

R E V I E W

by Alexandra Glavanakova, PhD.,
Associate Professor in American literature and culture
at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
regarding the selection procedure for the academic position of
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
in the Area of Higher Education: 2. Humanities
Professional Field: 2.1. Philology (Literature of the peoples of Europe,
America, Asia and Australia - English and American literature),
Post-World-War-II English Literature and Translation (English)
at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Details of the selection procedure:

The procedure for the position of Associate Professor was announced in SG no. 103/12.12.2023, in the Area of Higher Education: 2. Humanities; Professional Field: 2.1. Philology (Literature of the peoples of Europe, America, Asia and Australia - English and American literature), Post-World-War-II English Literature and Translation (English). Dr. Angel Igov is the only candidate for this academic position. The candidate has submitted all the required documents by the deadline. The review of the provided documentation and the enclosed evidence indicate that Dr. Igov meets the eligibility conditions for the position of Associate Professor set forth in the minimum national requirements under the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Candidate's Data:

The candidate is a graduate of Sofia University with a bachelor's degree in English Philology (2005) and a master's degree in Literary Studies (2007). In 2012 he defended his PhD dissertation at the Department of Literary Theory at Sofia University on “Fictional Models of the City in the Contemporary British Novel: Ian McEwan and Martin Amis” under the supervision of Associate Professor Ognyan Kovachev. In 2012, he was appointed as a Senior Lecturer at the Department of English and American Studies, where he has taught seminars in the compulsory courses “Translation,” “English Literature: Romanticism” and “English Literature from Modernism to Postmodernism” in the English Philology undergraduate program; as well as lecture courses in “Literature and Cinema: The British Postmodern Novel,” “Literature and Adaptation” and “Twenty-first-Century Literature: Rewriting and Re-creation” in the Department's MA programs in Communication: Language, Literature, Media and Language and Culture. Since 2023 he has been teaching the lecture course “English Literature: from Modernism to Postmodernism” in the English Philology BA program.

It should be noted that Dr. Igov is not only a lecturer, but also an established literary translator (with 15 books published in translation from English, two of which have won prestigious awards), a literary critic and a journalist, as well as a writer. He is the author of three novels and two collections of short stories, some of which have been translated into foreign languages. His novel *The Meek* was awarded the National Literary Prize “Hristo G. Danov” in 2016.

Description of the candidate's scholarly publications

For the purposes of the present selection procedure for the position of associate professor, Dr. Igov has submitted a book based on his doctoral dissertation, 13 studies and articles, covering a wide range of research topics in English literature, its reception, and on issues of translation, as well as a habilitation monograph. These publications, as well as Dr. Igov's teaching and professional and scholarly activities, fully meet the criteria for the position of associate professor.

The facts presented here clearly testify to the wide-ranging research interests and professional

expertise of the candidate, who navigates with ease demanding literary questions and the challenges of literary translation. With his publications, Dr. Igov demonstrates his expertise in the field, a precision in conducting scholarly research, the ability to articulate different dimensions and perspectives of the issue under investigation, clarity, and rigor in his approach. It must be pointed out that no plagiarism was found in the publications submitted with the application.

Scientific contributions

I intend to focus only on the monograph submitted for the current habilitation procedure, *Flags and Keys: Poetics of the Epigraph* (2022). The monograph aims to explore the origin, development, and functions of the epigraph in English literature. The text consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. Utilizing Gerard Genet's theoretical framework for the study of paratexts, Dr. Igov develops his own methodology for analyzing the intertextual charge of the epigraph, classifying it along the inside-outside axis. The candidate chooses the metaphor of the flag to denote the epigraphs used specifically to emphasize connections with other texts. The metaphor of the key, in turn, points towards the possible interpretations the text, which any given epigraph serves as an introduction to. Despite its apparent simplicity, this framework makes it possible to explore the entire complexity of the phenomenon. Dr. Igov copes equally well with the close reading of texts that differ in terms of historical period, genre, form, and significance in literary history. In this way he proves the applicability of the proposed methodological framework and successfully fulfills the research task. The selection of the specific works with epigraphs he examines in great detail is quite felicitous. These are mainly authors from the English canon - T.S. Coleridge, Mary Shelley, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, J. Fowles, W. Scott, Ch. Tomlinson, substantiated with many more, though less detailed analyses, of cases from American literature: W. Faulkner, E. Hemingway, J. Steinbeck, H. James, J. Updike, and others. The monograph is reader-friendly, follows a logical argumentation and orderly exposition, starting from the historical review of the possible sources of the epigraph, followed by an examination of its material characteristics, while its many functions are analyzed in parallel. Special attention is given to a somewhat deviant form of the category of the composed / inauthentic epigraphs, which in my view serve not so much an intertextual role as a metafictional one: self-commentary by the author of the text that follows with elements of self-irony.

The fifth chapter, entitled "The epigraph in Bulgarian literature: specifics and trends," is one of the highlights of this text and one of its major contributions. In addition to positioning the discussion about the epigraph in a wider comparative and transcultural context, this chapter opens the door to subsequent, innovative research work on the epigraph in the context of literary interconnections and cross-fertilizations by adding a fresh perspective to the complexities of literary history. It is here that Dr. Igov discovers some specifically Bulgarian features (which, as mentioned by him, could also be shared by other "minor" literatures in the Balkans). As he reads selected Bulgarian authors - I. Vazov, St. Mihailovski, G. Milev, Y. Yovkov, A. Gerov and G. Gospodinov – Igov detects "conceptuality" on the one hand, and on the other, epigraphs that are grounded in folklore.

The contributions of Dr. Igov's monograph is not only in what he has accomplished, but also in the directions the text suggests for subsequent research. The candidate repeatedly states his intention to continue to seek the validity of Franco Moretti's law of literary evolution through the methodology of distant reading applied along the center-periphery axis by continuing his investigation of the epigraph. No less significant would be the study of the impact of the epigraph on the reader's perception of the text, where one of the computational methods from the field of digital humanities could also be applied to search for patterns in large databases.

Conclusion

Based on the overall academic activities, research, publications, and teaching, I give my full support to Dr. Angel Igov for the position of Associate Professor in the Area of Higher Education: 2. Humanities Professional Field: 2.1. Philology (Literature of the peoples of Europe, America, Asia

and Australia - English and American literature), Post-World-War-II English Literature and Translation (English) at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.”

April 24, 2024

Assoc. Prof. Alexandra Glavanakova, PhD