 1940s and early 1950s saw numerous show trials,[33] purges, officially sponsored anti-Semitism, and accusations of espionage, disloyalty, and subversion: "Within Eastern Europe, there was practically no escape, and flight to the West became increasingly hazardous" (Marrus 352). Elaborate efforts were made to seal the borders to escapees; frontier police emerged as elite formations, entrusted with the crucial task of preventing flight. Satellite border exit controls were constantly strengthened, as an American refugee adviser reported in 1953 (Marrus 352). Still, thousands of people chose exile and left Czechoslovakia illegally. Due to the month and year of the political change, these exiles are often referred to as the *post-February*

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[31] The political division of postwar Europe, however, was a result of careful preparation—so called "spheres of influence"—that had taken place long before. Janos (314) argues, for instance, that the political design of Stalinism was refined and routinized before the war, and was eventually imposed upon the countries of East Central Europe in the years 1945-48. Other historians, instead, perceive the Cold War as a result of the Tehran (1943), Yalta (1945), and Potsdam (1945) Conferences.

[32] For more on illegal emigration from Czechoslovakia see Celovsky's Emigranti, Drabek's Z casu dobrych i zlych, Ripka's Unorova tragedie, and Cermak's It All Began With Prince Rupert.

[33] "Show trials" often take place under authoritarian regimes in which the judicial authorities have already determined the guilt of the defendant: the actual trial has as its only goal to present the accusation and the verdict to the public as an impressive example and as a warning.

exiles or simply the *Forty-Eighters.*

Writers between 1945-1948

One may ask, of course, what role writers played in this geo-political situation. Although they usually are not politicians, writers often play a significant role in social and political change, as we have seen in the previous chapter. It seems as if some sense of intellectual commitment to the truth drives them to express their opposition to the regime and often they are even considered "unacknowledged legislators."[34] In telling a story or writing fiction they are often making allegorical references to the social and political establishment, as was the case of Czech writers during the National Enlightenment of the nineteenth century, for example.[35] We may argue that during the communist period—when all other forms were strictly censored—animation and children's literature, for instance, became the place where dissent could be expressed. Obviously, the Czechoslovak government was aware of the power of such criticism by writers and, consequently, Czech authorities attempted to co-opt the nation's writers soon after the war.

Alfred French (30) observes that writers in Western countries are accustomed to personal feuds or literary controversies involving politics: but almost never do such controversies have any decisive effect in the world of public affairs: "However threatening, grandiloquent, or seductive are the voices of poets or novelists; no one expects politicians taking much notice of them: and the polemics take on a reassuringly harmless image" (French 30). This was not so in Prague, French (30) argues.

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[34] See Aczel's The Revolt of the Mind on the Hungarian case on this, for example.

[35] We will see a similar motif in Vejvoda's short story "Little Donkey" later on.

In June 1946, literature's relationship to politics became the main theme of an official congress of the Czechoslovak Writers' Syndicate, and President Benes himself attended. The President drew attention to the close relationship between politics and literature in the past, noting that Czech writers have often spoken as the conscience of their nation (French 30). Now that their country had become a symbol of international co-operation, Czech writers for the first time had the opportunity of demonstrating their national ideals and tradition on the world stage. But their literature would only be worthy if they were free to autonomously and freely express themselves. It was believed that Czech literature needed to stand above conflicts between political parties, groups, or classes, and that it should not be used as a tool in such conflicts. It was asserted that, above all, freedom of expression needed to be vigilantly protected from interference by party, class, political or other non-literary influences (and of course protected from interference by the State itself). French notes the rather bizarre quality of the situation: a President appealing to his nation's writers to "safeguard freedom of expression from the state apparatus" (31). However, given the "matter of fact" manner in which Benes made such an appeal, it may be argued that he doubted that many Czech writers—voluntarily or not—would opt to preserve the autonomy of literature. French notes that the communists were already openly attempting to harness this appeal to their cause (31).

Yet, we observe that for writers, active engagement, through their work, in the process of social change meant that they were often forced to take up a political position (French 37).[36]

[36] Several Czechoslovak authors worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the Second World War. Egon Hostovsky, Jan Klecanda, Zdenek Nemecek, Ladislav Radimsky, and Emil Walter, for example, served as Czechoslovak diplomats during the inter-war period.

Although there are many authors whose exilic work indeed deserves a detailed examination,[37] I have chosen to focus upon the work of Jan Drabek—and will, in the following examine his perception of the historical trauma of 1948. This chapter, thus, examines the specific experience of Drabek and analyzes what of his post-1948 experiences were rooted in this historical, as well as personal, trauma. There are several reasons for such a choice: firstly, Drabek's literature is devoted to reflections on exile to significant extent; secondly, he lives and writes in Vancouver and his work is known to Canadian audiences; thirdly, his expression of exile is representative of the "generation of 1948." Although we need recognize the limits of generalizing the significance of Drabek's work, nevertheless, there may be certain parallels, attitudes, and approaches that are common among the *Forty-Eighters*. I believe that only a further—and much more detailed—study of other post-1948 authors can lead to solid historical and literary critical conclusions regarding this particular generation of authors.

Jan Drabek (b. 1935)

Jan Drabek was born on May 5, 1935 in Prague. His father, Jaroslav, was a lawyer, and the Drabeks (who were politically active parents, also had another son named Jiri), spent the Second World War both in Prague and in Paseky, a country house in East Bohemia. Jaroslav Drabek was involved in the political resistance movement during the war: he spent several years in prison and in Auschwitz. After the war, he was appointed a

[37] For instance: Ivan Blatny, Boris Celovsky, Jan Cep, Josef Cermak, Jan Dockalek, Viktor Fischl (aka Avigdor Dagan), Ivan Herben, Frantisek Herman, Frantisek Herman jr., Egon Hostovsky, Bedrich Herman, Rudolf Jilovsky, Jaroslav Jira, Jan Klecanda (aka Jan Havlasa), Erazim Kohak, Jan Kolar, Frantisek Listopad, Karel Loula, Jaromír Mestan, Jan Munzer, Rudolf Nekola, Zdenek Nemecek, Ferdinand Peroutka, Ladislav Radimsky (aka Petr Den), Milan Ruzicka, Milada Souckova, Vera Starkova-Secka, Jiri Skvor (aka Pavel Javor), Vladimir Stedry, Pavel Tigrid (aka Pavel Schonfeld), Ota Ulc, Robert Vlach (aka Jiri Kafka or Alfa), Emil Walter, Frantisek Zverina, and Jan Lubor Zink (I have compiled this list from various sources; for more information see Broucek, Cermak, Culik, Mejstrik, Pejskar, and Zach).

chair in the trial of K. H. Frank—a Nazi general in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Due to his strong pro-democratic attitudes and active involvement in the war resistance movement, he was proclaimed an "enemy of socialism" after the Communist Coup in 1948 and was thereby forced to flee the country. His active political life, as well as his family's dramatic escape, certainly influenced his son Jan, who was about to turn thirteen at the time of the family's exile.[38]

The family's escape was indeed a dramatic one: during a cold late winter night in March 1948, the family of four left Czechoslovakia on skis, traveling through the mountain range bordering on the American-occupied zone of Germany. Applying for the status of political refugees, they were transferred to a refugee camp and were able to immigrate to the United States of America in the same year. They settled in New York, where Jan Drabek attended college. After his graduation, Drabek tried several jobs between 1956 and 1958. He worked, for instance, for the US Navy, and between 1958 and 1960 he was employed as an editor for the Washington *Evening Star*. In 1961 Drabek left for Europe and worked as a refugee settlement officer in Vienna, Austria. Later that year he was offered a position as a broadcaster in Radio Free Europe in Munich, where he stayed until 1963. A scholarship enabled Drabek to study one year in India, from 1963 to 1964.

[38] Some scholars may argue that Drabek, due to his early age at the time of emigration, belongs to the post-1948 exile only physically (Mestan 57) and that his literary activity belongs rather to the post-1968 exile. We strongly disagree, however, with such an assessment for several reasons: firstly and importantly, Drabek left democratic Czechoslovakia and did not experience the subsequent Communist regime, which accounts for—as we will see later—some of the major differences of perception between the two exilic waves; and secondly, Drabek's teenage years in the USA in the 1950s cannot be, with certainty, ignored as not yet "mature." In contrast, I hope to demonstrate that Drabek's work provides for quite a typical representation of the post-1948 exile experience. Moreover, we may note a remarkable coincidence that Drabek—born in the same year as Edward Said—also became a refugee at approximately the same time as Said did. While the Drabeks escaped from a totalitarian regime, the Saids became refugees due to the Arab-Israeli war. We may see that, despite their early age at the time of emigration, both authors implemented an existential search for their own roots—to various extents—in their writing.

Upon his return to the United States in 1965, Drabek took a position as a travel clerk for American Express in New York. Having married a Canadian woman, Joan Sander, Drabek immigrated to British Columbia in 1965. There, for a short period of time, he taught at a high school in Vancouver (1966-1967), and during the 1960s and 1970s he worked as a travel agent and studied at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. He also served as the chair of the B.C. Federation of Writers and was a B.C. representative on the Caucus of the Writers Union of Canada.

After the fall of communism in his homeland in 1989, Drabek returned to Czechoslovakia in 1992 to teach English at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There he was offered a diplomatic career and served as an Ambassador of the Czechoslovak Republic (later the Czech Republic) to Kenya and to Albania for several years. In 1998 he retired from public service and returned to Vancouver, where he now lives.[39]

It appears that autobiographical sketches and narratives constitute the major genres of Drabek's work. He wrote five novels, ten nonfiction books, and a number of articles and essays. Drabek's writing focuses on the fate of a Czechoslovak émigré who wanders throughout the world. How were his experiences of exile and his response to the Communist Coup reflected in his work? What is Drabek's main theme? Does this representation of exile speak to us today? After careful examination of his literature, it becomes apparent that several key questions constitute Drabek's writing. Generally, Drabek's focus is on political, global, and external issues that we ascribe to the specific post-1948 context. In the following, therefore, I will focus upon Drabek's work through the following themes: the idea of enlightenment, an unending search, and the powerful

[39] Drabek, Jan. Personal Interview. May 25, 2006.

drive towards an understanding of the ethical.

Exile as Enlightenment

Firstly, Drabek's work is strongly autobiographical. As such, his literature often presents instructive narratives: it is as if Drabek's main goal were to educate, to cultivate, and to enlighten his readers. We may perhaps conclude that the instructive qualities of his writing are associated with his experience of being a son of an exiled political activist. Drabek and his family were the émigrés of 1948 whose main goal was to fight communism. While Drabek did not directly experience communism in Czechoslovakia, his upbringing, we may argue, provided him with a strong pro-democratic attitude. Exiles in the West fought their battles by condemning communist propaganda in the West. This was accomplished through publications, and through education, which warned of the dangers of totalitarianism. It seems that Drabek, although he left his homeland in his teenage years, perceived his role as an educator and felt responsible for sharing his views. While Drabek never missed a chance to point out how poor a student he himself was (Personal Interview, May 25), it is possible to observe the attempt to educate his readers in all his works. We may ask whether Drabek is anti-communist because he *says* that communism is bad; or because he *shows* how communism destroys the human spirit. We may ask if Drabek is primarily an anti-communist propagandist, or if he is an artist who explores the human spirit and in the process shows the horrors of communism. A thorough reading of Drabek indicates that although the theme of education is strong in his work, Drabek is not a theorist or historian. Instead, he is an artist, a narrator, who expresses his own perception of the world through fiction. Several books might be examined from this perspective.

Strongly autobiographical, Whatever Happened to Wenceslas (1975) is Drabek's first novel and one of his best known. The story concerns Jan Dubsky, who leaves Czechoslovakia in 1948, studies in New York, and serves in the US Navy—as did Drabek. During his stormy youth he meets a girl who eventually becomes his wife—together they spend several years in the South, before they are divorced, at which time Dubsky immigrates to Canada. The novel outlines Czechoslovak history during the Second World War, post-war political situation and the political views of Drabek's father and his generation. Although it is a compelling story that clearly aims to educate Western readers about central European issues, nonetheless it is not a historical textbook.

Drabek's The Lister Legacy (1980) also aims to educate the reader about Czechoslovak history. Its espionage-like nature introduces an elite British unit that is required to find and destroy a Nazi laboratory that is working on the development of biological weapons. The laboratory presumably occupies an old bunker along the Czechoslovak border in the Sudeten land, and the soldiers are confronted with numerous obstacles once they get to the area. Eventually, "Operation Lister" is successful, although many soldiers and civilians die before the war is over. The Lister Legacy, as Drabek (Personal Interview 25 May 2006) suggests, takes him back to his childhood in the Orlicke Mountains in Czechoslovakia. A house that Drabek's parents bought before the war becomes a model for a scene in the Lister Legacy. Also the main female character, Hana Dykova—an actor who helps the British soldiers to orientate themselves in the countryside—mirrors a then-popular Czech actress Hana Vitova, as Drabek confirms (Personal Interview 25 May 2006). This is one of Drabek's most thrilling novels, which addresses the popular topic of the airborne resistance during the Second World War. It

reflects on the controversial attack of British-trained Czechoslovak parachutists who killed Reinhard Heydrich—the German general assigned to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia—in 1942. While this theme was quite appealing to several other writers, Drabek felt that it was important to add his own fictional interpretation of this historical event. The dramatic nature of the book partially resembles Frederick Forsyth's The Day of the Jackal and The Odessa File as Drabek relies heavily on detail and dramatic gradation of the plot in this work. None of his later works embody the drama of the Lister Legacy and Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier.

Beyond these autobiographically-based works, Drabek wrote two more novels that oscillate between the exoteric and the academic. His Blackboard Odyssey (1973) was written during his teaching career at high school in Vancouver. Drabek traveled throughout Europe in order to complete a comparative study of higher education in Europe and North America. His extensive knowledge of various educational systems owes much to the exilic—and traveling—nature of his life.

Later, Drabek began a new—and very significant—period in his literary activity: that of non-fiction narrative. Thirteen (and Po usi v protektoratu [Up to the Ears in Protectorate]), Po usi v postkomunismu [Up to the Ears in Post-communism], Po usi v Americe [Up to the Ears in America], and Hledani stesti u cizaku [Searching for Happiness Among Strangers] all reflect his life experience and are clearly historically educational. Drabek's interest in history and politics is, after all, well defined by a Czech exile in Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier: "All Czech refugees study political science—or history" (Report 79). This characteristic of the post-1948 Czech exile aptly illuminates the intensity of their political and social engagement. They are not, and this

includes Drabek, indifferent to their homeland and to their new environment. We will see that this political and historical vs an existential approach constitutes one of the main differences between Drabek and Vejvoda.

Unending Journey

A second major theme in Drabek's work is that of searching for a home. The search for roots, love, and home constitute the core of most of his books. Both the earlier novels Whatever Happened to Wenceslas, and Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier, as well as his later nonfiction works Hledani stesti u cizaku, I Luff You B. C., Thirteen, and Po usi v protektoratu deal with his search to discover his own place. A theme of uprootedness is evident in all his work. Being exiled at the age of thirteen, Drabek naturally experienced difficulties of self-definition. Neither a mature adult, nor a child, Drabek sees his early years in America as both adventurous discovery and emotional struggle at the same time.

This struggle is skillfully presented in Whatever Happened to Wenceslas through the character of Jan Dubsky. Not an exceptionally talented student, Jan studies at an American high school, but his mind belongs to girls, to relationships, to a sphere where one may "work" without language, grammar, and diploma. Jan's sexually passionate relationships, his marriage, and his eventual divorce, reveal an intense search for identity. Feeling neither American nor Czech, Jan Dubsky moves from place to place (throughout the USA and Europe) struggling to discover his identity and his place. Dubsky seems to embody Said's image of the émigré who is never "satisfied, placid, or secure" (Reflections on Exile 186). A certain degree of restlessness draws our attention to a very fundamental character of exile—the feeling of being in a temporary state. It is as if the

exile continually awaits a return to his or her homeland, while being forced to live in a foreign land. This contradictory, dualistic, position emphasizes the significance of time. A sense of temporality, we argue, may lead either to detachment or frustration. Detachment, as Said suggests (Reflections 185), becomes a virtue that enables one to appreciate life on various levels; frustration, on the other hand, has a destructive nature. Although Whatever Happened to Wenceslas cannot be considered tragic in the usual meaning of the term, a certain degree of frustration persists throughout the text.

The motif of the quest is again introduced in Hledani stesti u cizaku [Searching for Happiness Among Strangers] (2005). The title itself suggests that this retrospective book deals with the author's own search. It is a nonfiction work, where twenty-eight-year-old Drabek realizes that he does not know where he belongs. As is usual with Drabek's books, questions that are too profound or too provocative to confront are avoided. Instead, he introduces an appealing narrative that appears to be merely entertaining. Fortunately, however, the work is nonetheless more than that. Exploring his own adventures and search for life's fulfillment in the 1950s and 1960s, Drabek—either intentionally or not—provokes the reader to reflect on her or his own life. Drabek (Hledani stesti 124) eventually acknowledges that a major influence in his quest for place were his two aunts that he encountered in Vienna some eighteen years after emigration: "My sweet aunts provided me with a more significant view on my homeland than anybody else. [...] I knew these ladies very well, they were the pillars of my childish environment in some sense" (124). His aunts enable Drabek to become honest with himself when they ask eventually: "So, how are you doing in your life? [...] Is it happy traveling, or are you still escaping from anything?" (Hledani stesti 125). Since traveling

constitutes a major part of the book, as it does in Whatever Happened to Wenceslas, we shall consider this question a crucial point. Is a young emigrant Drabek thoughtlessly enjoying traveling or is he searching for something else: a place to live, partner, home, identity? But can an exile honestly answer such a question? Does he or she really know what they are looking for? Did Drabek ever fully narrate his own quest? We may look at one of his books, I Luff You B.C., which deals with an identity-search indirectly.

