

# **The exile, the outcast, the emigrant**

## ***Literary and artistic portrayal under the Nazi and Soviet regimes***

**International conference**  
**UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SORBONNE**

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The objective of this conference is to understand exiles, outcasts, and emigrants through the eyes of writers by examining the manner in which they were portrayed in the literature of Central, Eastern and Western Europe under the Nazi and Soviet regimes. An analysis will also be made of visuals (painting, cinema, posters) where “the Other” is stigmatised, ridiculed, or annihilated.

Totalitarianism, or the totalitarian experience, according to Hannah Arendt, has exploded “all our categories of thought and standards of judgment” (Arendt 1994). Based on a unilateral and homogeneous vision that tolerates no alternatives, the Nazi and Soviet regimes committed themselves to a principle of *exclusion* in which the Other – regardless of the “basis” of his otherness, whether it be race or social class – had to either be re-educated and converted into a New Man or eliminated (this re-education was deemed impossible for certain ethnic groups and social categories). All *ambivalence*, according to this model, was also to be eliminated. As Baberowski and Doering-Manteuffel said, Stalinism was “an attempt to establish an order devoid of ambivalence and uncertainty. In this manner, it was similar, [in concept], to the racial purity utopia of the National Socialists” (Geyer & Fitzpatrick 2009). This totalitarian society was expected to “not have anything outside of itself” or “within itself that would indicate another form” (Lefort 1986) or figurate an alternative. The formation of a “new population category” (Rouvillois 2014), in which the human being is assessed only through a prism of uniformity and fitting into a larger community includes in itself the perception of the Other (whether he be the intellectual, the Jew, the homosexual, etc.) as an “enemy of the people” or as Lydia Chukovskaya said “the foreigner” [чуждый] (Chukovskaya 1980) who exists outside of the newly created social space. The idea of otherness also includes the idea of “the superfluous man” (Javakhishvili 1929), meaning the man for whom there is no space in the Nazi or Soviet reality.

The very concept of the *Weltanschauung* – the Nazi worldview – implicated the construction of the world in accordance with the vision (Nancy 2016) of Nazism and the Aryan. In order for this world to be actualised, that which was not deemed excellent – namely the Jew – was to be eliminated (Nancy 2016). That is to say, the conquest of territories was not the ultimate goal of Nazism. Instead, it was the Germanisation, or Aryanisation, of the areas in question. In this worldview, the Jew was seen as nothing but unprocessed material (Anders 1980), a “living beings [were] downgraded from the status of the human race” and seen as “mass corpses” (Traverso, 2002, 55).

The concept of the emigrant will be examined in its multiple dimensions: including the ideas of exile, of the inner emigrant, and of the deported emigrant, as described by

Victor Klemperer in his analysis of the language of the Third Reich. In the Soviet context, the term emigrant refers to a person who is forced to leave his country. Similarly, there exists the concept of the inner emigrant: one who is forced into exile without experiencing territorial displacement. The last meaning will be examined especially in the Nazi context in relation to the Jew: the term “recipient emigrated” (*abgewandert*) was written on letters returned to senders when the recipient’s door bore the inscription “Here lived a Jew” (Klemperer 1996). It thus captured the deadly dimension of the term “emigrant” and maintained the concept of “statelessness”, and therefore “rightlessness”, as suggested by Alexis Nouss (Nouss 2015).

In this context, we envisage examining the literary and artistic representations of those who refuse to “be of his time” (Horvath 1938), meaning those who go into exile or continue communicating their ideas “between the lines”, or depict outlaws in their writing and believe themselves to be “foreigners [who are] useless in this new world” (Zweig, *Rausch der Verwandlung*).

We propose the following research axis:

- Exile, writing, totalitarian and dictatorial regimes
- Visual representations in totalitarian regimes
- Stigmatisation, stereotyping
- The construction of *The Other*
- The destruction and the removal of *The Other*