

OPINION

on the dissertation of Venessa Nacheva

“Corporeality and liminality in the poetry of

Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki”

by Ostap Slyvynsky, PhD,

Department of Philology, Ukrainian Catholic University (Lviv, Ukraine)

I consider the fact that the work of Polish poet Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is gradually becoming the important subject of research in the Slavic studies around the globe extremely important. The artistic world of the poet, who grew up at the intersection of various boundaries – geographical, cultural, existential – is naturally unstable, fluid, with blurred boundaries between images, poetic concepts and themes, and thus requires not only a flexible methodology, but also an extreme interpretive attention.

The topicality of the proposed dissertation comes from at least two circumstances: 1) the work of Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki remains still poorly studied in its key (and most complex) points related to the dialectics of the internal and the external, the somatic and the psychic, the individual and the super-individual (that is, the socio-historical), expressed through the dynamics of corporeality; and 2) the mentioned dialectics in the poetry of Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is hardly considered in the context of the cultural-historical changes in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the opening of the closed spaces of the periphery, the shift of interest from the universal (or rather the central) to the local.

The dissertation, albeit to varying degrees, achieves both goals. At the same time, I consider the researcher’s decision not to set as her goal the study of the relationship between the poet’s dialectic of corporeality and the physical, geographical border of Poland and Ukraine, with which he is objectively connected, to be quite justified: the mentioned fact rather opens the space for his creative search, but by no means exhausts it and does not imply particularly significant scientific discoveries.

The concept of the interconnectedness of corporeality and the border, built on the ideas of M. Merleau-Ponty, K. Jaspers and J. Kristeva, successfully synthesized and developed by the author of the dissertation, is interesting and convincing, but also provides a relevant methodological starting point for the interpretation of Tkaczyszyn-Dycki’s poems. According to this concept, "corporeality constantly provokes the border and shifts its parameters, making it a border in action, that is, a borderland". Thus, corporeality appears as the self-transcendence of the

body, which achieves dynamics and potentiality, overstepping its own limitations. This dynamics also stands out as a key to the overall poetics of Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, characterized by “fluidity”, the mutual overflow of motifs and images, making their interpretation difficult, but emphasizing the integrality of the author’s poetic consciousness.

I consider the entire first chapter “Theories of the corporeal and the borderline” to be extremely valuable from a methodological point of view, offering a synthetic view of the problems of identity, self-knowledge of the subject and the search for direct contact with the world through the body. In this context, the historical perspective of the displacement of the collective with the personal in the process of achieving the geopolitical, spatial identity of Central Europe after 1989 is particularly interesting, and leads to the creation of a special type of geopoetics. However, a broader – besides the Bulgarian and Polish – cultural perspective of this region is somewhat missing here, at least as a brief reference. It is not entirely clear why the author considers an idea of the borders of Central Europe as important only for the “Slavs”, ignoring other, non-Slavic peoples inhabiting this region.

The borderline situations in which corporeality manifests itself in Tkaczyszyn-Dycki’s poetry are defined in a very clear and convincing way: death, struggle, guilt. The poet’s paradoxes are particularly evident here: death, most often perceived as an extremely personal event (we never feel so lonely as at the moment of death), is displayed as the space of reciprocity, because in the context in death, the boundary between the body of the lyrical subject and that of his partner “melts”. And vice versa: the struggle, usually associated with the confrontation of two subjects or two separate entities, appears as an internal process, as “self-injury”.

The images through which the Tkaczyszyn-Dycki’s poetic *ego* is expressed are very well defined: mother, father, God, Norwid, genus, friends/lovers. It is not entirely clear, however, how corporeality manifests itself in the context of some of them, especially Norwid and genus (as for God and the divine in general, we find more interesting observations on this matter in the chapter devoted to the motif of guilt in Tkaczyszyn-Dycki’s poetry). The particular, spatial aspect of Dycki’s poetics is the subject of research in the last chapter of the dissertation. The theoretical and methodological methods used in the previous chapters are successfully complemented here with the semiotics of everyday life.

In conclusion, I can say that Venessa Nacheva's dissertation work is undeniably valuable, innovative, up-to-date research. I propose to the scientific jury to award her the academic degree "Doctor of Philology".