Although it appears to be a travelogue, I Luff You B.C. (2001) enables Drabek to express his love and passion for his second home—British Columbia. Rather than dealing directly with the search for identity or place, this text explores what Drabek has finally discovered. Upon first reading, we may find the book almost too enthusiastically intense. Drabek devotes various chapters to his favorite—and least favorite—aspects of British Columbia's life, people, politics, history, and nature. The book is written in an informal manner, full of humor, jokes, and innuendos. Moreover, the language employed is very compelling and demonstrates Drabek's obvious discomfort with his other beloved country, Czechoslovakia. It appears as if disappointment with the post-communist society he encountered in the Czech Republic in the 1990s, finally releases him and he is able to express his strong feelings for British Columbia. It is not surprising, after all. The country he left in 1948 and was allowed to visit only forty years later had changed remarkably, not only due to the passage of time, but more particularly because the communist regime had so powerfully influenced and crippled its people.

It appears that Drabek, upon returning to Europe in the 1990s, may have recognized the difference between himself and other Czechs—a difference he might have not expected to feel and which he may have found disturbing. I Luff You B. C. then, may

be viewed not simply as an overly enthusiastic travelogue, but rather as an intensely subjective and emotional confession of love for a country that not only received Drabek as her own son and allowed him to develop his potential, but provided him with a much needed sense of belonging, a new home. Thus, as much as this volume may be considered a significant part of exilic literature—how to settle with one's inconsistent emotions—it may also be an example of "immigrant literature"—how to love a foreign country as a homeland. Here, of course, a subsequent question emerges: When does the foreign stop being foreign? Although exiles may often dream and struggle toward the end of their exile, is it possible for the exile to ever feel at home? Said (Reflections on Exile 186) argues that the fate of the exile is never to be "satisfied and secure" in exile. Is the émigré necessarily sentenced to unending exile then?

As for the Drabek's continual search, however, the most important works are Thirteen (1991) and Po Usi v Protektoratu [Up to the Ears in Protectorate] (2001), where his quest is articulated distinctively. Thirteen was written in 1991, and its Czech translation Po usi v protektoratu was published ten years later in 2001. The books, however, are not exactly alike. Drabek (Personal Interview 25 May 2006) admits that a Czech translation has been accommodated to fit an audience that did not need as much explanation of historical events as the English original did. Both books offer a detailed autobiography, tracing his childhood during the Second World War in Czechoslovakia and the following dramatic escape of his family. Particularly the conclusion of both volumes appears to be the most significant reflections on Drabek's search for home and identity.

In the English version of the text, Drabek expresses his emotions freely. After forty years of being in exile, Drabek returns to his homeland and—once again—faces the essential question of belonging:

> The night before my return to Vancouver I crisscross the Old Town once more. I cannot get enough out of it. *Where is my home*? ask the opening lines of the Czech national anthem. So do I. Home, to the glib and elegant Czech playwright and actor Voskovec, was merely a place where one hangs his hat. I beg to differ. For me, home is where we see our parents the first time. It is where we first recognize the sounds of our mother tongue—or any tongue. It is where we utter our own first intelligible sound, hear the first fairytale, and decipher the first written message. Home is where we discover the world (Thirteen 158).

Here, a fifty-six-year-old Drabek returns to the quest of his youth and asks what he has not asked for a long time—where is his home? Somewhat nostalgically, he acknowledges that it is here—in the house he was born in and in the streets where he grew up. It sounds like a happy end for one who has for so long been in exile: the man has returned home and his long-life desire for a home has been fulfilled. This is the English version of the text. The Czech one, however, written ten years later, lacks the sincerity, openness, and above all, the happy end of the previous volume.

Instead, Drabek is unusually brief: "The night before my departure I crisscross the Old Town Square once more. I cannot get enough out of it, but at the same time I ask where my home really is. And also, if this question—that J[osef] K[ajetan] Tyl solemnly formulated some 156 years ago—is still so much important today" (Po usi v protektoratu 159). There are no emotions, no real questions. We encounter quite an unusual phenomenon: an émigré hesitates to say whether the question of home really matters at all. Here, it is as if Drabek recognizes that the homeland he has always dreamt of is not home any more; it is as if his long-life desire and search has suddenly melted on the

cobblestones of his native town—as if the dream, having become reality, has lost its appeal. Should we conclude then that a significant change has occurred between the years of 1991 (Thirteen) and 2001 (Po usi v protektoratu)? Why did Drabek allow his emotions to flow so freely initially, but then later show no sign of how he felt some ten years later? Did his approach to his homeland change during this time period? Two possible explanations arise when we consider these questions.

The first possible explanation involves the exile's sensitivity to being confronted by situations which involve a refusal, or rebuff of any kind. While serving as a Czechoslovak diplomat in Albania in the 1990s, Drabek experienced a communication breakdown with some Czechoslovak officers. Drabek (Po usi v postkomunismu [Up to the Ears in Post-communism]) believed that his wife urgently needed to be taken to a modern European hospital by plane. The Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, however, insisted that all expenses for such a journey needed to be paid by Drabek himself, and Drabek agreed. The Minister expected a fax confirmation from Drabek before the plane was allowed to take off, and this caused a hazardous delay in his wife's hospitalization. Drabek felt this was inappropriate behavior on the part of a Czech official, and this might have led him to keep his distance from the homeland afterward. Exiles, who have been refused once already, may feel more sensitive and less tolerant than others when confronted with situations of this kind. Although a similar situation might arise for any Czech official, it seems that those once exiled often feel more insecure about their position in their homeland. Previous feelings of rejection may rise to the surface and be exaggerated in situations of this kind.[40]

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[40] After this experience, for example, Drabek decided to finish his diplomatic career and return to Vancouver (Po usi v postkomunismu [Up to the Ears in Post-communism].

A second possible explanation may lie in Drabek's feelings of disillusionment and disappointment; Drabek (Po usi v postkomunismu 214) directly expresses some feelings of disillusionment with the post-communist Czechoslovakia. Living in exile for over forty years, Drabek's memories of Czechoslovakia necessarily had some qualities of childhood romanticism. Although growing up during the difficult war years, Prague was nonetheless a magical town for a boy of his age. While experiencing the dramatic period of German occupation, his country and countrymen had the twenty-year experience of democracy prior the Second World War. We may argue that the situation in Prague during the early 1990s was much different than anything the country had known before. The domination of the communist-controlled society had a powerful influence on its citizens, and human relations were first to change: people no longer trusted each other; egoism, fear of each other and the social system prevailed; and the experience of democracy vanished. For a man returning to Czechoslovakia after forty years of absence, change could not have been more significant. The disillusionment of a person who spent most of his life in North America—a society that welcomes and utilizes, to some extent, multiculturalism, national differences, and personal approaches to life and work—was perhaps too strong.

The Czechoslovakia of the 1930s was a different place, and Drabek's childhood memory, as so often happens, kept alive the joyful, positive, and human society – a society in which people were connected to each other and shared the common enemy of Nazi Germany. Due to his early emigration, naturally, Drabek did not experience the shift from a democratic society to a violent state where human rights and freedoms were severely curtailed for many decades. His joyful return in the early 1990s, thus, initiated

another painful experience—it was a different country, and he did not, it seemed, belong to it any more. It may seem as if his return initiated another kind of exile: that is, not being at home in one's own homeland for the second time. Is not this an even more painful experience than being expelled from a native country? When the exile thinks of his home in a faraway land—even if this is a neighboring region—he or she often still feels confident that there is a home that may at some point be returned to. Many exiles indeed settle down in a new country, marry its natives, become citizens, and find security and happiness. Sooner or later, however, the roots that have their foundation in the exile's homeland often make themselves felt, and the exile feels driven to return. But what if they find that it is a different country, which does not welcome them with open arms? What if they realize that they cannot identify with its people and its way of life any more? What if they feel strangers in their native land? I would suggest that Drabek's work naturally leads us to these questions.

The socio-political atmosphere of a post-totalitarian state, moreover, cannot be changed overnight. People need time to adapt and acclimatize to change—and Drabek arrived in Prague just at an unfortunate stage in its post-communist development. He came—as many exiles indeed did—enthusiastic and full of ideas about how to improve the country's reputation, image, and administration. As much as Drabek was ready to help his homeland—as his father did after the Second World War—the attitude of distrust and rampant bureaucracy he encountered were too strong for a Westerner. It is not surprising, after all, that Drabek encountered remnants of communism everywhere—in housing, work, shopping, and social life—and could not understand it: "I do not know Communism; after all, I lived under the Communist regime for a week only" (Jan

Drabek. Personal Interview 25 May 2006). His one-week experience of the communist regime, thus stands in a strong contrast to Vejvoda's twenty-eight years under the same regime. It does, we will see, determine their various approaches not only towards the world around them but also to emigration itself.

A year after his Po usi v protektoratu, nevertheless, Drabek published Po usi v postkomunismu [Up to the Ears in Post-communism] (2002) where the issue of home appears once again. Contemplating on his English-written Thirteen, Drabek re-considers the closing lines when he writes:

> It was mainly the absence of some national cohesion that made me return to Canada. [...] I, a Czechoslovak-born, was particularly depressed by that. And all of sudden I realized that I have indicated in my Canadian-published memoirs that my home is in Prague. I was wrong then. It was under a strong wave of enthusiasm that overwhelmed me after my arrival in Czechoslovakia some eight years ago. There is no doubt that my roots are in the Czech Republic. My home, however, is not (Po usi v postkomunismu 214).

Drabek, in a moment of sudden insight, distinguishes between one's roots and one's home. These final lines reveal a new awareness: while living in exile he had been consistently drawn back to his native homeland through nostalgic memories of his childhood home; he has felt that he belonged to Czechoslovakia or Czechoslovaks. However now—when he is finally free to live wherever he wants—he has discovered a new kind of liberation from his past. For forty years Drabek was not permitted to visit his country of origin, and this impossibility—together with aging—had intensified his interest in the place from which he came. Only now, after having some negative experiences in Czechoslovakia, is Drabek able, and perhaps comfortable, to call Canada his home (I Luff You B. C.).

This confession may well conclude a study of Drabek's search for home. Once exiled, an émigré faces the question "Where do I belong?" again and again. Even while he might have found his new home in another country, he is still drawn to his place of origin. Thus Drabek finally distinguishes between his Czech roots and his Canadian home, and after a lifelong search he feels and acknowledges the pluralistic nature of his life and self. This quality of pluralism, as well as the detachment that comes with exile, may eventually provide the émigré with a certain degree of satisfaction in his situation of exile.[41]

The Call for Ethics

Lastly, I would like to refer to Drabek's emphasis on ethics. His novel Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier (1977) not only touches upon issues of enlightenment and exilic quest, but it also approaches the issue of ethics. This text is an exploration of values: justice, ethics, democracy, freedom, patriotism, religion, and violence.

Antonin Klima, the protagonist, is imprisoned in a Prague prison, where he has been visited by a Russian official, Simeon Zolotenko. Zolotenko is apparently searching for the motive of a murder that Klima committed. Zolotenko, an embodiment of the Russian rule, does not believe in a mere criminal murder. All his visits consist of determining a true motive—Klima's connection to the West and a possible connection to the resistance movement. Their dialogue resembles a philosophical disputation rather

[41] Interestingly, I have not found much of religious discussion in Drabek's work. Although various ethical and social issues are negotiated in Drabek's work, any transcendental questions are strictly avoided (the Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier is exception). While Drabek grew up in a Protestant environment, religion did not play a significant role later in his life. Although he does not seem to identify with any particular religion, he perhaps aptly represents the agnostic attitude that is common with Czechs. Jaroslav Vejvoda, we will see later, takes a similar approach. Although their work consists of existential and transcendental questions, they do not take up any direct spiritual attitude.

than a police interrogation. Zolotenko's stubborn search for a wider political significance on the one hand, and Klima's passive satisfaction with personal revenge on the other, represent two different worlds of understanding (7):

> "Understandably, some of the men in higher positions are worried."
>
> "Worried? Why? I am safely behind bars and certainly not planning on escape."
>
> "No, there isn't much chance of you escaping. They're more worried about what you may represent."
>
> "Oh. Like truth, justice, heroism, retribution—"
>
> "Mostly they're afraid of murder."
>
> "I haven't committed murder."
>
> Simeon Zolotenko looked out of the barred window to give me a chance to settle down and also to provide for a proper pause before smoothly changing the subject.
>
> "Mr. Klima, I'm not here to enter into semantic, philosophical, or even ideological discussion with you. I am not very good at that sort of thing. But it is felt that your motives should be understood, your way of thinking."
>
> "I thought my actions, my life, were an open book."
>
> "No, they're not. You must realize that what may be understood in the West is not always clear here. Since I've spent considerable time in the West, I'm aware of the differences."
>
> Zolotenko paused, as if wondering whether what he was about to say should be said. Then he added, "Not that I always understand them (7)."

Retrospectively, we learn that Klima escaped from Czechoslovakia after the Communist Coup in 1948, and then spent several months in Western Europe with his uncle Colonel—who died under suspicious circumstances in Germany—and later emigrated to

Canada. The reader has no idea what murder has been discussed; only at the end do we learn that Klima—Canadian citizen—returned to communist Czechoslovakia to kill a particular official there. Living peacefully in Vancouver, that is, Klima incidentally had found that a certain man, Rosenkavalier, tortured people in a communist concentration camp and also shot to death Klima's uncle many years before. Klima, now an ordinary Canadian citizen who has never experienced happiness and fulfillment in exile, obtained false Czechoslovak documents in order to revenge these murders. Given that he does not believe in justice in a communist state, he decides to fulfill the "moral" revenge himself. Klima finally kills Rosenkavalier, by then an officer at the Ministry of Interior, and, having become a prisoner in a Czechoslovak prison, faces Zolotenko and must explain his motives. The nature of this book is philosophical, as is the interrogation regarding the premeditated murder. Zolotenko, surprisingly, expresses a degree of sympathy with Klima and his "moral" mission at the end. Eventually, Klima is executed for murder with a suspicion of political motives.

On the issue of ethics, we may sense that two different approaches collide here. Klima, who kills Rosenkavalier in an act of revenge for lost lives, does not still consider his action as murder. Zolotenko, whose Bolshevik bureaucracy daily kills innocent people, is not interested in Rosenkavalier's death either; rather, he investigates the political and ideological motives of murder. We may speculate that Zolotenko is more interested in the power that a killer has, rather than the act of murder itself. Klima, who identified himself as a Christian, finally introduces a specific retributive Christianity:

> [...] Absolute non-violence, the non-resistance to evil, often seems to result in greater suffering and evil. It has its place in certain exceptional situations – some pretty important situations such as Christ's non-

> resistance all the way to the cross, the Christians in Roman arenas, Martin Luther King in the U.S. And certainly in the Gandhian victory in India.
>
> [...] That's why I think the use of non-violence against Communists is virtually impossible. You've taken the proper precautions. First you've almost hermetically sealed your people from the outside world. And even if the news of a non-violent attack against you got through, you've managed – mostly through the reduction of religious influence in your country – to destroy the proper moral fibre for receiving the message of non-violence and, what's even more important, to draw the proper conclusions from it (89-90).

This revolutionary approach does not relate to anything else in Drabek's work. An idea of violence that might be justified by good intentions, however, is not new.[42] What is unique is Klima's appeal to violence against communist practices. Eventually, the émigré Klima discloses his profound thought:

> [...] By destroying the spiritual aspect of your society you've also destroyed the idea of a deeper, supernatural basis for suffering, pain and death. It's all meaningless without reward in the other world and therefore much more frightening (90).

For Klima, the danger of communism—or other totalitarian regimes—is not contained within its economics or politics. Rather, the danger lies within the ideology that steals hope from its people. This is what draws the Canadian Klima to return to his homeland and to kill the officer. Frustration, restlessness, and pain, all accumulate in Klima's life to such a pitch that he is capable of finishing his task.

Other ethical approaches, patriotism and empathy, for example, also receive attention in the character of Klima's friends. Klima is adjusting to a new homeland when visiting a friend in the Prairies. When three friends—Czechoslovak refugees—contemplate their affection to a new land, Riha says suddenly:

[42] In Christianity, we may find similar attitudes in Liberation Theology, for instance.

> God, I love it here. This is where I should have been born, without being bothered by goddamn alien ideologies, without people crowded into medieval cities where they keep building barricades against tanks. Imagine if I had been born in Portage la Prairie! If I went to school where primarily I'd have learned the difference between a Holstein and a Longhorn, where no one except the local reverend had a plan for saving mankind—and his would be a nice, gentle one. [...] These people around don't hate. I mean it: THEY DON'T HATE! Winnipeg is full of Germans against whom some of the farmers around here fought less than ten years ago, and in British Columbia they're compensating Japanese they herded into camps when everyone was running about scared of an invasion. No one has to run away anywhere. There are just these incredible stretches of land, and on them the Ukrainians are producing wheat for the Soviets, which their relatives in the Ukraine are unable to produce because they're collectivized and demoralized. Isn't it crazy (86-87)?

It is not only the countryside that charmed this man; it is its atmosphere and friendly people that provide such a contrast to post-war Europe and enable immigrants to feel well. Drabek—as we have seen in I Luff You: B. C.—does not need to mask his affection for Canada. Instead, he looks for the good and positive aspects of it, in order to choose his own home voluntarily now, as much as Klima did (Report 78). Their own happiness in a new country, however, does not draw them inward. Instead, they are now fully able to sympathize with their countrymen who still suffer under the regime:

> And what about those who were dragged between us to muster on those deadly, freezing mornings at Jachymov and Leopoldov, whose cold bodies had to be accounted for before they were loaded up and taken away? What about Beda and Jiri, the two who were shot beside me near Cheb, at a spot from which we could already see into Germany? And Mita, who survived then but died horribly two years later because his system rebelled against the red radioactive dust in the mines? God, they all must be remembered (Report 156)!

