

## OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Violeta Decheva, DSc,  
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on the PhD Kamelia Svetlinova Spasova's academic works,  
for the competition for Associate Professor of the Sofia University "Kliment  
Ohridski" in professional direction 2.1. Philology - Literature of the Peoples of  
Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia (Western European literature)  
published in State Gazette issue No. 105 / 11.12.2020.

The submitted academic works and results of the conducted research, combined with the academic, teaching and socially engaged activity of PhD Kamelia Spasova, fully comply with all requirements of Sofia University for taking the academic position of associate professor.

Her monograph *The Modern Mimesis. Self-reflection in literature*, with which PhD Kamelia Spasova participates in the competition for this position, is a solid, comprehensive study of the *mimetic idea* of its formulation in Plato and Aristotle through its conceptual transformations in the field of modern theory and history of literature. The change is traced through the introduced concepts of *re-termination*, *pseudo-morphosis* and *literary figure*. The book is the result of her long-standing, in-depth research practice and aims at tracing the development of mimetic theory through its self-reflexive potential. The author pursues this goal by introducing in her work on the theoretical construct historical paradigms of *anomaly*. The proposed work is the first comprehensive study in Bulgarian, and such an approach has been contributed in the field of literary studies.

Each of the five parts of the study from a different point of view moves towards a clearly set research goal. The author seeks to cross these different points of view with the intention to "entangle" a conceptual network in which to capture and manifest the self-reflective potential of mimetic theory.

The overall impression of the monograph is a desire for the sought-after exhaustiveness in the description of the idea of *mimesis*, although PhD Kamelia Spasova soundly reminds that she does not claim such. And yet - her view, and her analysis seek to cover all possible aspects of the process. She is in no hurry to draw conclusions and assessments, although in the end they are clearly formulated and quite definite. She prefers the analysis to be developed in the course of the observations and in the presentation of the argumentation. Without looking for the maximum completeness in the presentation of the facts, she precisely chooses the examples that represent a theoretical or historical direction. I appreciate this careful (sometimes even scrupulous) description of the processes and their presentation in their contradiction and divergence in the development of modern literary criticism.

The very initial satisfaction of the idea of mimesis with literature, in order to trace the self-reflective potential of the concept in its uses in historical processualism, opens a space for the author to praise both literature and literary studies. This space, on the one hand, slightly distances it from the object of study. On the other hand, it is a priori open to the possibility of showing emotion, even a passion for literature. And the opportunity is skillfully used by the author through her chosen technique of the historical paradigm of the *anomaly*, which in turn also creates distance. From this point of view, a game space is created, the opening of which I find very valuable. It makes possible the free shift of perspectives in the exposition of the mimetic theory in the historical contexts, the meeting of the historical layers in a conscientious analysis, in order to highlight the differences between them. Thus, in their highlighting and meeting, in the movement of the edge between history and theory, the author creates a playing field in which the pleasure of the game in the presentation and the pleasure of refusing to choose a single-line theoretical structure helps her to do her job by showing self-reflective potential of *modern mimesis* while having fun. For me, this is a high quality of work.

The method of *analogy* and *anomaly* as part of the conceptual network in which Dr. Kamelia Spassova works in her monograph is considered in the first chapter, while *the figure* in its historicity is the subject of the second. The other three chapters of the study analyze the *similar*, *probable* and *accidental* (Chapter 3), *the types of realism* (Chapter 4) and *the fantastic / inhuman* - in the last fifth chapter.

I would highlight the significance of the first two chapters in particular. In the first, she deals with libraries and reading characters and formulates her idea for compiling *historical paradigms by anomaly*. In this sense, this chapter is key to the study. It lays out the various aspects of the library's discourse, while at the same time introducing, analyzing and arguing the use in the study of the concepts of *example*, *paradigm*, *exception*, highlighting the potential of the concept of *paradigm* and *anomaly*. I find the substantiation of the usefulness of literary studies from the compilation and use of *historical paradigms by anomaly* to be contributing.

Tracing the possibilities of *the figure* in Auerbach through *kairos* and *chronos* in the second chapter is, in my opinion, one of the most solid parts of the study. It reproduces the possibilities for a modern history of literature through the figure and the cut instead of through the narrative and the causal dynamics of the processes. In general, the choice that PhD Spassova makes to base all her work in a discreet way the key to modernity study of Auerbach's "Mimesis" by making a serious, solid analysis and contextualization, I find defining in the modeling of the concept of *modern mimesis*. The comparisons with Erwin Panofsky are great. Including the autobiographical intertwining and intertwining between Auerbach and Panofsky. In general, I find the superimposition of theoretical, historical and

especially personal autobiographical (horse) text in this part very useful, but also contributing. Of course, the same approach is applied in the other chapters, but in this one I think it is used in the most compact way.

I would add that in this sense, the whole study enters the twentieth century through such contextual layers and stratifications without avoiding the communist era. This is a fruitful moment in the work that I believe deserves to be continued and supported. I find especially valuable the entry of Bulgarian modernism and the research of Bulgarian literary studies in general in the overall field of the literary twentieth century.

The presented monograph in co-authorship, book, articles, studies and reports by PhD Spassova for participation in the competition, published in scientific, specialized, peer-reviewed academic issues and editions, are dedicated to topics of interest in her long research work and prepare her work in *The Modern Mimesis*. These are, for example, different aspects in the study of the concept of *mimesis, chance and fate, figure, realism, reflection, example, paradigm*, etc. I am well acquainted with her book *An Event and an Example in Plato and Aristotle* (2012) as well as her work from the point of view of drama, which she does not miss from the field of her literary interest. It is no coincidence that the 333 points collected in this category of materials (G) is far above the required points, as well as the number of citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review.

Among the teachers with high marks among the students, Dr. Spasova participates in projects with them, leads seminars and programs. She is the organizer of a number of conferences and scientific forums.

I have known PhD Kamelia Spassova for a long time. She is among the most established Bulgarian literary critics. I appreciate her commitment to a reflective and open literary theory and history. As well as her activity in the media literary landscape. I know the way of her professional growth and development in the formation of special areas of her research interest.

All the above gives me cause to recommend with conviction a position of associate professor of the Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski" to be conferred on PhD Kamelia Spassova.

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Sofia