

Summary

PhD thesis entitled “Writers and Writing in the Works of Lion Feuchtwanger (1884-1958),” whose aim is to demonstrate and to analyze a role of a writer according to the German author, consists of two parts.

In the first part, having sketched the author’s biography, I present and interpret selected Feuchtwanger’s essays on literature created from 1927 to 1946. In the essays he presents himself as a writer whose main aim is to win a recognition of as many readers as possible. However, after 1933 his writing was also strongly influenced by historical events. Thus I analyze Feuchtwanger’s “reportage” from the Soviet Union entitled *Moscow 1937*, in which he praises the only adversary of Hitler’s state, as well as his memoir on French internment camps, *Der Teufel in Frankreich*, 1942 (*The Devil in France*, 1941). The former is crucial for his political opinions, the latter for his stance on a Jewish matter; during the WWII Feuchtwanger changed from an enemy of Zionism into an ardent supporter of Israel. The chapter is concluded by an analysis of Feuchtwanger’s unfinished essay *Das Haus der Desdemona*, 1957/58 (*The House of Desdemona*) in which the author strongly emphasizes his attitude towards historical events which he treats like “a costume,” a manner of dealing with contemporary problems in a neutral way. Regarding relationships between Feuchtwanger’s biography and his writing, I employ a methodology of an autobiographical pact of Philippe Lejeune in this part of my thesis.

In order to examine how this attitude is related to Feuchtwanger’s writing, I devote the second part of my thesis to four types of writers depicted in Feuchtwanger’s works. The first one is represented by Thomas Wendt, a title hero of a “dramatic novel” published in 1920. Wendt is a writer-revolutionary who leads the revolt in Munich. Yet he turns in all his political activities in favor of writing which becomes his means of a social and political fight. Eric Wiesener, *Exil*, 1940 (*Paris Gazette*), on the other hand, represents a Nazi propaganda writer. This figure serves as an example of a fate of a writer-servant in a totalitarian regime. The next character is Josephus Flavius, *Josephus-Trilogie*, 1932-1942 (*Josephus-Trilogy*), an eminent historian who tried to be a Jew and a cosmopolite at the same time, yet at the end he chooses to be a fighter for Palestine. The last figure that I interpret is Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Narrenweisheit oder Tod und Verklärung des Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 1952 (*‘Tis Folly to Be Wise, Or, Death and transfiguration of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*). Feuchtwanger depicts manipulations with his writing during the French Revolution. Although the author approves “a social progress,” the novel serves as an indirect critique of Stalinism, for instance a

revolutionary cult of Rousseau symbolizes the cult of the individual. In the second part of my thesis I employ Pierre Bourdieu's methodology of fields of cultural production and power (in the second chapter), relationships between history writing and literature according to Hayden White (in the third chapter), and again Philippe Lejeune's autobiographical pact (in the fourth chapter).

All the characters are rooted in the writer's essays. Like Feuchtwanger himself, they are all convinced of a particular, leading role of a writer. Although they influence the ruling ones, they are also depicted as those who are themselves under a heavy political pressure. Taken together, they form a polyphonic portrait of an eminent writer such as Feuchtwanger understood it. Feuchtwanger's writer should fight through his works, which must be created so that both an average reader and a connoisseur could appreciate them, and learn from them. For the main aim of any writer is to create reality, which I tried to demonstrate through my analysis of Feuchtwanger's essays and characters of writers created by him.

Key words:

Lion Feuchtwanger, exile, literature, writers