We can empathize with Drabek's characters. Their experience produces neither hatred nor apathy; rather, their experiences enable them to perceive the world from a larger ethical perspective. Their encounter with a Canadian pluralistic culture, provided for a

tolerant and unbiased approach to life and people. While they did not become heroes and fighters against the communist ideology of their homeland, they nonetheless understood that a positive attitude was more fruitful than otherwise. This shall not be found, for instance, among the *Sixty-Eighters* and in work of Jaroslav Vejvoda.

It is not unusual to encounter ethical reflection in the work of the *Forty-Eighters*' writing. We have seen that Drabek positions Antonin Klima in the role of a judge of humanity. While contemplating revenge on Rosenkavalier, hence, Klíma represents a tool of God's justice. He does not question the moral aspect of such an act; he does not ask if revenge is justifiable or not. Klima's consciousness is above the law within the corrupt communist state that Drabek portrays. Drabek's appeal, thus, is a call for social and political ethics, rather than a discussion of individual moral values.

The Character of Drabek's Work

Although Jan Drabek left his home country at a very young age, his exilic experiences influenced his future life profoundly. As we have seen, feelings of uprootedness constitute a major theme in his work. Drabek's writing and allows him to express and explore thoughts and feelings which are central to his life, and there are few situations and ideas within his written work that were not also present in his life. All his works, whether fiction or non-fiction, reflect a particular sensitivity toward detail and description.

Drabek is, first and foremost, a great narrator who draws inspiration from the world around him. While it is primarily Drabek's own exilic life that inspires his novels and non-fiction, he also touches on historical issues that are outside of his own direct experience (such as in The Exotic Canadians and I Luff You B. C.) Drabek's language is

often tender, which softens painful experiences and feelings of political disillusion with humor and fun, which is, interestingly, a rather common approach in Czech literature. Beyond being entertaining, Drabek's work also presents a humorous—yet gentle—portrayal of the painful reality of the émigré's homeland. Not surprisingly, Drabek often writes from the first person perspective, and often employs direct speech. Drabek also interweaves the imaginative with the real.[43] If we rely on Lever's (21) view—that the narrator tells what "he believes has happened to actual people," and the novelist tells what "he believes happened to imagined people" (Lever 21)—then we see that Drabek plays both roles in his work; he is at times a narrator, at other times a novelist.

Furthermore, we may ask whence Drabek draws his inspiration. Situations within his work very often represent the real environment that Drabek knows, whether it is post-war Europe, America in the 1950s, and Vancouver in the late 1960s, or Prague in the 1990s. The prison scene from Report, however, is not grounded in personal experience, yet is very real. Jaroslav Drabek, his father, spent several months in prison in Prague during the Second World War and later published memoirs of this experience in Z casu dobrych i zlych [From the Good and Bad Times]. While Drabek has not seen the prison first hand, his description of particular prison practices is very cogent and specific to those of the communist prisoners. Drabek skillfully introduces the practices of the Soviet generals: suspicion, surmise, and distrust constitute a considerable part of the Report. His accounts appear accurate and many real prisoners emerged after the democratic change in the 1990s to give witness to the nature of communist prisons. Drabek also plays with

[43] One of the stories in The Exotic Canadians, for instance, suspiciously evokes a story of how Drabek met his wife. In the "Prisoner of the Big Apple" (48), a lady's name is Nancy Sanford, while his true wife is called Joan Sanders. Nancy, however, lives and teaches in Ottawa (as Joan did), and meets Drabek in India (as Joan indeed did). In this fictional book, however, the story has a different progress—Nancy is a girl friend of another man.

history and intertwines events; at times he appears to interweave Nazi practices and communist ones. Even while fictitious, his work creates the impression of credibility and personal experience.

To conclude, Drabek chose to see his life in the political perspective of the time period that was granted to him—from the Second World War, through the Cold War, and finally, through the democratization process in the Czech Republic. Drabek is a writer who senses that daily events have a connection to international politics and global issues. Drabek, initially a victim of 1948 Communist Coup, understands his role accordingly: he shares the marginalized democratic past of his homeland in his literature and devotes a considerable amount of energy to educate on communist—and other—ideological dangers. Thus, his work reflects on significant post-war issues, while at the same time it deals with an individual's emotions and life. His unending exilic search, as it appears in most of his books, challenges both exiles and non-exiles to perceive their own life alternatively.

In the next chapter we will examine a very different perspective: that of a post-1968 exile. Jaroslav Vejvoda, unlike Jan Drabek, focuses on the internal rather than external issues related to exile. His anti-political attitude in particular makes for a significant contrast in their writings, as we will see.

CHAPTER 3 – JAROSLAV VEJVODA AND PRAGUE SPRING OF 1968

Prague Spring of 1968

The period of the sixties, from a literary point of view, was even more significant than the previous years. Along with the social turmoil in the West (the hippie and student movements, for example), Czechoslovakia experienced her own socio-political upheavals. After twenty years of a strict hard-line communist rule, the state now became more flexible under Alexandr Dubcek's notion of "socialism with a human face." Political prisoners were being released; a relative freedom of the press was tolerated; and a new kind of socialist politics was introduced. In the mid-1960s the whole cultural community in Czechoslovakia was very actively involved in pushing for a liberalization of the communist system. Its efforts were successful, culminating in six months of almost complete freedom during the "Prague Spring" of 1968. French (212) argues that what ended up as a movement for wide political, social, and cultural reforms started as a set of proposals designed to promote improved efficiency, balanced economic growth, and a better use of the country's human and material resources. The troops of the Warsaw Pact, headed by the Soviets, however, seized Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and restored a new—and more dogmatic—communist Government.

At one stroke, the Czech cultural community, almost in its entirety, was removed from public life, and those most affected were writers (Culik, "Czech Literature and the Reading Public"). Thousands of people left the country, including even pro-reform

communists, socialists, once-active members of the Party, writers, and others (they are referred to as either *post-August* exiles or *Sixty-Eighters*). While a relatively weak Czech exilic literary tradition in the West between 1948 and 1968 existed, the arrival of new émigrés after 1968 gave Czech émigré cultural life a strong boost (Culik, "Czech Literature and the Reading Public").

The 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, according to Culik ("Czech Literature and the Reading Public"), was extraordinarily successful and cast Czechoslovakia into a "timeless, neo-Stalinist zone" for almost two decades. When the post-1968 purges "cleansed" the Czech cultural scene of some four hundred writers (Culik, "Czech Literature and the Reading Public"), taking their place were writers of lesser rank. It is important to emphasize that the post-1968 exilic community came from the same roots and shared the same mindset as the dissident community of about four hundred Czech writers (Culik, "Czech Literature and the Reading Public") who had stayed behind. Both Czech exiles in the West and the dissident community in Czechoslovakia were children of the 1960s liberalization process and its culmination, the 1968 Prague Spring (Culik, "Czech Literature and the Reading Public").

To conclude, we may look at how Culik ("Czech Literature and the Reading Public") defines Czech exilic literature as that kind of writing which "attempted to compare and contrast life in Czechoslovakia with life in the West, to map out the process of psychological adjustment of people who left Czechoslovakia for the West, and to broaden the horizons of Czech literature, by enriching it with international experience." Culik admits, however, that Czech independent literature has not been studied in any great detail from this angle yet ("Czech Literature and the Reading Public").

Czechoslovakia is not perhaps unique in respect though, and what has been said on Irish exilic writing by Ward (xi) may be applied to Czech too: "Perhaps the most striking feature of an examination of the secondary literature concerned with exile, literature and Ireland over any period is how little there is generally and how little has been written about by Irish commentators" (Ward xi). Can we understand this lack of academic studies on exile as a challenge for further research?

Writers of the Prague Spring

Although Czechs generally tend to exaggerate their author's prophetic role (Pilar qtd. in Culik, "Literarni konference"), such enthusiasm seems appropriate for the period of the 1960s, in general, and the Prague Spring, in particular. Even while some succumbed to the mirage of the Soviet-type socialism after 1948, writers were the first to revolt against the totalitarian forms of Stalinist conformity, argues Hana Benes (98).

The 1967 Fourth Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers in (June 27–29 in Prague) became an important landmark. The period preceding the event (especially since the 1956 Second Congress of Writers) was marked by an immense literary activity of authors who dealt frankly with the "basic issues bearing on the spiritual and intellectual life of the nation" (Benes 102). Their writing departed from the Soviet concept and revealed that "the Spring" of Czechoslovak literature had arrived after the long "winter of cold Communism" (Ladislav Radimsky qtd. in Benes 98). In 1967 the congressional discussion became the first public analysis of the main issues of Czech and Slovak literature, argues Benes (104). Milan Kundera, the first speaker of the session, stated that the "Czech nation was again in danger of being relegated to the cultural periphery of Europe" (Kundera qtd. in Benes 103) and Ludvik Vaculik observed that "no

single human problem has been solved" during the communist twenty-year rule (qtd. in Benes 104). Yet other prominent writers raised their voices against the ruling Communist Party: Vaclav Havel, Ivan Klima, Pavel Kohout, Josef Skvorecky, Jan Benes, and others. The Communist Party responded with strict persecution;[44] and it was this persecution of writers and their resistance that eventually played a crucial role in the fall of President Antonin Novotny in January 1968 and initiated the democratization process of the "Prague Spring" (Benes 106).[45]

The following months, as we have already seen, brought liberation to almost all spheres of Czechoslovak life and provided for further literary activity. The unexpected invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops, however, struck the nation as a shock and caused people to "shrink in horror" (Benes 111). On August 26, 1968 the Union of Czechoslovak Writers condemned the Soviet Union for its violent attack and declared its opposition to the invasion (Benes 111). Eventually, the arrival of political "normalization" –the 1970s return to strict communist rule—was marked by the persecution, imprisonment, and exile of many authors.[46] Culik ("Czech Literature and the Reading Public") argues that from the late 1970s onwards, Czech exiles in the West collaborated intensely and with unity of purpose with their dissident colleagues within Czechoslovakia and that both these literary groups had now more or less merged under the heading of Czech "independent literature"

[44] Vaculik, Klima, Kohout, and Havel were removed from the Central Committee of the Writers Union; the Union's newspaper, *Literarni noviny*, was forbidden to publish the speeches delivered at the Congress; a show trial of Jan Benes and Karel Zamecnik was held by the Communists. Moreover, together with them Pavel Tigrid, an exile of 1948 and editor of the *Svedectvi* periodical in Paris, was tried (Benes 105).

[45] As for the relation to Czechoslovak exiles, Vaclav Havel promoted political pluralism, for instance, and called for political practices of pre-war Czechoslovakia, and favored reconciliation with members of the post-1948 non-Communist and anti-Communist exiles (Benes 109).

[46] In November 1968 Jaroslav Seifert, for example, paid attention to colleagues who left the country: "We trust that they will return. And we shall welcome them with open arms" (Benes 113).

("Czech Literature and the Reading Public").[47]

We have seen that writers played an important role in the process of democratization in the 1960s (Benes 97). As in many times in the past, they now became political spokesmen of the nation "struggling for freedom and national independence" (Benes 97). Benes also emphasizes the responsibility of writers for the nation's moral and spiritual stability and sees writers as the "living conscience" of the Czech nation (97). Though their role was often exaggerated in the past, we have seen that the role of the writer in the politics of the 1960s deserves a strong recognition. Accordingly, we then need to ask how well the post-1968 exilic writers played their role of being the conscience of the Czech nation for those abroad. Were they able to overcome the trauma of the violent interruption of the promising Prague Spring? Did they employ their social and political experiences of the 1960s and their experiences of exile in their work?

As demonstrated earlier, the exilic community of post-1968 authors was rather significant. Some scholars suggest, Culik among them ("Czech Literature and the Reading Public"), that it included some four hundred Czech writers, which, for a country with a population of fifteen million, is quite a large number. We do not know how large a percentage they comprised of all Czech authors; however, their impact on the literary world was not due to their numbers only. Their personal experience of corrupted

[47] Such a consistent approach that *samizdat* and exilic writers shared raises the question of the other-than-physical exile. Perhaps, we should consider the situation of those writers who did not withdraw from the country. However, their work was placed on the banned list, and they experienced a kind of inner exile, as noted earlier. Moreover, Culik ("Czech Literature and the Reading Public") believes that the dissident community in Czechoslovakia coalesced in 1977, into the human rights movement, Charter 77, and people were united by a common goal. The same, it seems, applied to the mainstream Czech exilic culture in the West, which closely collaborated with the Charter 77 activists and disseminated their ideas. Notwithstanding an early controversy over Milan Kundera's émigré work, both the exile and the dissident writers "were broadly in agreement politically, philosophically and aesthetically" ("Czech Literature and the Reading Public").

socialism put them in high demand, both in their own country and abroad. A few, indeed, satisfied the demand for political analysis of the 1960s for the international audience; some, on the other hand, provided valuable analyses of exilic life. Yet others blended these two elements together in their work—and they were particularly important for the West. The most influential and significant Czech exiled writers—Milan Kundera and Josef Skvorecky—represent the latter. However interesting these two men are, nevertheless, we shall pay attention here to some of those writers who have not yet been examined in a scholarly manner heretofore. While Kundera and Skvorecky have already received considerable attention for their exilic writing, we are interested here in seeing how other writers also expressed their exilic experience and how the readership, literary critics, and Western audience regarded them. Did they devote their literary skills, for example, to represent the experience of the painful loss of their homeland?

I have chosen to study the émigré approach of Jaroslav Vejvoda, because Vejvoda provides us with strong insights into exilic communities and the exilic soul. His depiction of exile — no enviable fate — embraces very intimate, individual, and existential questions. However, the character of *Sixty-Eighters*[48] is very diverse in comparison to the *Forty-Eighters*. Let us note the most significant attitudes among these writers.

Ludvik Askenazy and Arnost Lustig, both Jewish writers with Holocaust experience, stand alongside idealists such as Milan Kundera, Pavel Kohout, and Ivan

[48] For instance, Ludvik Askenazy, Jan Benes, Jaroslava Blazkova, Antonin Brousek, Ivan Divis, Ota Filip, Josef Fisera, Jirina Fuchsova, Jiri Grusa, Dusan Hamsik, Vilem Heil, Jiri Hochman, Miroslav Holub, Jaroslav Hutka, Josef Jedlicka, Pavel Kohout, Jiri Kolar, Petr Kral, Antonin Kratochvil, Jan Kresadlo, Karel Kryl, Milan Kundera, Vera Linhartova, Jiri Loewy, Artur London, Arnost Lustig, Stanislav Mares, Karel Michal, Ladislav Mnacko, Patrik Ourednik, Jiri Pelikan, Jan Peroutka, Jan Pivecka, Rio Preisner, Michaela Prunnerova, Peter Repka, Sylvie Richterova, Zdena Salivarova-Skvorecka, Ivan Schneedorfer, Karol Sidon, Josef Skvorecky, Ivan Svitak, Alexandr Tomsky, Vlastimil Tresnak, Karel Trinkiewitz, Jaroslav Vejvoda (aka Jaroslav Marek), Bronislava Vokolkova, and Monika Zgustova (I have compiled this list from various soruces; for more information see Broucek, Cermak, Culik, Mejstrik, Pejskar, and Zach).

Blatny, once devoted young communists; there were also writers with strong anti-communist attitudes such as Josef Skvorecky, Jaroslav Vejvoda, and others. Some argue, however, that their diversity was most visible only after the fall of communism when many of them returned home and outlined their different perceptions of democracy. It is generally believed, however, that post-1968 authors were in a much better position than their predecessors, for several reasons. Firstly, the Prague Spring was extensively monitored in the confused and insecure West of the late 1960s that was looking behind the Iron Curtain with hopes for social change. Secondly, due to their pre-exilic activity and large dissident community, these authors were often supported by their homeland. Thirdly, they grew up in the cultural and social unity of socialism, and many of them experienced the initial passion for, and disillusionment with, communism. Although they were all exiles from communism, we observe that political writing after their emigration was rather rare. It was perhaps a deep disappointment with the failure of the Prague Spring that prevented them from further involvement and interest in the politics.[49] Scholars generally agree that although they were not politically unified and involved, the intellectual exile of 1968 influenced the Czech literary scene in a more profound way than did 1948 exiles. Let us examine how specifically this was played out in their exilic writing.

Mestan (56) examines the extensive work of Josef Skvorecky (b. 1924), especially his novel Pribeh inzenyra lidskych dusi [The Engineer of Human Souls], that follows a certain Czech man into his Canadian exile (Mestan 56). It is a strongly autobiographically oriented work that allowed Skvorecky to depict transition from the

[49] This does not mean, of course, that the Czech politics of the 1960s was ignored in their writing. We argue, however, that it often served as background to more substantial questions of human relations.

homeland. Skvorecky built its plot around the character of Danny Smiricky who had already been introduced in the novel Zbabelci [The Cowards], which was written soon after the Second World War. Skvorecky's skillful interpretation of human relations that are affected by the trauma of emigration provides a very interesting outline of exilic community. Skvorecky also wrote a play for the Czech exile theater in Toronto called "Buh do domu" ["God in House"], which tried to reflect on the conflicting relationships between the political exiles and Czech visitors to Canada (Mestan 57). Milan Kundera (b. 1929) is another writer who considered emigration in his work (Mestan 57). For example, both Kniha smichu a zapomneni [The Book of Laughter and Forgetting] and Nesnesitelna lehkost byti [The Unbearable Lightness of Being] manifest the philosophical nature of exilic perception. Not only do these writers struggle to deal with the political issues of occupied Czechoslovakia, but as they raise existential questions, they are confronted with a new dimension in their own lives (Mestan 57).

