

Abstract:

During the twelve years of the National Socialist regime in Germany, the relationship between the writers who left the country as emigrants and those who decided to stay was characterized by latent tensions. The former claimed that they were the only active literary opposition to stand up against Nazi Germany while the latter insisted that they impartially witnessed, in an attitude of passive hostility, what happened in the country. This tense relationship grew into an open dispute after World War II. It has been extensively outlined that this controversy has significantly influenced the development of German Literary theory in the post-war-period.

Today, we should approach the writings of German exiles and "inner emigration" from a more rational perspective, ceasing to see this era only in the light of a subsequent literary controversy.

The PhD thesis presented here aims at developing a set of such rational evaluation parameters which may serve to better understand selected writings of authors from exile and "inner emigration" in the historical context of National Socialism. An in-depth review of three novels (Werner Bergengruen, *Der Großtyrann und das Gericht*; Ernst Glaeser, *der letzte Zivilist*; Ernst Weiß, *Der Augenzeuge*) will analyze to which extent an omnipresent Nazi propaganda and a strong NS symbolism influenced the work of these three authors - regardless of where they wrote, in their mother country or from exile's perspective.