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JOSEPH CONRAD IN THE CONTEXT OF BULGARIAN MARITIME LITERATURE

Abstract:

This article dwells on the Bulgarian reception of Conrad's maritime writing and considers a number of influences, allusions and typological similarities. The text discusses the receptive effect of expansion that characterizes the ensuing literary articulations of the sea. Conrad's life and works became culturally relevant in Bulgaria at a time when cultural life was invigorated by state-supported endeavours to raise sea awareness (the establishment of the Bulgarian Maritime Society in the 1920s is a landmark event in this respect). The first trace of Conrad's creative reception in Bulgarian literature can be observed in the works of his translator Dobrin Vasilev (1893–1957), studied by Petya Tsoneva. This thread continues after the Second World War with a new generation of maritime authors. Conrad's presence in Bulgarian literature is most articulate in writers whose expertise, knowledge and perspectives are the outcome of actual experience of the sea, creatively rendered in their fiction. Such category of writing, for instance, includes the works of Varban Stamatov (1924–1998), centenarian long-distance captain Vasil Valchanov (1915 -), long-distance captain Vasil Dachev (1932), and maritime writers like Nikola Radev (1940–2016) and Todor Velchev Koruev, nicknamed the Sea Wolf (1935–2010). Conrad's maritime prose, however, is likewise consistent with the creative quests of sea-fond writer Boris Aprilov-Ahoto (1921-1995) who was not a professional sailor. The generic scope of the considered works includes fiction, travelogues, and memoirs.

Keywords:

Joseph Conrad, Bulgarian maritime literature, influences, allusions, typological similarities

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