Jan Benes and Jan Novak immigrated to the US and both, more or less, employed the exploration of the exilic experience in their work. Jan Benes' (b. 1936) Bananove sny [Banana Dreams] and Zelenou nahoru [The Green Upwards], for example, deal with the assimilation of Czechs into American society; through the eyes of his characters, Benes struggles to comprehend the North American lifestyle (Mestan 57). Jan Novak (b. 1953), who immigrated as a teenager, published Striptease Chicago that explores the years after 1968. Unlike Benes, Novak's work focuses upon the miserable quality of life for those in exile, although, as Mestan notes (58), it is not clear whether his emigrants were already troubled prior to their emigration. Later he wrote the novel Willy's Dream Kit that portrays ethically problematic emigrants (Mestan 58). Among the other writers who

occupied themselves with an emigration theme we may mention Vlastimil Tresnak (b. 1950) and his To nejdulezitejsi panu Moritzovi [The Most Important Goes to Mr. Moritz], a Dostoevskian novel, which is situated in West Germany and employs several exilic topics, such as searching for one's parents and the life within an emigrant community. Otto Ulc (b. 1930) also deals with exilic themes in Spatne casovany bezec [The Wrong Timed Runner] (Mestan 58).

Several nonfiction volumes also emerged and, naturally, autobiography constitutes a major part of much of this writing. For example, Jiri Traxler (b. 1946) wrote Ja nic, ja muzikant [I am a Musician], Kamil Behounek (b. 1916) published Ma laska je jazz [My Love is Jazz], Jara Kohout (b. 1904) introduced Hop sem, hop tam [Hop and Skip], and Karel Hvizdala (b. 1941) anthologized interviews with twenty writers in Ceske rozhovory ve svete [The Czech Interviews Abroad] (Mestan 58). Jaroslav Hutka (b. 1947), initially a singer, emerged as an essayist in exile and his "Pozar v bazaru" ["Fire in the Bazaar"] and "Hostina" ["The Banquet"] reflected aptly on the exilic experience (Pilar, "O ceske exilove literature"). Although we have briefly examined the major works—both fiction and nonfiction—that deal with exile, we need to note that a search of this literary field did not reveal as large a number as expected. While other literary genres such as poetry and songs were not a part of this research, their contribution would not at any rate considerably change the sporadic nature of exilic writing.[50] I will examine the novelist Jaroslav Vejvoda, for whom the post-1968 emigration became a leitmotiv of entire literary work.

[50] See "Exil v ceske moderni poesii" by Petr Kral. This paper, which was presented at the symposium on Czech emigration in 2001 in Prague, briefly examines a few major exilic poets and their expression of exile.

Jaroslav Vejvoda (b. 1940)

Jaroslav Marek was born on September 13, 1940, in Prague. He graduated in 1962 from the Law School at the Charles University in Prague and, after two-years in military service, Marek worked as a lawyer and journalist. In September 1968, after the failure of the Prague Spring, Marek went into exile in Switzerland where he worked as a chief assistant and as a librarian, as well as studying Law at Bern University. Rather than finishing his studies in Law, he decided to write instead. Yet later he worked as a media analyst and for the Free Europe Radio. Eventually, Marek moved to Zurich, where he worked as a lecturer and also in the media. Soon, he started using the pseudonym "Jaroslav Vejvoda" for his exilic work. Culik ("Lidstvi na skripci") argues that this was due to the fact that the Swiss authorities did not permit non-citizens to publish work that was of a political nature. Stanislav Broucek (Kandidati 110), on the other hand, argues that Marek choose a pseudonym in order to protect his relatives and dying mother in Czechoslovakia.[51]

Before his emigration Vejvoda wrote short stories, essays, and a novel. Although this novel, Vzdusne polibky posilati [Sending the Air Kisses], was never published, it was recognized by the Nase Vojsko publisher in 1965 (Culik, Knihy 152). His first published novel—Plujici andele a letici ryby [Swimming Angels and Flying Fish] (1974)—was awarded the Egon Hostovsky Award in 1974.[52] For this research we have analyzed the books that Vejvoda wrote between 1974 and 1991, all of which were written

[51] It should be noted that relatives of emigrants often suffered from the Communist Police's interrogation and persecution. They often experienced various professional troubles, such as being denied the right to study or work at their institution of choice.

[52] "Cena Egona Hostovskeho:" Czech literary award for outstanding exile novelist was granted in the 1970s and 1980s in Toronto in honor of Egon Hostovsky—post 1984 exilic writer. Jaroslav Vejvoda, actually, was the first writer to be ever awarded this prize.

in Czech. However, he wrote dozens of essays and articles, both in Czech and German, as well as several plays and screenplays, such as "Die Wohnwand" (1988), "Das kalte Paradies," and "Hunderennen." In 1997 Vejvoda returned to the Czech Republic and has been teaching at the Charles University and The Writers' Academy of Josef Skvorecky (Broucek, Emigrace 170-171). He has published two other books—Jezdci noci [Night Riders] (2003) and Smrtihlav v laznich [The Death's-Head in a Spa] (2005)—since 2003.[53]

Although Vejvoda studied law, and practiced it for several years in Czechoslovakia, literature appealed to him greatly. While in Czechoslovakia, Vejvoda wrote and published numerous articles and essays, and during the Prague Spring he quit his legal work in order to become an editor of the *Lidove noviny* (Broucek, Kandidati 111). As Broucek indicates, Vejvoda signed his contract with the paper on August 20th, the day before the invasion. However, he never began his work as editor, leaving in exile soon afterwards. In exile, his literary and textual activity broadened in scope and Vejvoda wrote a number of books, articles, essays, and screenplays. We have already mentioned some of Vejvoda's crucial themes. In the following, we will explore Vejvoda's reflections on feelings of uprootedness, his use of eroticism, the existential questions he raises and his provocative call to "awaken" his readers.

Disturbing to Awake

While Drabek employed his energy toward educating us on Czechoslovak history and politics, Vejvoda's energy is directed toward opposing and disturbing his apathetic and negative-thinking Czechoslovakian counterparts. Vejvoda portrays his characters in

[53] Sources: Broucek, Emigrace a exil 170; and Culik, Knihy za ohradou.

various situations where they are unable to pretend being other than what they really are. Thus, a reader may encounter Vejvoda's emigrants in their lowest state of being—in desperate, lonely, and frustrated moments. Vejvoda seems to be continually questioning the ethics of his readers and his countrymen. Plujici andele a letici ryby [Swimming Angels and Flying Fish] (1974) is a collection of short stories, each of them capturing various experiences of Czechoslovak refugees in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Switzerland. The book was well received by critics and literary counterparts.[54] Indeed, the book offers a valuable insight into the joys and pains of this exilic community.

The story of "Dobrocinny bazar" ["Charity Bazaar"], for example, expresses a common theme in Vejvoda's work (we see this theme again in his "Hunderennen" [Dog-racing]. A young female emigrant, staying in a refugee camp in Vienna, visits a charity bazaar in town in order to choose a few pieces of necessary clothing. Being a well-schooled young lady, she takes off her coat and puts it on a hook by the door upon entering the room. While checking the clothes on the tables, she is seized by a desire to possess things, and soon realizes that her present desires may represent much more profound needs such as place to belong to, people she could relate to, and vision for her life. Having contemplated her own fate, however, she does not choose many of the offered clothes, but rather, takes only luxurious silk pajamas. When she decides to leave the bazaar and return to the camp, she realizes that her own coat is missing from the hook where she had placed it. After a careful examination of the room and its last few visitors, she notices another lady who is putting on a coat, and realizes that this is her own! A short exchange with the lady and her husband shows that, in spite of a common language,

[54] For instance, Josef Skvorecky—who published the book in his Sixty-Eight Publishers—praised the new artist and his depiction of exilic understanding (Vejvoda, Plujici andele, Foreword ii).

they do not understand (or believe) her cries. The couple departs, with enraged sighs and her coat. As there is nothing to do she sits on the doorstep and cries aloud. As she leaves the room, she notices a little chalk writing in Czech on a wall: "Chickie, thieves around!" and "Kopriva is a cop!" (Plujici andele 43). This story presents an exchange between characters that is typical in Vejvoda's fiction; we will see later how the exilic relations are important for the author.

In "Sklenice chladneho mleka" ["A Glass of Cold Milk"] Bozka, a female nurse in a Swiss hospital, has been watching the rain and the head nurse's vegetable garden below her window. She thinks about her medical student boyfriend Martin, with whom she left Czechoslovakia. The story displays a philosophical dimension as Bozka writes, in her mind, a letter to a friend she left behind: "Do you know the feeling? You are swimming in the aquarium and, all of sudden, you don't have enough oxygen?" Plujici andele 94). The reader soon learns that Bozka did not want to study medicine, but rather philosophy. As her thoughts develop we may see her disappointment with Martin's approach to life: "Politics is shit; I do not mix with it" (Plujici andele 109) Martin claims. Finally, Doctor Brzezinski comes to announce his leave and finds Bozka deep in thought: "How can a man assimilate?" Bozka asks him. The doctor, who has left his native land twice, lost his parents, and his wife and son, thinks for a moment and then replies: "Only plants and unicell organisms assimilate. A man holds a dialogue with his environment. [...] A man can integrate but should stay active" (Plujici andele 110-111). Such a "dialogue" constitutes a very significant part of Vejvoda's work. While, on the one hand, Martin expresses his rigid and anti-political approach ("Politics is shit"), through Doctor Brzezinski, on the other, we also hear a voice that encourages dialogue with the political

environment. Such an eloquent presentation of these contradictory positions are more common to post-1968 authors. After all, this tension between apathy and engagement, as we shall see later, constitutes a leitmotif in all of Vejvoda's work.

Vejvoda's story "Babicko, posli mi modryho slona" ["Grandma, Send Me a Blue Elephant"] appears to be different from his previous ones—it is written from the perspective of a child—but nonetheless asks familiar questions regarding the nature of exile. In it (Plujici andele 82-83), the reader comes to understand the loneliness of a little girl who is writing a letter to her grandmother: "Grandma, send me a blue elephant, that one with a broken ear..." she writes (Plujici andele 82). She is explaining to her Grandma that, while she has received many presents from her father, she dislikes most of them. Her father, who is obsessed with the task of quickly integrating his daughter into a new country (as well as being obsessed by his need for display before his fellow countrymen), buys an "education tool" and a microscope for his daughter. His daughter, however, does not enjoy these strange things and complains to her grandmother: "So, there is, for example, WISSENSCHAFT FÜR KINDER written on the box. It is like... something... for kids; do not be angry with me, grandma, I do not know that first word in Czech. Mum says that I forget so much, but I do not know if I have ever known these words" (Plujici andele 81). In this story, Vejvoda explores the situation of a young child who cannot possibly understand the changes in her life that have come with exile. Through the perspective of a child, Vejvoda is able to capture the exile's feelings of isolation that are the result of the loss of native language and of the familiar—here represented by a stuffed elephant. These are perhaps the essential emotions of exiles. For example, the little girl tries to adapt to her situation by emulating her parents' own struggle for adaptation:

> I don't want to write badly about dad. [...] But he is always angry if I do wrong, or if I do nothing—although there is still a lot to do not to be different. It is not good to be different, the best is to merge with the crowd so that people will not watch us and notice mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes, but if he is one in the crowd, these mistakes are not visible (Plujici andele 88).

Here we encounter a familiar question regarding the struggles inherent in transition and assimilation for the exile. Appearing different makes assimilation more difficult, Vejvoda indicates, and it is this painful process of transition and adaptation that constitutes a significant part of exilic literature in general. Vejvoda contends that the logic of transition and assimilation poses serious ethical problems for those in exile.

The novel Osel nebo splynuti [Donkey or Fusion] perhaps represents the provocative and allegorical nature of Vejvoda's work at its best. The opening chapter introduces the main character, Alexandr, in a theater during a rehearsal of Dostoyevsky's The Idiot. Alexandr, once a graphic designer, now works as a stagehand. Reading through much of the book, the reader remains uncertain as to the setting of many situations. There is another character, referred to as CLOVEK, who is Alexandr's colleague from the theater. As the story unravels, we find that Alexandr and CLOVEK have devoted two years to making a 15-minute movie—an animated story of a singing donkey—that has been broadcast on television recently. Alexandr is shocked to discover that a "fairy tale of a little donkey" is now seen to be a political critique of his host country, Switzerland. Still, Alexandr disagrees—it is not he who is responsible for the creation of this story, it is CLOVEK who has inserted his political jokes and satire into Alexandr's pictures. The reader follows the story of a singing donkey who arrives at the entrance to a nice pasture with many other donkeys, only to find that, unfortunately, the pasture is fenced with a high wall, and the little donkey has yet to find his way through

the gate. Here, he learns that he must first work before being admitted into the pasture. The donkey brings water, stones and wood back and forth, while his little songs grow weaker and weaker. Finally, he is not able to sing any more; the only sound he can make is "I-A-I-A!" At this point, the donkey is allowed into the pasture, whereupon he eats, eats, and eats. Suddenly, there is another, thin and hungry, little donkey behind the bars, who would like to enter the pasture. The singing donkey, who is not singing any more, looks with disgust and says "I-A-I-A."

Vejvoda uses this fable to illustrate how social and political structures form the character of their citizens. It is a story that exposes the manipulative potential of social power, as well as the individual's susceptibility to social control (this is reminiscent of George Orwell's Animal Farm). Vejvoda is, presumably, referring not only to the democratic Swiss regime, or to the communist Czechoslovak state; he is also suggesting that no one anywhere is immune to the abuses of political or clerical power. Alexandr, now feeling exposed to the punitive potentials of social and political power, is frightened of what may come next: will he be confronted by the Swiss police, immigration officers, and even his friends? He feels he must defend himself against all criticism; his story of the singing donkey is to be understood, he insists, purely as a satire on the role of artists in an industrial society. He claims that it was definitely not meant as a "contribution of two young artists to the discussion of the situation of people who came to live and work here, those who work but cannot be full members of the society" or even as a "satiric parallel to the biased assimilation of a foreigner in this country, whose persona and culture are not respected; whose role is not to accept and pass on his own experience, but rather to become one in the crowd." The story also gains a criminal aspect when drug

dealers enter the scene and extort Cecile, CLOVEK's girlfriend. CLOVEK agrees to take on Cecile's guilt for her and, subsequently, experiences custody, psychiatric treatment, and total life failure.

Vejvoda addresses disillusionment and conformity in this work and uses striking parallels to support his view that communication between "Eastern" and "Western" European cultures is not possible in the contemporary situation. Culik (Knihy za ohradou 155) stresses the symbolic importance within the story of the rehearsal of The Idiot (which is being directed by a Soviet director). The fact that The Idiot fails with the Swiss audience, Culik argues, points to the differences and a lack of understanding between the Swiss and Russian cultures. The Swiss audience considers the play too philosophical on the one hand, and lacking elements of the then popular socialist realism, on the other (Knihy za ohradou 155).

Vejvoda's story "Ohen" ["A Fire"] in Provdana nevesta [Married Bride] uses eroticism to awaken its readers. It begins with the introduction of a Czech-Swiss émigré, Vaclav, who is working temporarily as a tourist guide in a Croatian town. He is expected to meet a woman from Czechoslovakia he has never seen before. They have only exchanged a few letters. Vejvoda gives a thorough introduction to Vaclav: we read of his past, his emigration, his lack of success abroad, his longing for relationship and for a woman. When Vaclav finally meets Eva, however, he is disappointed by her cold approach. He has been dreaming of a lovely erotic night with her but she shows no interest in him initially. After being left on his own, Vaclav drinks all night, only to awaken the next morning to find that he has received a message from Eva that indicates the place of their next date that evening. The following day, after their tryst, Vaclav

contemplates his fate and a possible future with Eva. However, Vejvoda chooses to suddenly break the harmony established up to this point in the story. After a hot night on a Croatian sandy beach, a naked Eva gets up and asks him: "Where are the things?" (Provdana nevesta 142). It takes a few moments before Vaclav realizes that she is asking for the *gifts*—makeup, creams, and perfumes—he had said he would bring her from Zurich. The cynicism of the exile is at the centre of this section of Vejvoda's story:

> Eva eagerly searches inside the car, enlightened by a light strip. In all her hurry she had not bothered to put on her dress. [...] With the same desire she was touching Vaclav's body a while ago, she is now looking for the crinkly bags with the Zurich shopping that were intended for the modest Eva—so Vaclav thought. That was, however, a different woman from this hustling figure. [...] Vaclav's eyes try to avoid the theater-like scene, he looks up to the stars and sounds of the sea, to the red horizon (Provdana nevesta 142-143).

Vaclav is struck by momentary depression and sadness. He was indeed dreaming of this woman's body; nevertheless, this brutal change in her behavior is too crude for him to bear. He wants to leave and forget the embarrassing moment.

The clash between the exile and the citizen who remains in the homeland is a conflict that often concerns Vejvoda, but here it is represented through the sexual encounter between Eva and Vaclav. Their erotic encounter, while having the potential of leading to an enriching relationship, becomes sad, disappointing and impersonal. Similar clashes and misunderstandings constitute much of Vejvoda's work that often portrays the disappointed, frustrated, and unsuccessful exile who confronts a frigid, suspicious, and featureless countryman from Czechoslovakia. This story, as with much of Vejvoda's writing, draws a picture of unhappy people: and this seems to be the case for both the exile who emigrates and the one who stays behind the Iron Curtain. Vejvoda's work suggests that it is not the Swiss legal system that is to blame for emigrants not feeling at

home in Switzerland, for the Czechs in Czechoslovakia do not feel at home either. Vejvoda opens up a broader and more general discussion on issues about belonging and happiness which fail to provide us with a hint of a solution. However, "Ohen" concludes with Vaclav's accidental realization that Eva has a destroyed face, a face she is ashamed of. Her desire for make up thus becomes something more than the mere consumerism Vaclav initially thought it was. Eventually, we may notice that Vejvoda's apparent cynicism is perhaps a mirror offered to the reader, rather than an expression of negativity and emptiness. His characters are more human than they first appear.

