The nation’s “timeless mission”: Frontier Orientalism in Central European historical fiction

Frontier Orientalism. Historical fiction. Central European identity. Turks in literature. Imagology.

Andre Gingrich’s concept of frontier Orientalism focuses on the former Habsburg Empire, which has been overlooked by Orientalist and postcolonial studies. Through a comparison of Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, and Czech novelists, including Janko Kalinčiak, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Géza Gárdonyi, Jaroslav Durych, and Jozef Horák, this study shows how the genre of historical fiction evoked what Gingrich calls Central Europe’s “timeless mission” of defending the frontiers of the West from Eastern barbarians, as a metaphor for the repression of minority identities.

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