

S. Filonenko,
doctor of philological sciences,
Berdyansk State
Pedagogical University

100 SHADOWS OF BLACK: NOIR AS GENRE AND STYLE IN THE CONTEMPORARY POPULAR FICTION

Noir is a very popular phenomenon in the contemporary mass culture, especially in cinema and popular fiction. The public is attracted by its shadowy tone and dark stylistics, figures of fatal women and cynical life-bitten heroes, urbanistic toposes. The word "noir" initially meant "black", "le roman noir" was the synonym to the gothic romance in the XIX century. After the II world war the term was applied by French and American movie critics to the special formulaic narratives in cinema and popular fiction. The concept of noir has significantly varied its meaning during the last decades of the XX century. A huge amount of the critical works is devoted to the phenomenon. It was interpreted as a genre, a style, a special sensibility, atmosphere or the new wave in American post-war cinema, from the early 1940s to the late 1950s. Film noir embraces a variety of film genres, gothic movies, gangster melodramas, private eye criminal films. Crime, usually murder, is an element of almost all films noir; in addition to standard-issue greed, jealousy is frequently the criminal motivation. A crime investigation by a private eye, a police detective (sometimes acting alone), or a concerned amateur is the most prevalent, but far from dominant, basic plot. Film noirs tend to have unusually convoluted story lines, frequently involving flashbacks and sometimes obscure narrative sequence. The attention in the article is also paid to the functioning of the term noir in contemporary Ukrainian literary criticism. Noir is analyzed as a popular fiction formula, a subgenre of the hard-boiled detective fiction. It is represented by the novels of Olexiy Volkov, Alla Serova, Andriy Kokotiukha. Their literary works depict the modern Ukrainian urban setting as analogical to Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Chicago in classical Ukrainian noir. They include the conventions of complex plots, theme of crime, sexuality and corruption, night rainy scenes.

Keywords: popular fiction, cinema, noir, mystery, genre, style, formula.