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Spies

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Insurrection and resistance are bonfires constantly rekindled within the heroes of Sušić's narratives, the heroes who view their profound and ingrained sense of Bosnian ethnicity as both a blessing and a curse. Bosnia has always been a country for whose territory clashed many a foreign army, at times even the banners set at dusk would not last long enough to witness the break of dawn; its borders, which trace the intersection of the East and West, have been constantly delineated at the focal points of military maps and conquest plans, so it was only natural for her every nook and cranny to be under the watchful eyes of paid spies.

Derviš Sušić developed and deepened this grim vision of the historical fate of Bosnia and her people in his novel *Spies*, in which the traditional forms and conventions pertaining to the structuring of the novelistic form have been shattered through the rejection of the single and uniform narrative flow, the compositional scheme of which would be based on the recounted fate of the protagonist. The novel has, namely, been realized through the mosaic fitting of independent narrative sequences, literary sensible on their own, into a more complex aesthetic creation. The wide panorama of historical events is realized through the combination of various types of narration: the fates of Sušić's heroes have been recounted in the form of letters, archive records, documentary testimonies, with particular narrative sequences, such as the one about the secret agent Abid Morlak, incorporating multiple types of narration.

Although the basic conceptual ideas make of *Spies* a complete work of art that distinguishes itself through a modern narrative structure, the value of this novel lies, above all, in its fragments and particular episodes such as, perhaps, the one about Dabiživ Vojsalić, the Ragusan-Bosnian-Ottoman spy. Although the summary of this story is stylized in the atmosphere of a chivalric romance novel, behind this seemingly optional literary stylization a historical image of the end years of the Bosnian Kingdom is, in fact, revealed. The literary shaping of historical events has also been evocatively accomplished in the episode of Husein-beg Gradaščević. Sušić does not present the significance and greatness of the phenomenon that is Gradaščević and his insurrection through the pathos of romantic plays; rather, we would say, through the diagonal narrative perspective: the story is conceived as a confidential report of an Ottoman spy who insensibly and spontaneously out of contempt and hatred towards the insurgents endures a painful examination of conscience and becomes one of Gradaščević's most loyal insurgents.

Translated by Bojana Vuković

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