

Opinion

for the defense of a dissertation for the award of the scientific and educational degree "Doctor"

in scientific specialty 2.1. Philology - Theory of Literature

Phragmentary Inquiry and the Possibility of Literary Transgression

with author Ioanna Ivanova Neykova

and scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. Darin Tenev

Yoanna Neykova's dissertation is an extremely thorough work, which shows not only her excellent theoretical preparation, but also her enviable ability to launch important scientific theses. It is evident from the entire work that Neykova does not limit herself to referencing other people's ideas, but, starting from them, skillfully develops her own theses, imposes interesting observations, and applies theoretical ideas and models to specific artistic texts. Moreover, the PhD student works with complex texts and ideas, which she adequately interprets and analyses. I make this introduction to say that rarely in a dissertation do we find such scholarly and independent writing, which is indeed a sign of Joanna Neykova's talent for doing scholarship.

The whole dissertation also betrays a good blend of historicism and theorizing, insofar as the problem of the fragmentary requirement is posed in different contexts, and even when it comes to the fragment and the German Romantic tradition, interesting and unusual angles are found through which to talk about the tradition of the concept. The interpretation of fragmentation as a literary-critical issue, the consideration of the genealogy of the fragment as a genre form and its place in the history of various aesthetic and literary movements, also goes in this direction. As - as the PhD student herself says - this is necessary in order to see "the points of intersection and connection between the various literary, theoretical and philosophical streams of fragmentation". The multifaceted nature of this pairing of the historical and the theoretical is also a fact of life in the exploration of the practice of fragmentation at the level of structure, organisation, and making, insofar as part of the thesis is concerned with highlighting different practices of fragmentation - interruption, dislocation, displacement, repetition, alliteration, montage - and weaving them into different writing strategies, with Joanna

Neykova focusing specifically on Blanchot and Beckett and the projections into their understandings and texts. In this context, the PhD student inscribes the concept she prefers to work with and which is excellently defended throughout her work, namely, thinking about fragmentation as a requirement. In this case, one turns one's back on unidirectionality and singularity, moving towards a pairing of form and content to arrive at the idea of the fragmentary, seen 'not as a genre or mode of writing, but as a requirement that continually takes thinking and writing beyond its literary-historical and philosophical limits, to the edge of what is possible in and through language'.

The great charge of the dissertation is its focus on the idea of defining literariness, on the attempt to show what it is that defines its essence and can be imposed as a contribution, on top of all known attempts to answer the question "what is literature". This definition, according to the work, can stand on the idea of the fragmentary, as long as it moves away from thinking of it as emblematic simply of particular genres and movements - Romanticism, Expressionism, Modernism, Postmodernism. To put it in the beautiful language of the thesis it defends, the dissertation builds a theory of "the forces of the fragmentary as forces of literature." Inevitably, therefore, it combines close and distant reading, focusing and contextualizing in an effort to demonstrate a conceptual analysis.

Looked at a little more broadly, Joanna Neykova's research fits in with the kind of theories that know that it's hard to think of the work as a constipated, static system, as unified, whole and complete, and so it - without necessarily always naming it - is in tune with today, with the idea of fluidity that marks thinking about modernity. Sigmund Baumann's hackaturist view of society as "fluid" is famously illustrated by the absence of stable orientations in the modern world and in modern man. Postmodernism can also be rethought through Neykova's text, especially in the direction of the crisis of narrative tradition. This is why I say that indirectly the dissertation also works in the direction of the actual. Last but not least, it also raises the question of the relations of literature with the extra-literary, of the limits (working with Georges Bataille) and - to use the words of the text - of the "transgressive potential of literature as the potential that the fragmentary actualizes", as well as the language of literature and the dialogues of the present with the classics

The abstract presents very correctly the ideas and contributions of the thesis, and the articles are numerous and published in reputable journals. Taking into account

what has been said so far, which testifies to the high achievement of the PhD student, I confidently give my vote for the award of the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty 2.1. Philosophy - Theory of Literature.

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