

Jost Hindersmann, **Britischer Spionageroman und Zeitgeschichte. [The British Spy Novel and Contemporary History.]** Dissertation, Osnabrück (Prof. Harald Husemann). published as: Jost Hindersmann, **Der britische Spionageroman: Vom Imperialismus bis zum Ende des Kalten Krieges. [The British Spy Novel: From Imperialism to the End of the Cold War.]** Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995, vii, 250 S., 49,80 DM.

Without any doubt, the spy novel is one of the most popular literary genres. In the sixties, Ian Fleming's fictional superspy, James Bond, acquired the status of a cult hero with the merchandizing industry selling everything from 007-dolls to 007-toiletries, and today authors like John le Carré and Frederick Forsyth sell thousands of books on their name alone. However, literary scholarship has neglected the spy novel for a long time. The first studies published in the seventies concentrated mainly on the history and structure of the genre. This investigation is the first monograph to analyse the relationship between British spy novels and contemporary history ranging from the Franco-German War 1870/71 to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The texts chosen for this study are some 150 of the most influential and popular British spy novels.

In the introduction, the terms used in this thesis are defined, different approaches to the spy novel are presented and the method and aim of the research explained. The main part of the thesis is subdivided into chapters according to historical periods. At the beginning of each chapter, a short historical survey is given.

Chapter 1 deals with spy and invasion novels published between 1871 and 1914. It shows that these novels were written as propaganda in order to alarm the nation, that the enemy switches from France to Germany and that the hero not only fights against evil foreigners but also against political and social unrest at home. Authors discussed include G.T. Chesney, Erskine Childers, William le Queux, and E. Phillips Oppenheim.

Chapter 2 is about war-time spy novels by John Buchan. His protagonist, Richard Hannay, was designed as a role model for his readers. Although Buchan's novels were not as anti-German as those of William le Queux, they were nevertheless written as

propaganda especially for the troops. Any attempts to weaken the Home front were condemned.

Chapter 3 analyses spy novels published from 1918 to 1933. John Buchan and "Sapper" warn their readers against the thread of Bolshevism.

Chapter 4 deals with the spy novels of Eric Ambler and Geoffrey Household written between 1933 and 1945. Both of them create a new kind of hero more sceptical towards authority. For Household, fascism is a totalitarian system like Stalinism, whereas for Ambler the fascists are puppets on a string controlled by Big Business.

Chapter 5 examines retrospective spy novels about Nazi-Germany and the Second World War. The *secret histories of the war* are shown to be novels which claim to be historical reconstructions. The *as-if narratives* by Len Deighton and Robert Harris about a hypothetical German invasion of Britain are seen to be a reaction to Britain's entry into the Common Market. The *nightmare-that-wouldn't-die* novels about Nazis on the run prove that the figure of the Nazi has become a stock character in British popular fiction.

Chapter 6 deals with the Cold War novels by Ian Fleming, John le Carré and Len Deighton. Firstly, their different attitudes towards the state of British postwar society is shown. While Fleming frankly enjoys the affluent society, he also pleads for a return to prewar values. Le Carré, on the other hand, criticizes the establishment for not being flexible enough to adapt to the new situation, while Deighton uses the antiestablishment perspective of the "Angry Young Men". Fleming denies Great Britain's international decline, whereas le Carré and Deighton admit to it. Fleming supports the Manichean ideology of the Cold War, while le Carré and Deighton equate Western conduct in the Cold War with that of the East.

Chapter 7 demonstrates that, even with the thawing of the Cold War and Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, it is still possible to write spy novels about the East-West relationship. Five novels published in 1989 by John le Carré, John Gardner, Frederick Forsyth, Colin Forbes, and Adam Hall are discussed.

Chapter 8 surveys spy novels written after the end of the Cold War and gives an outlook on possible developments in the future.

The thesis concludes with a structured bibliography listing approximately 600 books, articles and reviews on the British spy novel.