

REVIEW

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Scientific specialty - 2.1. Philology, Theory and History of Literature

Subject: dissertation for the award of the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in a scientific specialty 2.1. Philology at the New Bulgarian University.

Author of the dissertation: Maurice Name Fadel, Associate Professor, PhD, New Bulgarian University

Dissertation topic: Detectives, scouts, Cold War:
criminal and spy literature in a comparative perspective

The topic of the Cold War, which affected the literary development, is relevant because Bulgarian society has not yet managed to overcome all the consequences of this global ideological conflict, which largely formed the beliefs, attitudes, values and behavioral patterns of the nation. Unfortunately, the topicality of the topic has been confirmed in recent weeks by the fact that these mental attitudes have led to the return of the confrontation in Europe and the world. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the cultural mechanisms by which ideology is formed is extremely important today.

The main object of research is the development of the crime and intelligence-adventure genre in Bulgaria. This process is characteristic primarily of literature after 1944, and therefore the main focus is on the study of the artistic process during the socialist period.

The first part focuses on the presentation of classical crime literature. This is necessary because the main characteristics of the genre, its connection with modernity and the market, its relationship with the main literary-historical processes of the late 19th and early 20th century, some general characteristics of the world depicted in crime literature and the image of detective as a structural center of the literary work of this type, must be clarified in advance in order to be used as tools for analysis and interpretation in illuminating the literary historical processes in Bulgaria, which are the main subject of research.

The author defends the thesis that the genre of criminal literature arises from the need to understand the processes taking place in establishing modernity as an economic, institutional, ideological and value principle for the organization of public relations. As for the origin of the genre, the author believes that it has two sources. The first is represented by the Anglo-Saxon tradition, which diligently seeks to destroy the traditional model of aesthetic impact by identifying the reader with the world described in the work and replacing it with a purely rational solution to mysteries. The second source is represented by the French-language literature, in which the repulsion from aesthetic influence is not so radical and an attempt is made to reconcile the rational with the sensory-identification, although it is the rational that remains predominant.

The second part of the paper is devoted to the attempts to write a crime novel in Bulgaria. At that time this was a well-known phenomenon in our country, but mainly through translations from English and French. In 1947, however, the first originally Bulgarian book was published, sustained in the traditions of the genre - the novel "The Blue Sunset" by the young, then, but inspiring hopeful writer Pavel Vezhinov. The critics are prepared for what is evident from the relatively good knowledge of the main characteristics of the genre, but still do not accept this first experience. The objections are, as might be expected, ideologically motivated. And the main reason for this negative attitude is not within the limits of the artistic, but rather in the theory of the essence of the socialist state. The author of the dissertation examines in detail Lenin's book *The State and the Revolution*, as well as all the following of these basic legal documents of socialist law. The basic idea of Leninism is that in socialist society there is no economic basis for the emergence of crime, and therefore the preventive functions of the state must gradually die out.

The third part is dedicated to the successful project of the party-led socialist literary process to create literature that uses the main features of the crime novel to achieve specific ideological goals. The focus is on the two brightest representatives of the genre: Andrei Gulyashki with the series of novels about Habakkuk Zahov and Bogomil Raynov with the series about Emil Boev.

The author of the study believes that this type of literature legitimizes the pervasive public paranoia, the reasons for which are found in the inherent system of modern supervision, thoroughly analyzed by Michel Foucault. The person feels constantly monitored, but does not know who is watching him. But this situation has another very significant consequence - in practice it turns out that there is no difference between the representatives of the warring

headquarters. They seem to be playing their own autonomous game, and everyone else has suffered, ie. the common people.

The last, fourth part of the study, entitled "Iran and Ideology", analyzes the main characteristics of the image of the world built in the adventure-intelligence novel, as well as the main characteristics of the character. It is stated that he has all the main features of a detective from the classic crime literature - a lonely lonely melancholic who comes to life only when confronted with another difficult mystery. Of particular interest in this part are the detailed analyzes of the various elements of the image of the world with which the heroes scouts have to do - building the image of the hostile West, hotels, food, women. The attention is naturally focused on the series about Emil Boev, whose action takes place in the West, inaccessible to the socialist reader. The main thesis of the author is that Bogomil Raynov consciously strives to build a "home" image of the West, showing that "there" is not better than "here", and in many cases even worse. The other objects of analysis - hotels, food and women - have the task to illustrate with illustrative examples some ideological problems of the consumer society.

As for the image of the protagonist, the author of the study cites irony as his main characteristic. It is a natural consequence of the above postulate that there is no universal notion of good and evil and that it all depends on the norm by which we measure it. The analysis is detailed and convincing, but it would still be good to derive the following characteristics of artistic impact from this ironic approach.

In conclusion, the study summarizes the main characteristics of the adventurous-intelligence novel, as it develops in our country. Its main characteristic is its closeness to the basic postulates of socialist realism, which this type of literature managed to revive to some extent at a time when it was already sufficiently discredited, but at the same time to change it. Comparing the Western spy novel, representing a world in crisis, with the socialist intelligence-adventure novel defending the value of the Motherland, the study highlights the different attitudes of this type of literature to classical crime. While the spy novel is markedly ironic about crime, although it uses many of its techniques, the socialist intelligence-adventure novel is not just ironic, but downright negative, recognizing it as an element of enemy culture in the West. In the end, however, it turns out that the seemingly warring genres achieve the same ultimate goal - disbelief in reality, suspicion of the other, and life-changing efforts - the legacy of the Cold War. Which, on top of everything, doesn't seem to be over yet

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The main scientific contribution of the research is related to the elucidation of the role played by the intelligence novel in the general literary process of the socialist era, as well as its importance in achieving the ideological goals of party propaganda in the Cold War situation. In addition, as a specific scientific contribution can be pointed out the detailed and reasoned analysis of the specific manifestations of the genre in our country and above all the two main authors - Andrei Gulyashki and Bogomil Raynov. Although there is research on the subject, such a comprehensive and in-depth interpretation has not yet been made. A specific contribution is the application of Paul de Man's theory of the letter as a characteristic feature of the unreal image of the world created by the crime novel.

Conclusion:

As a result of the above, I strongly support the proposal of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maurice Name Fadel to be awarded the degree of "Doctor of Science".

20. 03. 2022 г.

Sofia

Signature:

Reviewer: Prof. Alexander Panov Ph.D., Dr. Sc.