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Introduction: On Exile and Exiles

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According to established definitions, exile (having the Latin etymon "exilium" – expressing the action, but also the idea of exclusion or even banishing of a person) means "a forced departure from the native land, as a result of a decision external to the individual who takes this action, or a forced settlement in a foreign territory."[2]

Other definitions include, as possible explanations of this situation that the human being has often been confronted with, the consequences of wars, conflicts or persecutions (political or religious), but certain authors have emphasized the freedom of choice of some of those who decide to leave home, aiming "to reach a higher level of knowledge, impossible to find within the borders of their known world."[3] After all, Saint Augustine himself defined human being as "peregrinus": that is, pilgrim, traveler, even exile.

Writers in exile have often been seen as prisoners between different realities, forced to adapt to a binary way of living or thinking (and, subsequently, of structuring their literary material), outraged or grieved by the circumstances that caused them to leave, but harboring a deep nostalgia for the places they had left behind. On the one hand, they always try to configure a new identity, including a literary one, but on the other, they tend to preserve, even if in a subtle way, the old one, impossible to forget. This is the convincing evidence that the very

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[2] "Exile": *The Oxford English Dictionary.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 540.

[3] Battaglia, Salvatore ed. *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana.* apud Mario Sznajder, Luis Roniger. *The Politics of Exile in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 14.