Once again, Vejvoda is not simply criticizing a legal system, but rather satirizing a common characteristic of those Czechs who were not able to succeed on their own. These figures, without motivation or higher ambitions, end up in pubs giving advice over their beers to the whole world on how to run a government, a state, a woman, a family. Vejvoda is trying to demonstrate, it seems, that neither exile nor home itself is able to guarantee happiness or the direction of one's destiny. On the one hand, we are not solely responsible for our own happiness; on the other hand, those who went into exile without a deep idea, motivation, and courage, found themselves feeling "homeless," uprooted, and overly critical, in their families, in their professions, and—above all—in their spirit. Vejvoda shows this tragic fate without melancholy or excitement. He is describing what he has seen and—to some extent—experienced himself. He is not proclaiming these people heroes, nor is he condemning them as villains. Vejvoda's literary strength is in his ability to capture the usual and the ordinary, to awaken his reader while there is still a chance for change. Most of Vejvoda's characters seem to hold a mirror to the reader that

says: "Learn what you are and where you are heading soon enough, lest you become a one of these drunk and frigid figures."

Yet Vejvoda's inclination to disturb his reader is a strongly compelling attribute in his writing. If Said (Reflections 182) argues that willfulness, exaggeration and overstatement are often the characteristic styles of the exile, then Vejvoda uses exaggeration in his literature to provoke his readers. The exile feels disturbed by the realization of his own vulnerability, which he feels more acutely than others given his transition to a new place, and Vejvoda in turn, takes this feeling of being disturbed and directs it towards his readers in an attempt to awaken them to their condition. Disturbing one's readers may well be the essential role of the intellectual, as Vaclav Havel indicates:

> I, too, think the intellectual should constantly disturb, should bear witness to the misery of the world, should be provocative by being independent, should rebel against all hidden and open pressure and manipulations, should be the chief doubter of systems, of power and its incantations, should be witness to their mendacity. For this reason, an intellectual cannot fit into any role that may be assigned to him. [...] An intellectual essentially doesn't belong anywhere; he stands out as an irritant wherever he is; he does not fit into any pigeonhole completely (Disturbing the Peace 166-167).

According to Havel, an intellectual—in our case an exilic writer—is naturally determined to search for new perspectives and approaches, which is exactly what Vejvoda is trying to accomplish in his work. Is not disturbance, after all, a basic—and the most challenging—attribute of an exile?

On Uprootedness and Homelessness

Similarly, the theme of uprootedness is another of Vejvoda's essential concerns. Darko Suvin (117) argues that the central problem of exile is "to belong," and this is skillfully represented in all of Vejvoda's work. The insecurity that his characters often

feel is not only a consequence of emigration but also of a deeper existential trauma.

Often represented by a loss of citizenship, Vejvoda brings forth the issue of uprootedness in almost every story he writes. “Vylet do Tangeru” [“Trip to Tangier”] in Ptaci [Birds] (1981) introduces a young Swiss woman who has been spending her vacation in Spain with her teenage sister. The older sister wanders through a hot Spanish city and contemplates her still single life: she has been so unlucky—her family emigrated from Czechoslovakia to Switzerland when she was in her twenties, and this has complicated her Swiss citizenship. Her sister, who has just left with a group of people for a one-day trip to North Africa, Tangier, was not ten yet when they moved to Zurich. Given that papers were not refused to children by the Swiss authorities, her little sister received her documents quickly. What an injustice! When both girls board the plane and watch the beautiful ocean and snow-capped mountains beneath them on their way home, her little sister says to her: “You know, sister, a passport is not everything, after all!” (Ptaci 113). The older sister considers this the “strangest sentence” she has ever heard. It seems that a passport, a magical piece of paper, represents freedom to the greatest extent for Vejvoda. In many of his stories we read of the passport—the embodiment of Swiss citizenship—as a means toward happiness. Here, however, we have yet to learn that even a Swiss passport does not guarantee total success, for the younger of the girls, who is a Swiss citizen with a passport, nonetheless spends a day at the customs office in the Moroccan port city of Tangier for lack of a required visa. It appears that Vejvoda is indicating, once again, that the power of officials places them above political freedoms and the guarantees that we mistakenly assume come with a passport. Also, a conflict between the “generations” and the distinct nature of their experiences is interestingly

portrayed here: "My little sister suspected that I—being homeless—preach ethics; that I envy her a chance to go home [to Czechoslovakia], where she does not want to go, for it is not her home. While I, my soul being there and my body being nowhere—at least as far as citizenship is concerned—envy her and make up mere aphorisms" (Ptaci 113). We will meet a similar motif yet again in "Mesto andelu."

"Mesto andelu" ["City of Angels"], which is a part of Provdana nevesta [Married Bride], is an exceptionally masterful story. A half dozen Czech men travel from Switzerland to Bangkok to enjoy sexual pleasures in the "city of sin." As the story unravels we learn that all are unhappy emigrants who were not able to start a family or make their fortune abroad. All are disappointed with their life in Switzerland and their desires are limited to beer and Bangkok women. The conversations of these unlucky men soon give way to feelings of frustration and emptiness. Upon their arrival in Bangkok, however, they realize that their papers—documents of their refugee status—will not enable them to enter the country and enjoy the least of earthly pleasures. As they fly back to Europe, the main character reflects on his life. Emphasis is put on his recollections of a particular vacation in Romania and a short-term relationship that left him with an unpleasant disease. While this is rare in Vejvoda's work, he here touches upon politics and allows his character not only to contemplate existential questions but also to perceive his life within a larger global context: "A venal healer helped me out of my physical troubles with a penicillin cure, but in a week—due to the uninvited arrival of tanks—my personal pain shifted into national tragedy" (Provdana nevesta 108).

Vejvoda's comparison—and fusion—of personal troubles with national tragedy is quite suggestive here. Vejvoda distinctively draws a parallel between eroticism and

politics, and, interestingly, both have failed in his eyes.[55] Such an allegory provides for an intriguing discussion regarding Vejvoda's focus on non-political themes. It is as if one's particular life not only depended on politics but also provided for it—as if personal pain constituted national pain. Faithful to his non-political approach, Vejvoda does not go into details; does not explain why the 1968 invasion was wrong. Rather he uses this political trauma—well-known and widely condemned in the West—in order to effectively portray his character's pain. Unlike his beery comrades, this man looks for meaning behind his pain. His psychological reflection then illustrates feelings of frustration and uprootedness that—combined with personal failure—leads to passivity and despair (Provdana nevesta 104-105): "My family's volcano erupted and released lava of misunderstanding that has been heating for years," reflects the main character on a plane back to Switzerland. Further, he tells us:

> But, both my women have a common refuge—exclusive to foreigners—a country where I have an address but not home yet; a dialect that I have not mastered; relatives, I do not know what to talk about with; a countryside that has not cuddled me. Where should I run to? To a pub where they would sprinkle me with beer for my family's problems, a family that most of them have not even been able to start? To my native land where I will be allowed only if I apply for a pardon for my long past escape? Escape that international conventions—my country signed it too—consider my human right? Or to Bangkok, where I have just been kicked out? I know, as I have known for years, that there is no place to run. My first and last flight—for many a show of cowardice, for others an adventure, for me a mere start, not a solution—it was and is a powerless attempt to escape from myself (Provdana nevesta 104-105).

Vejvoda explores the deep disappointment of a man who is successful neither in his homeland, nor in his new country. His adopted country is not a home yet, and while he

[55] This reminds us of Vaclav Havel's emphasis on "non-political politics," for instance. Havel, as with many other Czechoslovak writers, suffered disappointment with the politics of the 1960s, given that it was not able to prevent invasion by an outside power.

would be glad to become a citizen, having a Swiss wife and daughter, apparently, does not provide for it yet. But citizenship does not appear to be the goal here. Is not his search for stability, acceptance, and friendship more than just waiting for the papers? A refugee status that had been given to him many years ago does not help him to find his own place on earth. Rather than presenting a critique of the Swiss legal system, Vejvoda is here addressing a common theme of human unrest. Perhaps because he is entering a spiritual sphere that he finds uncomfortable, Vejvoda suddenly switches to a prosaic question upon his character's arrival home: "Have you had something for supper?" asks his wife to conclude the story (Provdana nevesta 105).

Vejvoda excels at raising profound questions with ease; however, his greatest virtue is to return to earth quickly. After reflecting seriously on his experience, Vejvoda often concludes with a simple—and perhaps cheap—notion that does not ethically challenge the reader. However, one should be aware that Vejvoda knows of the atheistic and agnostic character of his Czech readers and so appears to avoid reference to the spiritual aspects of life. One might also argue that some of his writing is only accidentally provocative and does not aim at anything other than entertainment. The difficult fate of most his characters, however, says otherwise—all the broken families, frustrated men, disappointed women, restless refugees waiting for their papers, and painful betrayals of homeland—illustrate the reality of life in exile. Through tender language, Vejvoda represents the worst aspects of emigration. His work illustrates Said's (Reflections on Exile 186) notion that being in exile is to be never "satisfied, placid or secure." Vejvoda's characters are not happy, and their lives are not getting any better soon. Real tragedy, according to Vejvoda, does not lie in large international events, but in one's own

approach to everyday life: joy and pain. The eloquent appeal in Vejvoda's work is his invitation to the exile to question his role and attitude toward both the strange and the familiar. His characters are confronted not only with the political events of world-wide impact or with their fellow-exiles, but also with their own "souls." They need to ask and search for answers, even when they may never be ultimately answered. Vejvoda's novel, Zelene vino [Green Grapes], illustrates this yet, again, in a fuller and more comprehensive manner.

Zelene vino [Green Grapes] (1986) seems to be one of the most impressive works on the exile's uprootedness. Hidden behind the events of an ordinary family's life, Vejvoda poses serious questions concerning the human condition: What is one's role in society? Is the exile responsible for his or her own fate? Does she or he need to "fight" against the power that forced them out of their country? Zelene vino introduces a Czech family of three who have been living in Bern, Switzerland. Each of them represents a different exilic fate: the wife, Jana Landova, was a journalist in her homeland; the husband, Petr Landa, is a lawyer; and their teenage son, Karel Landa, who is against everything. The story follows their thirteenth year in Switzerland in 1981—as indicated by the global events, such as the assassination attempt on John Paul II. It is not without interest that several details resemble Vejvoda's own situation: he lives in Bern, he is a lawyer, and the novel is written in his thirteenth year abroad. All of the above indicate the strong autobiographical flavor of the book.

The story opens as a *babicka* ("grandmother") from Czechoslovakia arrives for a visit, and we have a chance—through her eyes—to examine this family's life. It begins with the family's trip to the city, where they once worked in a hotel and dreamed of a

better future. Instead of being wealthy restaurant guests now, however, they are confronted with the successful hotel manager, a certain Gustav Ptak, their Czechoslovak counterpart. Misfortune and dissatisfaction with their exile, thus, is obvious from the very beginning. Frequent arguments between the husband and wife, as well as their irritable interactions with their son, are often provoked by their frustration over Swiss citizenship. Although Karel has been a Swiss citizen for some time, both parents are still waiting for their papers, which causes a lot of nervousness and discontent within the family. Individual chapters follow particular family members through their daily lives, depicting their thoughts and dreams, as well as examining their departure from communist Czechoslovakia.

Jana Landova works for an organization that provides a daily newspaper market survey for its clients. Her duties are to read all the dailies, cut out the required information, and arrange a volume for a client. As the story progresses, Jana is offered a new position: working in a messy underground office on a new project, collecting good news from the newspapers. The "good news project" is a creative idea, and the author plays with the image of the exile—an educated reporter herself—sitting in a dark office and looking for the good of the world, even if she has not been able to find her own. Jana has no a particular interest in her work—or family—any more. Eventually, a change occurs when she is offered publication of her own writing on the exile's experience within bureaucratic Switzerland.

Jana's relations with her family are of a similar nature to her professional ones: having spent her childhood and youth in submission to others, she is now slowly realizing there might be more. As she asserts her own rights—not necessarily feminist ones—her

world starts to change. Now she demands more attention, more appreciation, and a chance for growth. None of these are provided easily for her; she is a female migrant without papers—nevertheless, she is ready to fight for what she wants. Although obtaining Swiss citizenship is a first step toward her happiness, she decides to publish her manuscript that criticizes the Swiss government and its immigration policies. Despite her husband's plea not to publish it, and to play the good immigrant instead, Jana stays in her bedroom when an immigration committee visits their home, saying: "I will not pretend for them! I did not pretend at home, why should I pretend here? Either I am good enough like this or not at all. After all, they know very well we cannot go back. Why all these comedies then? I would rather stay a foreigner than play the monkey for their fun (Zelene vino 84)." The sudden emotional escalation that Jana experiences, is, significantly, caused by a new job offer that provides her with much needed hope for a better future. When she is not given the job she has dreamed of, however, Jana leaves for a holiday in Malta to write a travel guide series for the newspaper. Even this journey, however, and her brief romance with a young Czechoslovak doctor, does not appear to have any life-changing results. Later, back in Switzerland, she desperately awaits any letter from Malta, and when she finally receives one, it is only a note from the doctor asking Jana to send him some Swiss medicines for his patients. Thus, her wish for change—any change—is not fulfilled. Jana—a graduate journalist—finally delivers newspapers, and Vejvoda does not indicate where her future might lead.

Petr Landa, a doctor of law, has been working in a clerical position at an insurance company for several years. Petr, like his wife, feels a need for change. When he is approached by a supervisor to begin a project on nuclear energy in Vienna, he requires

no time to make a decision. His vision of a promotion and success, however, is in vain, and soon Petr loses both his job and hope. He receives another job offer in Vienna, when a stranger calls and asks for his co-operation. At first, Petr is suspicious of everything unfamiliar. This suspiciousness is a simple—though significant—attitude in the novel and, of course, in political exile experience. Petr suspects his friend of publishing a critical article on Petr's nuclear research, suspects his wife of cheating, suspects his son of not appreciating freedom enough, suspects his colleagues of not supporting his work, suspects the Swiss government of not trusting him enough, and suspects the Czechoslovak government of spying on him. Petr's suspicion, however, is not an explicit theme of a novel—one must seek it out; it is hidden between the lines. Even Petr himself is not aware of it, and he is neither exaggeratedly negative nor pessimistic. Rather, it seems, he is simply dissatisfied with his life: with his family relations, his work, and his plans for a better future. In the end, the stranger turns out to be a wine seller who proposes that Petr import a particular wine into Switzerland. Eventually this leads to a much-needed change, and we are led to believe that his wife joins him in the successful wine business.

The sixteen-year-old Karel Landa, on the one hand, and *babicka* on the other, represent a kind of stability in the family. Although they can hardly communicate with each other—Karel does not always understand her Czech slang—and they do not share common political views—Karel being a youthful anarchist and *babicka* a loyal communist—they find common ground when they are left alone in the summer. Although the two of them get along well with each other, there is an obvious gap between the woman and her grandson. The *babicka*, having experienced war and totalitarian

government, as well as the escape of her son, is not quite sure what to expect in this strange and foreign land. She does not, for example, understand how to operate a dishwasher, and Vejvoda uses this image as a symbol of two different worlds.[56] Despite their differences, however, these two characters find more harmony than the husband and wife throughout the book. Their desire to leave Bern—although each of them for different reasons—creates an interesting alliance, and as the story develops, Karel decides to take his *babicka* to a railway station in Germany so that she may leave for the home she misses so much. Two of Karel's friends volunteer to accompany the couple and drive his parent's car. Their several-hundred-kilometer journey may well serve as an image of leaving one's place and experiencing liberty. As we follow the story, we see that Karel and his *babicka* each need to find for themselves the space that they both lacked greatly in Bern. When the grandmother is finally on the train, Karel realizes that his friends have tried to smuggle drugs back into Switzerland, and his capacity for trusting people is eroded. Returning home to his parents later on, Karel, in time, becomes a fine student, who is busy with his temporary evening job. This change, while unexplained by Vejvoda, indicates an interesting shift in the life of the teenage exile son, who has to explore the values of freedom and democracy for himself.

Zelene vino is packed with insightful ideas and points of view, and Vejvoda provides a comprehensive look at an emigrant family's struggle to find their way in a new homeland. While it may appear as though the family's primary concerns are economic ones, they also deal with more profound questions. The book title suggests that the condition of the émigré is, in a certain sense, premature. Although living in

[56] A grandson enters the room, mechanically pushes the button and utters in a way he is already used to: "This one, Grannny" (Zelene vino 158).

Switzerland for over a decade now, Jana, Petr, and Karel still feel like outsiders and foreigners, and this is an issue that is raised often in the novel. Hence, several additional details are worth examining.

Firstly, the character of *babicka* provides for a unique insight into the family's life. What is her role in the novel? Is she supplying an image of the old homeland, an outsider in Switzerland? Is she a mere object for clarification of the attitudes that Jana and Petr still hold? Her point of view appears extreme in democratic Switzerland. For example, she cannot understand how it is that an immigration committee is not a Communist Party Commission, or that the city police are not the Communist Security Police, etc.

Secondly, Karel's disregard of Karel Gott—a leading Czech pop-music star—makes for an interesting discussion today (Zelene vino 53). Karel finds Gott, who is in his early forties, a dull, sentimental, and kitschy figure who belongs behind the Berlin Wall (as would most people of Karel's generation). It is, thus, most embarrassing for Karel when schoolmates call him "Mein Gott," referring to Karel Gott. Karel, in contrast with his parents, does not feel any ties to his native land. Rather—as with many second-generation immigrants—he prefers to assimilate as quickly as possible, so that his friends will have no reason for sneering at him. The Gott issue deserves some updating: firstly, given that Karel Gott is only a year older than Vejvoda, the reader who understands Czech culture will recognize that although Vejvoda presents Karel's disregard of Gott's music as reflective of generational differences, the issue presented here by Vejvoda is more ideological than generational. In a communist country, folk, brass-band, and mild pop-music of doubtful quality were the only officially acceptable music genres Rock and

Heavy Metal, on the other hand, represented a free, capitalist, and democratic society. Vejvoda, through his exploration of Karel's attempt to distance himself from Gott and all that he represents, reveals his criticism of a totalitarian regime where people are not even free to choose what music they may listen to. Here, Karel asserts and represents the new world of the second-generation Czech immigrant who must struggle with the legacy of communist dominated Czechoslovakia and yet assert his own new identity. While Karel Landa represents the second-generation Czech immigrant's struggle to fit into Western and democratic Europe within Vejvoda's novel, Karel Gott represents the oppressed Eastern Bloc.

