

*(Adapted from the 2010 Open Essay):* Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.” Yet Said has also said that exile can become “a potent, even enriching” experience. Select a character from *When the Emperor was Divine* who experiences such a “rift” and becomes cut off from “home,” whether that home is the character’s birthplace, family, or homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character’s experience with exile is both alienating and enriching and how this experience illuminated the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid plot summary.