

Opinion

on the Dissertation

by Yana Dimova

"Representation of Historical Characters

in the Novels of Fernando Campos"

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Yana Dimova's dissertation, "Representation of Historical Characters in the Novels of Fernando Campos," is focused on a topic that is little developed in Bulgaria: the representation of the character in the novel. What makes the work all the more relevant is the fact that it connects this theme to the postmodern novel wave.

The seriousness of the PhD student's endeavor is evident in the first chapter where she turns her attention to the theoretical formulations in the study of character in the historical novel. The chapter provides a careful overview of the theories of character. The author of the dissertation starts from the very beginning of thinking about literature, Aristotle's "Poetics," and arrives at the most modern understandings of the literary-theoretical study of the character in the novel.

The theoretical apparatus used by the PhD student is constructed to serve the author whose historical novels she analyzes, Fernando Campos. She sees these novels as difficult to fit into the schemes of classical narratology, which are also the schemes of classical thinking in general with their aspiration for categorical boundaries between fact and fiction, between the referential and

fictional dimensions of the utterance. This is not the case with Campos. The complex relation between truth and fiction in his works evokes for its explanation theories such as that of Riffaterre's "fictional truth" or the "mixed modality of the characters' existence," as the author of the thesis puts it (p. 27).

One of the main focuses of the thesis is biofiction. It is little analyzed in Bulgaria, and the efforts of the PhD student in this direction are undoubtedly contributory. Thanks to the fact that she examines Campos's novels not aesthetically but poetically, in terms of the techniques of the narration, a varied picture of this mode of representation, observed in different elements of the text, emerges before us.

In my view, the most contributing part of the dissertation is chapter four. In it, the PhD student argues for and elaborates on an element of Campos' novels that has been little discussed in literary studies: 'suppressed discourse'. The 'suppressed discourse' are those perspectives in the narrative that are left out of the main lines of the story and meaning that are only hinted at and suggested. Very often, we could identify them in the inner monologue of the character. The study of "suppressed discourse" allows us to construct a modal view of the work that analyzes not what is contained in it but what it might present to us.

I confidently recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to grant Yana Ivanova Dimova the scientific and educational title "Doctor" in the field of higher education 2. "Humanities", professional field 2.1. "Philology", scientific specialty "Literature of the Peoples of Europe, America, Africa, Asia, and Australia (Portuguese Literature, 20th–21st centuries)".