The fact that now, some twenty-five years later, Karel Gott is still a leading Czech pop music star is telling. Today's reader, having the advantage of experiencing the development of Czechoslovakia must wonder how and why Karl Gott's music has survived throughout these two very different regimes. On the one hand, we acknowledge that it is not impossible, after all, that while Gott happened to fit in with the ideology of the communist regime, he might also happen to be a talented musician. One does not preclude the other. We can see, on the other hand, that Vejvoda's critique is similar to that of Milan Kundera's in The Joke which focuses upon the communist manipulation of folk culture. Both Zelene vino and The Joke demonstrate that the "state-endorsed and manipulated culture" constituted a significant tool in controlling the nation (Feintuch 22).

Thirdly, the literary form that Vejvoda uses here is appealing. While Drabek—like Kundera and Skvorecky—writes usually from the perspective of the main character—Vejvoda does not often write from this perspective. Instead, he tries to comprehend a wide range of people, and, in this particular case, three family members

provide insight into their exilic souls. We may consider whether his novel, given these multiple perspectives, presents for a more "unbiased" work as a result. We may also question whether these various perspectives provide for enough space for the characters to develop and reveal themselves to the reader. An examination of Skvorecky's voluminous autobiographic series on Danny Smiricky, for instance, reveals much about Smiricky. Vejvoda does not take this approach, and sometimes we may question whether Vejvoda knows what the main character is experiencing at all. Writing from a single character perspective, however, does limit the point of view. Vejvoda's decision to write from multiple points of view, as well as his use of decisive slang and of direct speech—all contribute to creating a richly layered account of the exile's experience in Zelene vino.

Given the exile's feeling of uprootedness, according to Suvin (117), the exile is forced to choose between assimilation or separation from the new society--which he calls an "espousal of marginality" (117). Assimilation opens the prospect of success in the new country, which often means "becoming more Catholic than the Pope" (Suvin 117).[57] In contrast, the "espousal of marginality," a refusal to conform to the dominant modes of thought and behavior in the new country, is often characteristic of expatriate or exiled writers, who do not want to lose the language in which they write, nor the beliefs while led them into exile (Suvin 117). Being uprooted and marginalized gives rise to various human emotions and Vejvoda's literature portrays this marginality throughout. If exiles often look at non-exiles with a degree of "resentment" (Said, Reflections 180), then Vejvoda's exiles look at them with obvious negativity. While non-exiles belong in their surroundings, the exile is always "out of place" (Reflections 180). Exiles may dream of

[57] The path chosen, for instance, by T. S. Eliot, who reinvented himself as a conservative Anglo-Catholic, says Suvin (117).

what it is like "to be born in a place, to stay and live there, to know you are of it, more or less forever" (Reflections 180). Such resentment, however, may produce jealousy and partial, or even a total, separation from the new society. Vejvoda is trying to challenge this kind of resentment—this negative attitude that prevents émigrés from finding peace in their new home land and contributing to the society in which they now live.

Eroticism: a Sign of Enclosure?

The third dimension of Vejvoda's work that merits our attention is eroticism. What does it represent? What is Vejvoda saying to his readers through gendered perspectives? Is it possible understand eroticism as an allegory for a longing for home? Two different explanations emerge when we consider his work in respect to its historical context.

Firstly, Vejvoda begins writing in the 1960s, during the time of the Sexual Revolution. Though this revolution did not influence Czechoslovakian society in the same way as it did in Western countries, its influence was felt among the Czech writers too. Secondly, human relations became a primal—and often the only—officially allowed topic for writers under the totalitarian regime. The quest for widely appealing ethical and social issues was not only not promoted -- writing that concerned itself with such serious issues was often even banned. Authors of the 1960s thus often turn to the sphere of personal relations. This might be well observed, for example, in the literature of Milan Kundera and Josef Skvorecky, both *post-August* exiles, whose work was almost exclusively devoted to a focus on personal relationships. Sexual relations and eroticism, of course, are not only the focus of exilic writers. But, we should ask, what character did human relationships and eroticism come to have in the work of exiles?

As we have already suggested, the post-1968 exiles were disappointed with the social and political progress of their country. They usually emigrated either due to their disillusionment with politics—communism in particular—and restrictions on their creativity. Once in exile, these writers often departed from politics completely, and turned instead to issues that would resonate with readers of various political backgrounds. Unlike the post-1948 exiles, who were able to clearly define a common enemy—the regime—the post-1968 émigrés did not draw a clear line between black and white, good and evil. Given their diverse backgrounds, they did not even share a common attitude. Human relationships, then, provided for an engaging and unifying topic regardless of time and space, ideology and religious view.[58]

The failure of the "Prague Spring" forced many people to close themselves off and depart from politics as far as possible. In Czechoslovakia this change has been observed as a "weekend-house syndrome:" people demonstrated their resignation with the communist establishment by leaving for their cottages every Friday afternoon. They left their workplace—and state apparatus—behind and enjoyed a secluded space where nobody controlled their actions and thoughts. While this was an illusion of freedom to some degree of course, for a police state usually has control over literally everything, the psychological impact on the individual's perception of peace in seclusion was important. Exilic writers, similarly, had to resort to some kind of seclusion in order to psychologically survive their transition. Thus, they turn to the everyday relations between

[58] This has been well studied in work of Milan Kundera. His philosophical discussions are usually incorporated into the realm of human relations. Although these are almost exclusively of Czech exiles living in France and Switzerland (Mestan 59), they do not engage in specific political discussions.

the people around them for inspiration. Alongside Milan Kundera, Vejvoda became a master of such literature.

"Vlastenka" ["A Female Patriot"], a story from Provdana nevesta [Married Bride] (1991), for example, tells the tale of an emigrant on the run. Somewhere in Germany, eventually, he meets a Czech woman living in Switzerland who promises to drive him through the Swiss border. Listening to the radio, they learn that a terrorist had recently escaped. The emigrant does not have any documents with him, so they seek to cross the border between Germany and Switzerland at a god-forsaken countryside frontier. Driving in the night forest, however, they are approached by a German customs agent. In a panic at being asked for their documents, Eva—the owner of the car—decides to pretend a passionate sexual relationship with the man. The respectful officer passes the couple without confronting them and they later enter Switzerland. Beyond the creative idea of a romantic escape, however, we may examine another issue that is raised in this story: the issue of the willingness to give help.

Vejvoda explores Eva's unusual and extremely generous efforts to help a stranger through the pretense of a sexual encounter. Such a situation is not often found in Vejvoda's works. His characters are usually self-centered, envious or frightened. Eva is scared too, but there is another dimension to her that leads her to voluntarily expose herself to danger, in order to protect an emigrant on the run. Obviously, it is not sexual passion that leads her to this protective action. Can we argue, that this is Vejvoda's expression of his belief in the potential for positive and caring behavior? If so, we may want to question why, in other respects, Eva is presented in somewhat negative terms – her drunken behavior earlier on in the story for example. It may well be that Vejvoda

wishes to present a complex character whose behavior reflects both virtues as well as vices. It seems that he wishes to present characters who are neither angels, nor devils, and is implying that we should be careful when we judge.

When Eva arrives home, she learns from her husband that her favorite Czech poet, Jaroslav Seifert, has just been awarded with the Nobel Prize for Literature (Provdana nevesta 24). Why does Vejvoda conclude his story on this note of reference to Seifert, which appears out of context here? Perhaps one might argue that news of Seifert's award is Eva's metaphorical award for her ethical approach to a stranger. Perhaps Vejvoda is encouraging his readers—those frustrated and pessimistic emigrants—to believe that good may at times actually be counted on. Eventually, the pretence of a sexual relationship between the two strangers may be seen in an ethical light.

Having looked briefly at how erotic relationships figure in Vejvoda's work, we may wish to ask how eroticism is represented by exilic writers in general. Is there any common approach that may connect exilic writers? Is there a direct relationship between a longing for one's home and eroticism in literature? In order to avoid inadequate generalization, we should look at specific writers. We have seen that Jan Drabek, too, uses eroticism as an integral part of his books—both in novels and autobiographical texts such as Whatever Happened (Hledani stesti u cizaku [Searching for Happiness Among Strangers]). Erotic relations within his work often resemble more the expression of a teenage pleasure in sexuality, than a presentation to the reader, through the use of erotic relations, of specific challenges. However, while eroticism in Drabek's work may appear to simply reflect pleasure, I would argue that he, too, is addressing existential questions. Through his exploration of sexual restlessness in his characters, Drabek portrays their

inner—perhaps exilic—instability. Similarly, I would suggest that Vejvoda often satirizes his characters' sexual desire and behavior, not with the intention of ridiculing them, but rather with the intention of disturbing and provoking the reader into recognition and ethical awareness of what lies beneath their behavior.

The Character of Vejvoda's Work

Having examined some of Jaroslav Vejvoda's work, it appears that several issues, in particular, emerge. Firstly, Vejvoda aims at more profound questions than those explicitly introduced in the text. His readership is not ready for sermonizing; instead, they want to read their own stories, their own "miserable" lives. Vejvoda aims at a wide audience. We may wonder whether his often vulgar tone, for example, simply represents the pretense of an "I-am-one-of-you" attitude, or rather whether it also points toward something else. He may have understood that representing himself as "one of the group" would have allowed him to reach his readers more effectively than moralizing from a distance. But, we may ask, do Vejvoda and other Czech exilic writers write *for their readers*, after all? Should they reflect on the audience that is not often appreciative enough? What is their approach to this? Given that these writers usually do not write to make their living, we face an essential question: what is the driving force behind their particular writing? Are they simply expressing their own thoughts and experiences as a means of exploring and coping with their exilic pain?

Secondly, Vejvoda's engagement with the exilic experience serves our research well. We may argue that exile—on its own—is not his central issue. While the scenes within his work are situated among the exilic community in Switzerland, it is the Czechs and Slovaks—both in exile and at home—who play the primary role in his writing.

Vejvoda appears to be preoccupied with a theatre of human characters, which will allow him to pose essential questions. Perhaps, there may be no better place than that of exile from which to see all of humanity in all of its miserable and naked state. As we have seen, the figures within his works are not really tragic, for tragedy is not natural to Czech literature; rather, they are pathetic and satiric. If we were to sum up the various existential elements within Vejvoda's work, then despair, embarrassment, pathos, absurdity, impatience, and insecurity, as well as humor, eroticism, and satire all seem to be at the centre of his exploration. There is an endless battle between the outside and the inside ("Sklenice chladneho mleka," "Mesto andelu"), emigrant and dweller ("Ohen," Provdana nevesta), refugee and native (Zelene vino, "Lesni slavnost"), and man and woman ("Labut"). Vejvoda seems to enjoy presenting contrasts, as they are found in every street in ordinary life, and if these situations give rise to important questions about life, so much the better. Vejvoda does not question himself; rather, he provokes those who are "asleep" to wake up.

Finally, Vejvoda's use of language deserves attention. He usually poses as a bystander who observes events from a distance. Vejvoda's language, however, is not easily comprehensible: it is more lyrical than narrative, consisting of considerable slang, with short sentences that do not quite relate well with each other. It is a style that requires specific attention. Having said that, we need to emphasize that most of Vejvoda's work was written in Czech. Although several essays, articles, and plays were produced in German, nevertheless, Czech prevailed in all books. This, as well as his thematic approach, says a lot about Vejvoda's readership too. Vejvoda writes, we can see, for his

exilic counterparts: he satirizes their miserable fates in order to evoke their long-forgotten ideals.

The "mother language," among other things, represents the cultural heritage exiles bring with them to a foreign land. Vejvoda, too, touches upon a controversial issue with regard to what language should be spoken in the emigrant's family in "Babicko, posli mi modryho slona" in Plujici andele. Although he clothes his thoughts skillfully in a childish manner, we can sense a profound question:

> But mum says that we should speak our native tongue at home... That is why she teaches me. She says I should know how to say *brot*, *salz* and *lied* in Czech at least. [...] Once mum said to dad: "It is our native language!" but dad replied that we will die here and we need to assimilate. [...] Then mum said if I learn two languages at school, I may as well learn a third at home. And I will be a human three times over. [...] Grandma, send me the elephant. I will take him for a walk, and we will talk, even though he is not human. Tell me, grandma, if an elephant learns a foreign language, does he become a human three times over too? (Plujici andele 89-90).

In an amusing way, Vejvoda is outlining an essential theme of his work: the question is not only whether to speak Czech or German to one's children, but rather whether language may determine the speaker's identity. How significant is a language, if nobody but your family understands it? What are the implications of being expelled from a playground because a child cannot grasp the game's instructions from his or her peers? What is it like, if an adult is unable to communicate his basic needs and emotions because he or she does not speak the foreign language? Vejvoda's work asks us to confront these questions.

CHAPTER 4 – EXILE: POLITICS AND ANTI-POLITICS

As I have argued in previous chapters, the post-1948 exilic experience was different than that of the *Sixty-Eighters*. We have examined the transition from the social and political perspectives of Jan Drabek to the more individual and non-political themes of Jaroslav Vejvoda's work and noted that these distinctions constitute a major difference between their exilic expressions. These distinctions are rooted primarily in the different social and political character of each period.

The Communist Coup of 1948 occurred within society with a democratic past. The First Czechoslovak Republic was a nation that had been building its own state for over twenty years. While the six years of the Second World War interrupted the democratic process, they did not destroy the democratic experience of its people. When the Communist Party took power after the war, a large number of intellectuals chose exile rather than life in a totalitarian state. The majority of exiles were politicians and well-educated and publicly engaged people. The post-1948 exiles left soon after the Second World War, and their perception of Western Europe that they encountered at this time was marked by the experience of a destroyed continent. The ideals of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938) and its intellectual President Tomas G. Masaryk, in addition to a resolutely anti-communist attitude, often resonated in the work of *Forty-Eighters*.

Jan Drabek, together with his family, as we have already seen, left a few days following the political coup, and this experience was extensively depicted in his work.

His American education, as well as the opportunity to travel, equipped young Drabek with many positive attitudes: a natural sense of liberty, trust in human relations, and responsibility for one's own life—the values that were undermined in a communist country. All Drabek remembered from his homeland, however, was the positive, enthusiastic atmosphere of his childhood in mysterious Prague and summer holidays in the countryside. His work reflects almost exclusively this experience. Although his writings may not express feelings of homesickness, one may however sense a certain degree of nostalgia in his work. Given that Drabek spent most of his life abroad, his return to Czechoslovakia in the early 1990s thus represented a search for one's roots rather than a return to home. The disillusionment he experienced in his native land after forty years of absence only confirmed that he had already found his home elsewhere.

As we have observed in Drabek's work, a clear condemnation of communist ideology, for instance, is reflected in The Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier, while his later books reflect the negative impact of communism indirectly—through a satiric depiction of human action (Nahle ceskym velvyslancem [All of Sudden a Czech Ambassador] and Po usi v postkomunismu [Up to the Ears in Post-communism]). The theme of the Second World War also appears in Drabek's work, (for example in Lister Legacy). To some extent, Drabek's field of interest, and thus his readership, is larger than Vejvoda's. Generally, we have noticed that Drabek—and other *Forty-Eighters*—felt somehow obliged to awaken the North American society from the slumber of complacency with regard to the menace of communism.

The leitmotiv of Jaroslav Vejvoda, and perhaps of other *Sixty-Eighters*, is different. The European situation during the 1960s differed from the immediate post-war

one, and so its exile did (Tigrid, Politicka 98). The people who left after the Warsaw Pact occupation of the country had already gone through twenty years of communist rule. They were formed by this destructive ideology; some of them even participated in its development.[59] However, after the harsh realization communist ideas—such as a planned economy, state-owned business, pro-Soviet foreign policy and, most of all, restrictions on human rights—led to a fiasco, many of them turned to the democratic idealism of the early 1960s: "socialism with a human face." However, the violent occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 put an end to the reforms and many pro-reform communists, together with non-communists, faced the serious question of withdrawal from the public sphere. Those who promoted social and political changes, along with those who suffered materially, left for exile too. Unlike the 1948 emigrants, however, they lacked—or did not recall—the democratic principles of the First Czechoslovak Republic. They either grew up under communist rule—like Jaroslav Vejvoda—or simply grew accustomed to it—like Josef Skvorecky. They did not possess the enthusiasm nor did they put out the effort required to pass democratic values on to the next generation. Rather, they knew how communism was able to destroy—both emotionally and materially—its "inconvenient" citizens. These émigrés, thus, constituted a very different community from their post-1948 counterparts.

Mestan (60) argues that the economic prosperity of Western countries reached such a level in the late 1960s that it was not difficult for immigrants to establish themselves.[60] Although the economically-driven emigration of 1968 is the preoccupation

[59] Writers like Milan Kundera and Pavel Kohout, for example, initially supported the Communist philosophy and political attitude.
[60] After examination of Vejvoda's novels, however, we may challenge such a statement—for all of Vejvoda's writing about is the unsuccessful and miserable life of the Czech exile. We do not suspect

of several post-1968 authors, such as Skvorecky, Vejvoda, and Novak (Pilar, "O ceske exilove"), generally a nuanced understanding of capitalist society on the one hand (Vejvoda's Osel nebo Splynuti), and the theme of the individual's search for a new identity on the other (Vejvoda's Zelene vino), constituted major themes of *post-August* exiles.

