

OPINION

from

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about a dissertation

for awarding the educational and scientific degree

Doctor in science major

2.3. Philosophy (Doctoral Program in Philosophy Taught in English)

Author:

Snezhanka Mihailova

Subject:

**THEATER OF THOUGHT:
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY, THEATER AND PERFORMANCE.**

Supervisor:

Prof. Pravda Spasova

Sofia, 2023

1. Procedure data

The dissertation fully complies with the Law on DASRB and its implementation at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". During the period of realization of the dissertation, no violations were committed. The materials and documents submitted by Snezhanka Mihailova meet the necessary requirements. The five publications listed are references of the dissertation. All deadlines have been met. The doctoral student demonstrates serious competencies and motivation in the process of creating the dissertation.

2. Characteristics of the dissertation work

The volume of the dissertation includes a total of 168 pages. The structure of the dissertation contains an introduction, a two-part exposition, and a conclusion. The first part consists of five chapters and the second part of four. The bibliography covers 107 cited sources, as well as an additional 9 with reference to online resources. 18 images have been added to the thesis.

In the introduction, the aims and objectives of the present study are clarified, as well as a description of the work with its relevance and the statement of the problem. The methodology and the conceptual frame of the study are presented.

The author develops the topic in detail in the two parts of the study. A comprehensive study exploring the interrelationship of theatre, philosophy and the performing arts is available to the academic community. The focus is on feminist practices in Italy from the late 1960s to the 1990s.

An important starting point of the dissertation is to present and explore in depth the theater not as a spectacular event, but as a methodology of group forms of thinking (thinking-in-assembly), focusing on the example of the "second generation" in the Italian feminist movement 1970- 1990. The present study examines theater as a specific philosophical practice through the construction of theatrical thinking. It is convincingly outlined as a phenomenon of theater mainly built of philosophical categories. The doctoral student defends the thesis that theater is a situation in which human values are preserved and is a form of self-awareness. The process is constantly emerging, self-actualizing, fluid, i.e., not an object or identity, but a formation in a process of exchange. The central role of self-awareness practices is recognized. The performative aspect of thinking proposed by this dissertation has fundamental connections with philosophy. It refers to the emergent transformative aspect when philosophy is connected to experience and first-person narrative. Theatrical is seen as a rehearsal of autonomous thinking, where the production of language is intimately connected to lived experience, body and voice, and above all, to the practice of emergent or emergent relationships. Theater as a group-thinking practice involves actively redefining the conditions of the contemporary creative process.

3. Main contributions of the dissertation work:

Snezhanka Mihailova's dissertation has indisputable contributions in delineating areas of understanding that help us navigate a complex environment of examples, philosophical categories, activist gestures and authorial concepts. Essential to the author's exposition is the definition of thinking as a collective practice in a stage situation. The argumentation related to the voice and the acoustic dimension of thinking is solid. And the question of recalling and restoring absent voices is central to the social discourse of labour. The voice in the theater not only as an expressive tool, part of the actor's toolkit, but above all as a process of embodiment of thinking. The explosion of meaning derives from the conceptualization of thinking as devocalized logos.

The author defends the claim that moving from the scene as an idea to the scene as thinking-in-assembly, in which different fields are present, will allow us to register and recognize the cultural relevance of rich forms of relationships and practices and their particular importance in dealing with the crises of the present. Traces their emergence and establishment as an artistic process and their connections with other traditional or emerging practices. The paper argues the thesis of a transition from theatrical thinking as an idea to theatrical thinking as ethics. The activist charge of the dissertation, the social reflexivity of the presented theses and the overall addressing of unjust systems are the contributing elements that greatly impress me.

The dissertation provides enough information for future research projects of those who will contribute to the even better knowledge and positioning of this kind of artistic practices. The dissertation work is a valuable scientific-theoretical study, with high social and creative significance.

4. Conclusion:

I find Snezhanka Mihailova to be a diligent and creative professional. She has successfully integrated her wealth of knowledge into an ambitious, thematically and structurally complex project such as her dissertation. I am impressed with the amount of work that has gone into it. The dissertation is comprehensive and presents the most emblematic authors and examples for the specific study. The work is supported by a thorough research apparatus, abundant with skillfully used terminology and references. I support the work, the structure of the dissertation is logical and with a specific density due to the personal dedication of the author.

In conclusion, I recommend the respected members of the scientific jury to vote positively for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to the doctoral student **Snezhanka Mihailova** in professional field 2.3. "Philosophy".

Prof. Dr. Venelin Shurelov

Sofia, 17. 09. 2023