Vejvoda's work—almost exclusively devoted to the condition of post-1968 Czech émigrés in Switzerland—suggests that the character of this exilic wave was often economic and led to many social problems. Vejvoda's interest in the local emigrant community and its problems thus suggests a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the post-Prague Spring political tendencies. His characters sometimes speak of the Czechoslovakia of their youth with very critical observations about its way of life and economy, rather than in terms of its ideology. While acknowledging that Vejvoda is criticizing the regime, we may, however, argue that his generation never knew—or mastered—open criticism of the regime. His critique, thus, focuses on the consequences of a regime that has gone wrong: the failure in human relations, consumerism, passivity, and apathy. The author does not need to go far for his inspiration, for many of the exiles provide a valuable example of failure. We may ask, for instance, whether Vejvoda is hoping to challenge a national failure through the depiction of the very personal failures of his characters.

It seems only natural that we never encounter the kind of passivity and negativity in the post-1948 exilic work that we do in the post-1968 one. While the advent of communism in 1948 was an unfortunate result of the Munich Agreement and the Second

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Vejvoda of being inaccurate; rather we explain this discrepancy by Vejvoda's focus on particular emigrant communities in Switzerland that gave him such impressions.

World War, the Prague Spring in 1968 was only a weak thrust against the well-established Soviet rule over Eastern Europe. Democratic principles had been crushed some decades previously and no form of local resistance was strong enough to sustain itself. Only two options, thus remained for active authors: either to withdraw into "inner exile" (independent literature) or to emigrate. Many, we have suggested, chose the latter.

Through exploring the work of Jan Drabek and Jaroslav Vejvoda, we were able—at least to some degree—to distinguish between the two major Czechoslovak emigration waves of the twentieth century and determine their different approaches both to their homeland and to their exile. We have seen that while the post-1948 exiles intensively promoted anti-communist education and resistance (Borivoj Celovsky, Jan Drabek, Ferdinand Peroutka, Ladislav Radimsky), the post-1968 exiles were not so consistent in their approach and did not occupy themselves only or primarily with the dangers of communist rule.[61] Rather, they contemplated different issues, such as emigration communities abroad (Jaroslav Vejvoda), the Second World War and Holocaust (Ludvik Askenazy, Arnost Lustig), and human relations (Milan Kundera, Josef Skvorecky). We may argue, thus, that their political distance was due to their lack of democratic experience that the previous wave of exiles had possessed, and also to their differing degrees of disappointment with the failure of Prague Spring.

Similarly, their personal experience of exilic trauma—a feeling of uprootedness—was interpreted differently. Drabek employed his own direct experience as much as possible in his writing, and thus his work is strongly autobiographical. Many of his books, as we have seen, are non-fiction and he observes his own life from the perspective

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[61] Similarly, Vahabzadeh ("Reflections" 167) argues that the "unitary political cause does not produce unitary effects on the exiled."

of a man searching for his roots. For example, Drabek's treatment of his teenage years and existential confusion, as well as his passionate love for his new home, demonstrates the authentic and natural—and perhaps socially ideal—processes of assimilation of an exile. He is not overly excited about his emigration—he still contemplates his own origin—but he eventually accepts his new situation to some degree. Vejvoda's perception of uprootedness, on the other hand, is personified by his literary characters who do not look back to their origins. They are up-rooted too, of course, but, having been so powerfully affected by feelings of disillusionment within the communist regime, they do not tend to contemplate where they have come from. Vejvoda does not need to imagine and remember "the good old times" of his childhood, or to reminisce about his home country. Though painful, his emigration was a deliberate decision (unlike Drabek's), and Vejvoda does not aspire to confront history and politics. He is fully focused on the present time and particular environment; he is surrounded by real people who inspire authentic stories. While Drabek did not live among Czech exiles in the United States, Vejvoda makes an impression of only living with them. While human relations are the central focus common to both authors, each approaches the subject differently.

On Exilic Relations

The exile is confronted with situations and with cultural and social groups that he or she may never have previously encountered. The struggle to adapt raises ethical issues. In Drabek's and Vejvoda's work, exploration of relations between people predominates as a tool in assessing social behavior. Drabek and Vejvoda look at relations at various levels; firstly, the exile's relation to their homeland and to those who remained behind; secondly, the exile's relation to their host country and its people; thirdly, the exile's

relation to their exilic counterparts; and fourthly, the attitude of the Czech dwellers to their emigrants.

First, émigrés naturally need to determinate their relation to the country of their origin and its people. In the case of political and intellectual exiles, however, this becomes a difficult task. They have been pulled out either by violence, fear, or anger, so their attitude might be self-pitying. Their homesickness, stressed by the impossibility of return, mixes nostalgia with resentment, as poet Jaromir Mestan expressed it: "I'm in the third class waiting room / Excuse me, what platform is PRAGUE? / Far – far away / Just a few hours on a fast train / But today the trains don't run ("Pisne o Cechach" qtd. in Pejskar 245). Radimsky, Tigrid, and other *Forty-Eighters* devoted their time to Czechoslovak politics and its people—the fight against communism, its political techniques, and its leaders, is not unusual in their work. The cards had been distributed and all knew which the 'evil' one was. As for the *Sixty-Eighters*, this issue is anything but black-and-white. In their approach they are determined especially by two phenomena: firstly, the painful experience is still too recent; secondly, many of them were a part of the communist machinery before their emigration. Thus, their focus often avoids touching on some sensitive issues. Vejvoda provides an exception—his "Ohen," a psychological battle between the exile and those who remained—endures throughout the story and refers to unresolved relations on both sides.

The exile's everlasting dream of a final return is yet another relation to homeland which should be briefly discussed. Do we think that exile comes to an end when one is able to return to his or her homeland freely, without fear of persecution? While this may appear to be superficially the case, psychologically the truth is more complex. For those

exiles who have spent most of their life abroad, adapting and relating to their country of their origin may be very difficult. Often idealized and not reflecting the natural progress of time, their homeland may become yet another experience of exile for such émigrés. We have seen previously, for example, that this transition was certainly traumatic for Drabek.

Vejvoda's post-communist return to Czechoslovakia, however, was different from that of Drabek's. Although he apparently suffered the same post-communist pain as Drabek did, his return did not constitute such a shock for Vejvoda, for he has already lived through it. His ability to deal emotionally with the Czechoslovakian bureaucracy and passivity enabled him to return for good. Moreover, we may speculate that much of their ability to acclimatize was due to the nature of their host countries. While Drabek lived most of his life in multicultural and diverse North America, Vejvoda spent some twenty-eight years under communist rule and another twenty years in homogeneous and—to some degree—nationalistic Switzerland. This obviously influenced their approach to their homeland and eventual return. Drabek, unlike Vejvoda, adapted to his new country—Canada—quite easily. We may suggest this was due to Canadian multiculturalism, which enabled immigrants to settle down and integrate readily. We may speculate, on the other hand, that Vejvoda's characters—and perhaps Vejvoda himself—did not assimilate fully for several other reasons.

Firstly, Drabek left his homeland at the age of thirteen and had the chance to assimilate naturally, while Vejvoda emigrated at the age of twenty-eight and such a change appeared quite challenging. Secondly, the political emigration of 1948 was more dangerous for fear of severe imprisonment, forced labor, and even death (let us note, for

instance, the political and show trials of the 1950s), while the post-1968 exiles faced mainly psychological, religious, intellectual, and economic persecution. Unlike the previous exilic wave, the *post-August* émigrés often deliberately chose to flee themselves. All these phenomena certainly determined Drabek's and Vejvoda's perceptions of the post-communist Czechoslovakia to some extent. Vejvoda's upbringing, his deliberate fleeing from Czechoslovakia, and the comfortable accessibility of Switzerland to the Czech Republic—which often allowed for visits back and forth—perhaps all explain why, despite all the initial difficulties, he finally returned to his homeland in the late 1990s, while Jan Drabek, after serving in the Czech diplomatic service for a few years, returned to Canada at the same time.[62]

Secondly, the exile's relation to a host country offers much more space for literary creativity (or at least it is not as sensitive as the relation to the homeland). We have seen earlier that either assimilation or separation is a choice, and many writers explore the issue in their exilic writing. In the case of post-1948 exiles, for example, their experiences in their host country often contain a sense of adventure and curiosity. Drabek often suggests that American society seemed so different to him (Whatever Happened to Wenceslas?), the possibilities that democracy offered (Hledani stesti u cizaku), and finally the place he found as his second home (I Luff You B. C.). His approach is more positive than negative, as if he was aware of the advantages that North America provided for him. Socially—while not yet emotionally—we may perhaps talk of assimilation in this particular case. Vejvoda, on the other hand, explores Swiss society in a strongly

[62] A certain attention, of course, should be devoted also to their families, for it is often the closest relations that support or prevent such changes. We know, for instance, that Jan Drabek's wife is a Canadian; however, we do not know the details of Vejvoda's family.

negative light. His characters express a strong degree of separation and criticism. Sometimes, it appears as though a criticism of the Swiss legal system (and immigration policies) was his main issue. His Osel nebo Splynuti, as we have examined, portrays a refugee, Alexandr, and his fear of Swiss justice. After broadcasting his "Osel," the story of a nonconformist donkey, Alexandr is scared to death of what punishment will come. Will they imprison him? Will they deport him from Switzerland? Vejvoda impertinently criticizes the strict conditions that exiles had to endure in Switzerland (Zelene vino) and sometimes even ascribes a certain degree of indirect responsibility for broken exilic families to the Swiss system ("Labut"). We may argue that while the post-1968 exilic writer, as examined in the work of Vejvoda, criticized the consumer society, the legal system of the host country, and individuals, who fail ethically, the post-1948 exilic writer, as analyzed in work of Drabek, criticized the communist regime that destroyed the ideals of First Czechoslovak Republic and her President T. G. Masaryk. We may ask whether their different approaches were due to their economic conditions. Were the post-1948 exiles so preoccupied with establishing their new lives abroad, for example, that they took a more appreciative position toward their host countries? Were the post-1968 ones, after twenty years of totalitarian experience, so sensitive to injustice that they could not ignore it elsewhere?

Thirdly, relations among exiles themselves is a most interesting area to examine. While relations to homeland and host land may often only be perceived quite generally and theoretically, relations to one's immediate family, neighbors, colleagues, and fellow countrymen, on the other hand, are often expressed very concretely and specifically. Radimsky compares exile to a "magnifying glass," he argues that exile has the unique

chance to "unfold the truth of people and things" (7). We may think of no better place in applying this tool than to exilic communities themselves. Some believe that Vejvoda became a "classic" writer on the theme of exile, especially in his authentic, documentary depiction of everyday life of post-1968 emigrants in Switzerland. We may argue that exilic relations really represent the core of Vejvoda's work. Aiming at expressing the émigrés' despair, loneliness, frustration, envy, and fear, Vejvoda reflects their pain in an apparently exaggerated form. It may, however, be valid to question whether this reflection is actually an exaggeration of the exilic experience. We have seen that exile—even political exile—is not an ethical act itself. Rather, only the relations between people provide for the possibility of ethical action. We have also seen earlier that some apparently exaggerated behavior is the result of the pain, sadness and anger that often comes with exile. Vejvoda explains this as being too "visible," by being-too-different. A little desperate girl wrote to her grandmother: "It is not good to be different; the best is to merge with the crowd so that people will not watch us and notice mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes, but if he is a one of the crowd, these mistakes are not visible" (Plujici andele 88). Vejvoda, of course, criticizes his counterparts for being too passive and pessimistic in order to "disappear" in Swiss society. Again, Vejvoda appears to be challenging his readers to become responsible not only for their own lives but for the people around them. His work often appears to be an attempt to teach people—people who grew up under communist rule—the importance of human relations, and that encouragement, support and even joy that can be found in ethical relations.

Specific relations between the *Forty-Eighters* and *Sixty-Eighters*, moreover, deserve a brief mention. It may appear odd that we lack any significant study of the

connection between these two exilic literary waves. The post-1968 exilic writers only rarely touched on the topic of the post-1948 exile. It was more the first generation writers (post-1948) that reflected on post-1968, as we see in Drabek's Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier and Tigrid's Politicka emigrace v atomovem veku and Kapesni pruvodce inteligentni zeny po vlastnim osudu, for instance. It seems strange then, if, as Pilar ("O ceske exilove literature") argues, that some antagonism between the two waves has often been portrayed in Czech exilic literature. Unfortunately, he does not provide any references that would support such a conclusion. Rather, we tend to agree with Mestan (60), who argues that *post-August* totally ignores the *post-February* emigration.[63] Said argues that to have been exiled by exiles is the "the most extraordinary of exile's fates" (Said, Reflections 178) and we may sense this was often the case among the Czech exilic communities, especially the post-1968 emigration.[64]

Fourthly, the attitude of Czechs to their fellow exiles deserves a brief examination here. It is often believed that some kind of antagonism between these two groups—not common among other nationalities—developed.[65] Thus, I would like to look at how this might possibly be interpreted. We may then also be in a position to suggest another

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[63] Similarly, we have noticed that only certain communities are described in Czech exilic work, such as North America (Skvorecky, Benes, Drabek, Novak), France (Kundera), Germany (Tresnak), and Switzerland (Vejvoda). Mestan (59) argues that other destinations of political emigration such as Austria, Italy, Scandinavia, Australia, and New Zealand, are not represented for a simple reason: no significant writers have settled there.

[64] We should ask, moreover, whether the issue of nationalism as a safe haven, as Said (Reflections on Exile 177) outlines, finds any representation in Czech literature. Said argues that exile and nationalism cannot be discussed neutrally, and that émigrés want to belong to a group of triumphant people (Reflections 17). We have realized, however, that Czech exilic literature is almost devoid of this problem. Instead, Vejvoda harshly criticizes a lack of common interests that exiles in Switzerland maintain, while Drabek only briefly touches a competitive—rather than affectionate—relation of Czech exiles in his Hledani stesti."

[65] Interestingly, Culik ("President Albright?") observes that having lived and worked abroad is a serious handicap in the Czech Republic. Even now, many Czechs still may perceive the arrival of emigrants not as enrichment but as a threatening source of competition.

reason why émigré authors did not publish more books with an exilic theme. As far as we know, this topic has not been examined in depth thus far; we have to employ our own empirical observation as well as the testimonies of émigrés themselves.[66]

We need to remember that the authors we are examining were political refugees from a communist state. Official relations between the communist and Western countries during the Cold War, as we know, were not harmonious. To further support isolation from the Western—capitalist—society, communists often used propaganda in order to degrade its emigrants.[67] The intentional condemnation of those who left Czechoslovakia was not only theoretical; various practical mechanisms were applied against them, such as property confiscation, sentence without trial, and persecution of emigrant's relatives. These methods inevitably presented exiles as traitors, spies, pro-Western agents, criminals, or feeble-minded individuals.[68] Indeed, emigration was considered a political betrayal and moral offence by the communist regime and was presented as such for four decades. Ulc (62) outlines, for example, that in *Zemedelske noviny* on 23 January, 1986,

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[66] During the political liberalization of the 1960s, we should note, Vaclav Havel tried to open the question of exile and started a thematic study. "In 1968 I traveled a great deal and spent much of my time visiting exiles, because the phenomenon of exiles fascinated me. I was working on a book on exile, and I looked up about thirty important personalities in the post-February 1948 wave of exiles, from people like Zenkel, Lettrich, Slavik, Majer, and other politicians, to Peroutka, Duchacek, and Tigrid, and even Voskovec" (19). The manuscript was never published due to the later invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies. Yet later, "in a critical moment, I destroyed the entire file, so that today it exists only in the archives of the Ministry of the Interior, which had, as I later discovered, managed to photograph the entire manuscript" (Havel 19).

[67] In 1986, for instance, Vaclav Havel writes, that "reform communists still saw those post-February exiles as their former political opponents, and they would have considered it supremely bad tactics (since it could have been misused by the regime) to give any thought to exile at all. For them, exile was taboo. Of course, it was also taboo for non-communists, who for the most part assumed that, if the communists couldn't afford to risk something, so much the less could they. At that time, any contact whatsoever with exiles was perceived as extremely dangerous, indefensible, even suicidal, so there was no open communication between the domestic scene and the exiles" (Havel 19-20).

[68] It was not unusual if a recent emigrant was suddenly "detected" to be an agent in the media; his or her fictitious criminal activities emerged, and property was confiscated. Especially intriguing is the case of a popular singer, Valdemar Matuska, who escaped in 1986 and soon afterward an article entitled "Moral Fall of a Singer!" appeared in the Czechoslovak media (Vaclav Dolezal, *Rude Pravo,* qtd. in Mestan 59).

one of the paper's editors, Pilat, published an article containing severe charges against Czech emigrants: "They [the emigrants] hate the world so much that they would send an atomic catastrophe to humankind. This is the most miserable state to which the Czechoslovak emigration in the West has arrived" (qtd. in Ulc 62). Another scholar, the historian Jan Kren, tried to explain a fundamental character of emigration in his time in Do emigrace [Into Emigration]. Kren (qtd. in Tigrid, Politicka 46). Here he distinguishes between emigration during the Second World War and emigration during the communist period. The first—where many communists, too, stayed in exile—is perceived as an act of resistance to Nazi Germany, while the second is portrayed as the aggressive, reactionary, and illegal act of willful rebels (qtd. in Tigrid, Politicka 46-47).

For examples of non-fictional communist propaganda literature about refugees we might look at Posledni role pana "T" [A Last Role of Mr. "T"] by Zdenek Lavicka (aka Petr Bednar), in which exiled journalist Pavel Tigrid is ridiculously presented as a womanizer and war deserter, the democratic politician Petr Zenkl is represented as senile, the former Member of Parliament, Cizek, as a thief, the journalist Klatil as a drunk, and the politician Jiri Pelikan is accused of collaboration with the Nazis (Ulc 62-63). Although more sparse, there are of course examples of communist propaganda writings against exilic characters in fictional literature as well (Ulc 63). For example Pytlaci [Poachers] by Kostrhoun, Tomas a Marketa [Thomas and Margaret] by Krenek, and Emigranti [Emigrants] by Lubos Jurik, are all examples of literature where exiles are generally portrayed as weak, miserable, and criminal (Ulc 63). Even while considerable numbers of Czechs and Slovaks did not agree with the regime, its propaganda was so extensive that it influenced the opinion of many people.

It is often believed that antagonism towards exiles was caused by a certain degree of jealousy, felt by those who remained in their homeland. It was not rare to consider emigrants as people who could enjoy the goods of capitalism while those left behind suffered under the economically poor communist regime. Such an attitude, it seems, was intentionally—but not openly—supported by the communists and, unfortunately, shaped the perception of many. We may only speculate that the perception of exiles themselves was affected by this interpretation of the forces that led to their exile, and to such an extent that they avoided inclusion of exilic themes in their work. It seems that they chose to engage themselves with less problematic issues such as Czechoslovak history, as Drabek wittily indicates in Report on the Death of Rosenkavalier: "All Czech refugees study political science—or history" (79). Yet, we do not know whether the post-1948 or post-1968 exiles were affected differently by this propaganda.

Looking at Czechoslovak readers, Ulc (64) argues, for example, that nearly every family in Czechoslovakia was close to people who emigrated. Although we may question the exaggeration of such a statement, we must agree that many people in Czechoslovakia were affected by emigration, whether directly or indirectly. Given this situation, it is surprising to note that the readership of exilic literature was very low in Czechoslovakia (Ulc 64). Were people simply not interested in the fates of their counterparts? Were they so preoccupied with the realities of communist society that they did not wish to read the work of exilic writers? Ulc (64) suggests that his own novels with exilic themes (Spatne casovany bezenec [The Wrong Timed Runner], Stastne navraceny bezenec, [The Happily Returned Runner], and Bezenec v sametu [The Runner in Velvet]), for example, were not well-received by the Czech readership, or they were

not published at all. The only important criticism that he received commented that his work was an "offense against Czech national mentality" (Ulc 64). Pavel Kohout's Konec velkych prazdnin [The End of Long Holidays], that pictured the fates of diverse emigrants from the 1980s, received more positive attention (Ulc 63), but we may speculate that this was due to its successful film distribution in 1996 rather than its literary and topical treatment as such. We may also argue that emigration granted an endless inspiration for writing, as we have seen with many other nations. Why did Czechoslovak authors, then, not seize the opportunity to express themselves? Why is Czech exilic literature not more extensive? It seems that dramatic escapes from a communist state, adventurous beginnings in a new country, inspiring cultural and linguistic differences, and freedom of the press, might have provided for extensive literary material. However, they have not. As outlined before, there may be several reasons for this, such as personal difficulties abroad (common among the *Forty-Eighters*), reluctance to describe the miserable fates of their counterparts, disappointment with the administrative procedures of emigration, and the generally low interest of their readers. Readership interest in Czechoslovak exilic literature, moreover, has not changed since the democratization process in late 1980s.[69]

[69] After the democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989, the first steps were made in order to honor her émigré authors. Many members of the exilic literary community were granted Czechoslovak, and Czech respectively, orders and medals in recent years. The highest state decoration, the Order of the White Lion (Rad bileho lva), for example, was granted to Josef Skvorecky and Zdena Salivarova-Skvorecka in 1990 for their *Sixty-Eight Publishers* in Toronto—the largest Czechoslovak publishing house abroad. The Tomas G. Masaryk Order (Rad T. G. Masaryka) was granted to—among others—Jan Cep, Viktor Fischl, Egon Hostovsky, Zdenek Nemecek, Ferdinand Peroutka, Ladislav Radimsky, Karol Sidon, Pavel Tigrid; and the Medal for Merit (Medaile za zasluhy) was granted to Ivan Blatny, Ivan Divis, Erazim Kohak, Milan Kundera, Vera Linhartova, Jiri Loewy, Arnost Lustig, Antonin Mestan, and Josef Pejskar. Most decorations were granted by President Vaclav Havel—an author who himself famously struggled against the communist regime. So, officially, there has been some support and recognition of their exilic literary work. We argue that an official recognition is—among other things—a necessary part of the nation's perception and self-assessment. It seems, nevertheless, that the country has not appreciated her exilic community in a scholarly way: no comprehensive study of Czech literature and exile, or a complete list of Czech authors-

On Ethics

Along with human relations, there necessarily emerges a question of ethics. We have seen that the issue of ethics was approached differently by the two authors we have examined. As in other spheres, Drabek focuses on society as a whole and he is ready to fight communism. Radimsky (27) argues that a true exile knows he will come back home one day. Drabek is aware that his exile is temporary; his attention is, beside other things, focused toward his homeland's future. Vejvoda, on the other hand, has resigned himself in relation to many global ethical issues, as is true for many *Sixty-Eighters*.[70] Vejvoda knows that his exile is a chosen path that will, most likely, never change.[71] Vejvoda, it seems, is not interested in his homeland's politics or future. Can this be understood as an ethical question? Is there, after all, an ethical dimension to their exile? I argue that an ethics of exile can be examined only through the individual relations with their environment.

Could relations to one's homeland, for instance, demonstrate a kind of "ethic of exile"? We know that Vejvoda approached the question of return to Czechoslovakia differently after the fall of communism. When the reason for emigration ceased to exist after the fall of communism, soon Drabek and several others, such as Pavel Tigrid, returned to their homeland and became involved in the public service (diplomacy and

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exiles, has yet been published. If the Czech Republic is not obviously exceptional in such an approach to her exiles, then perhaps more study is needed. Both a general discourse on exile and particular case studies should provide for an insightful perspective on a society that should—in today's diverse and global world— be much appreciated. Studying exilic literature enables us to view society in a much broader perspective—a full exploration of exile, may provide us with s a "magnifying glass" view of society as a whole.

[70] We have seen that many post-August exiles departed strictly from the Czechoslovak—and communist—past. This may be well seen on a case of Milan Kundera, for instance. His radical refusal of his homeland, its politics, past, and present, demonstrates the attitude of many post-1968 exiles.

[71] In this perspective, we can argue that Vejvoda is self-exiled.

journalism, for example). Vejvoda, as well as other *Sixty-Eighters*, was not so enthusiastic and returned after a decade.[72] Although we know that Drabek—for various reasons—eventually decided to return to Canada and Vejvoda—at the same time—retired to the Czech Republic, the experiences of Drabek and Vejvoda cannot be generalized to account for other Czech émigrés. Their different approaches thus have been compelling to examine in terms of their experience both before, and during exile. We know, moreover, that an exile's ethics cannot be evaluated by his or her willingness or ability to return home. What it is, then, that constitutes whether an exile behaves ethically or not?

Some may argue, that exile itself shall be perceived as an ethical act. But can exile, especially a political one, represent the "good" of the society that revolts, for example, against the denial of human rights? Shall we define political exile as a prophetical state of being? Is not exile, after all, indicating a moral, political, or religious stand of the exiled versus the power that pushed them out? Is it more ethical to leave a country due to political injustice than to stay behind?[73] Regarding a large area of exilic writings, we may assume that many émigrés ask these questions themselves. There are some, however, are simply convinced that their departure was the only right decision they could make, either for their children, their career, the better ground for political

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[72] The degree of Vejvoda's criticism may seem exaggerated, of course, but was not Drabek exaggerating too? While in exile, Vejvoda wrote dozens of stories to satirize the Czechs abroad and the Swiss bureaucracy; nevertheless, when he arrives back in Czechoslovakia he learns that their situation—as far as human relations and bureaucracy is concerned—is perhaps even worse. This creates a very significant shift in the exile's understanding. While all Vejvoda's characters do not feel at home in Switzerland, so also do not feel at home back in Czechoslovakia once they are able to return. Here, a common painful experience emerges: the exile is not at home neither in his homeland, where everything and everybody has changed—nor is it in the new host country, where they were living for the past twenty years.

[73] See "The Privilege of Pain" by Sebastiaan Faber, and "Reflections on a Diremptive Experience and Four Theses on Origins and Exile" by Peyman Vahabzdadeh, for instance. Faber analyzes the idea of exile as an ethical model in work of Max Aub, Francisco Ayala, and Edward Said (Faber 14). Vahabzadeh, who perceives exile as a "primarily political phenomenon" (166), studies the examples of Leftists and their ethical exile.

opposition, and so on. Psychologically speaking, however, the majority of exiles struggle with this dimension as soon as they cross the border.[74] In order to survive emotionally and psychologically, they perceive their exile as an ethical act—were they not heroes, after all, when they denounced the totalitarian regime and escaped? This is true, of course, in some cases. In other cases, however, we believe that being in exile does not refer to a particularly ethical dimension. Ethics, after all, is not a characteristic ordinarily applied to families, groups, and nations generally. What might be examined, on the other hand, are the very particular approaches of individuals. Being in exile, as well as staying behind, thus, does not refer to an individual's ethics itself, it seems.

If "going into exile" does not refer to an ethical act itself, then perhaps the way a particular exile lives his or her life while in exile may refer to such ethics. Ladislav Radimsky (7) refers to exile as a magnifying glass, which we believe helps to evaluate one's ethics. In Sklonuj sve jmeno, exulante! Radimsky suggests that exile is able to make manifest the real nature of people:

> I believe the greatness of exile lies in its amazing ability to unfold the truth of people and things. Exile seems to be a magnifying glass that exaggerates both good and evil characters of a man, a nation, and the time period (Radimsky 7).

Exile is perhaps able to accomplish such a task due to pain associated with it. It is usually pain that makes a little thing smaller, a large question larger, a miserable man more miserable, and a devoted one even more devoted (Radimsky 7). In exile, according to Radimsky (7), a small poet stops working but a noted one starts writing. Radimsky confesses his delight at this particular exilic experience: "I love exile, this touchstone of a

[74] We have met several people who really had the most justifiable reasons for leaving their homeland, but who still have kept asking themselves if this was the right choice.

pain that quickly distinguishes gold from glitter, a diamond from a coal, a personality from a comedian" (7). Radimsky, living exiled himself, argues that the moral responsibility of a person is much higher in exile than at home. Referring mostly to the communist refugees, he explains that ethics anticipates the freedom of the individual—a liberty that is often denied by the communist regime: "the larger the freedom, the greater ethical responsibility" (Radimsky 89).[75] Here we may perhaps find the character of exilic ethics. Feeling responsibility for those who were left behind, and acting on that responsibility, constitutes decisive ethical action. The question then is not about the ethical dimension *of* being in exile, but rather about the ethical dimension of *an* exile.

In conclusion, we may note that ethical behavior perhaps should not rely on one's emotional stability and degree of comfort he or she experiences in exile. A state of uprootedness truly represents a strong appeal; however, we have seen that each émigré needs to determine his or her own position. Both of the writers we have examined, as well as many other emigrants, were influenced by the social and political atmosphere of their emigration. As for Drabek, we realized that such ethical calls carried a global appeal on international politics; while Vejvoda, on the other hand, posed a mirror to individuals and their very personal approach to the reality of exile.

To sum up, Czechoslovak literary exile eventually became a sphere where different worlds—cultural, political, and ideological—encountered each other; it was a sphere that enabled individuals to discover a new perspective and provided for plurality of perception. We may conclude with Vejovoda's favorite saying that exile is a path—

[75] According to Radimsky (90), ethics is a theory of persona. If the Communist ideology strives for the liquidation of a persona (whose basic predicate is freedom), then it kills ethics in order to subside the persona so as to make it amenable with governmental laws and police violence.

and thus it may go only forward (Broucek, Kandidati 116). He finds a certain parallel in E. M. Remarque's Shadows in Paradise, where the refugees are unable to continue after the victory, but—much more—they are afraid of returning back (Broucek, Kandidati 116). Similarly, the old anecdote holds: when an exile is asked why he keeps coming back—and not living here or there—he replies: "Well, it is best on the way" (Broucek, Kandidati 116). Said ("The Mind of Winter" 35), also stresses this advantage of pluralism that exiles gain: "...this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions. [...] Thus both the new and the old environment are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally. [...] There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension." Thus, a certain detachment from here and there—from time and space—eventually enables exiles to appreciate both.

Conclusion

Having examined Czech literary exile, we realized that some authors devoted their time and skills to expressing their political disagreement, to comforting, educating, and confronting a state of exile. Although they did not constitute a large number of writers, they contributed distinctly to Czech literature of the twentieth century. Whether they aspired to defeat communism intellectually (especially the *Forty-Eighters*) and wrote political articles in the West (Ferdinand Peroutka), supported their counterparts in exile (Ladislav Radimsky), provided psychological comfort to those who stayed behind (Pavel Tigrid), published their memoirs (Jiri Taxler, Kamil Behounek, Jan Drabek), or posed existential questions (especially the *Sixty-Eighters*) for both exiles and non-exiles (Milan Kundera, Josef Skvorecky, Jaroslav Vejvoda), their work reflected on dimensions that are familiar to every refugee.

The previous exploration has shown that each of the writers examined approached exilic experience in a different way. We were able to examine this difference by a particular study of two traumatic events in Czech history—1948 and 1968—and their émigrés. The transition from the social issues of the post-1948, Jan Drabek, to the individual and existential approaches of the post-1968, Jaroslav Vejvoda, seems to be the most significant characteristics of their work.

Critical analysis of Jan Drabek has shown his work to have a strong emphasis on the external and political issues—social issues such as ethical appeals, and political and social justice. Drabek left Czechoslovakia—a society with the twenty-year democratic past—with an experience of social and human values. His exile thus called for these values on a global level and Drabek addresses positive issues such as justice, good and evil, ethics, violence, law, democracy, and social order. Vejvoda, on the other hand, left a Czechoslovakia that was destroyed by the twenty-year rule of a totalitarian regime. He knew that the only way to survive intellectually was to enclose himself in his own world, and thus his emphasis is on the internal and, strictly speaking, non-political concerns. Against the background of the daily lives of his characters, Vejvoda thus challenges the negative and more personal issues in exilic communities: disappointment, disillusionment, fear, apathy, criticism, existential questions, nihilism, and fatalism. An analysis of Vejvoda's work, as we have seen, demonstrates a certain departure from political and social involvement of the post-1948 exiles. In contrast to Drabek's idealism and positive view of society, Vejvoda warns us about the destructive potential of the individual's surrender and negativism. By way of an analysis of these historical—and

personal—traumas, this thesis has argued a clear transition from the external and political approach of Drabek, to the existential position of Vejvoda.

APPENDIX

The identification of Czechoslovak writers in exile has proved to be one of the most demanding aspects of this research. As referred to earlier, a comprehensive work that presents an accurate and updated list of these author-exiles has not yet been written. Still, several particular volumes—descriptive, historical, and analytical—may be identified when approaching the subject. Interestingly, most of them were published for the first time after the fall of communism in the late 1980s, and all of them were written by Czech—though not exclusively—exiles themselves. Unfortunately, only a few of them were issued in English. That is, two encyclopedia-like volumes, Jiri Mejstrik's Czechs Around the World 1918-2000: Lexicon of Expatriates Who Have Made Their Mark in the World (2000), and Jozka Pejskar's bilingual Posledni pocta: In Memoriam to Czechoslovak Exiles 1948-1981 (1982), are both devoted to Czechoslovak exiles and provide for important—though brief and certainly not comprehensive—starting points. Pejskar's book, moreover, is dedicated only to exiles that died before 1981. Josef Cermak's It All Began with Prince Rupert (2005) is neither a scholarly nor comprehensive work, yet it provides an extensive overview of the large community of Czech-related Canadians. Unlike the authors mentioned above—who were journalists (Pejskar), lawyers (Cermak) or both (Mejstrik), whose books are products of more or less voluntary work, the Czech-written works approach the topic scholarly.

For example, Jan Culik's Knihy za ohradou: Ceska literatura v exilovych nakladatelstvich 1971-1989 [Books Behind the Fence: Czech literature in Exilic

Publishing Houses 1971-1989] (1991) provides a valuable anthology of Czech exilic literature, while Ludmila Seflova's Knihy ceskych a slovenskych autoru vydane v zahranici v letech 1948-1978 [Books of the Czech and Slovak Authors Published Abroad Between 1948 and 1978] (1993) offers a full bibliography of Czech and Slovak authors publishing abroad between 1948 and 1978, and Ales Zach's Kniha a cesky exil 1949-1990 [A Book and Czech Exile 1949-1990] (1995) brings a full list of emigrant publishing houses and their prints. Stanislav Broucek's collection from the symposium on Czech emigration, Emigrace a exil jako zpusob zivota [Emigration and Exile as a Way of Life] (2001), skillfully covers the psychological and emotional settlement with trauma of emigration by providing thematic full-text lectures of Broucek, Mestan, Ulc, Kral, etc. Broucek's other book, Kandidati dalsi existence: z osudu novodobe ceske emigrace [The Candidates of Other Existence: From the Fates of Recent Czech Emigration] (2004), then, introduces several particular exiles from the most recent perspective. Similarly, Karel Hvizdala's Ceske hovory ve svete [Czech Interviews in the World] (1981) offers valuable interviews with exilic authors. One of the most valuable practical sources for our research, however, is the work of Jan Culik, a professor at the University of Glasgow, whose professional interest in the theory of Czech literary exile seems unique among the scholars.

In addition, a few essays try to approach Czech exile theoretically: Ladislav Radimsky's Sklonuj sve jmeno, exulante! [Decline Your Name, Exile!] (1967); Politicka emigrace v atomovem veku [Political Emigration in Atomic Age] (first issued in 1968) and Kapesni pruvodce inteligentni zeny po vlastnim osudu [Pocket Guide for Intelligent Woman on Her Own Fate] (1988) both by Pavel Tigrid.

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