

Short Review

by Assoc. Prof. Boyko Penchev, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", scientific field 2.1. Philology, History of Bulgarian Literature
on the scientific works for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 2.1. "Philology", announced in State Newspaper, Vol. 109 of 21.12.2021, with the only candidate being Assist. Prof. Dr. Bilyana Radoslavova Kurtasheva

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University

It is evident from the proposed references that assist. prof. Dr. Biljana Kurtasheva meets the minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University.

II. Research activity and results

1. Evaluation of the monographic work of Dr. Bilyana Kurtasheva "On the Edge of Comparison. Yavorov and the Rolling Stones, and other Im/Possible Intertexts " (Zhanet-45, 2018).

The proposed study tests the possibilities of the intertextual approach by juxtaposing different, seemingly "incomparable" texts from Bulgarian and foreign literatures. Kurtasheva derives the genealogy of the intertextual approach from the theory of the death of the Author (Barth) and the authorial function as an instrument of control over discourse (Foucault), and then traces its practice by Nikola Georgiev. Intertextuality is seen as an opportunity for liberation not only from the Author with his biography, ideas, and intentionality, but also from the disciplinary field of traditional literary studies built on the Author and his relationship to the history of the nation and the national "spirit" or "consciousness." Thus, intertextuality in Bilyana Kurtasheva's research is thought of not simply as a paralleling of texts, but as an opening to contexts to which traditional literary studies is blind. "Context", in order to work as a hermeneutic tool, must also be structured by the interpreter as text.

The great stakes of the researcher's chosen approach is finding a new kind of grounding for literature in the social field beyond the secure institutional supports of the canon. With a clear awareness of the challenges of her chosen theoretical and methodological paradigm, Bilyana Kurtasheva writes on p. 14 that each of her analyses "takes intertextual and interpretive risks to open up new spaces for thinking literature, but also through literature here and now." Although in a discreet and unadvertised way, Bilyana Kurtasheva's interpretations actually provide a new look not just at literature, but through literature at some painful cultural and political issues of our time.

Bilyana Kurtasheva's intertextual approach, with the notion of intertextuality so broadly understood, leads to a tension in the relationship between "local" and "global", between "small literatures" and "world literature". In fact, intertextual analysis allows for intersections and encounters that cultural hierarchies and asymmetries in the field of literary production do not usually allow for. As the author herself puts it, "intertextuality can lend an in-betweenness, a

fragile centredness, even to the periphery (where we are)" (p. 168). This approach allows, for example, to see the shadows of Nietzsche and Dostoevsky behind K. Pavlov's "Alchemists", and London and the metropolis of modernism behind Geo Milev's "Inferno".

Bilyana Kurtasheva examines intertextuality in different aspects. Particular attention is paid to the politics of translation, for example in the foreign language editions of Bulgarian literature carried out beyond and especially within the borders of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Other parts of the study offer an interesting approach to the problem of 'world literature'. On the basis of intertextual analysis, Bilyana Kurtasheva builds a specific model of "world literature", bringing together the tales of evil stepmothers and the novels of Bolaño. Theory, too, turns out to be a kind of "text" with which literary texts enter into productive interrelations - Derrida becomes a context or boundary for Sylvia Plath's poetry, and the figures of Dora Gabe and Elisaveta Bagriana are refracted through Miglena Nikolcina's concept of matricide (and its paradoxical overcoming). The work shows how intertextuality can also be analyzed as a repertoire of images and figures passing through the texts of different authors (the aunts in the poetry of the 1990s) or the same author (the tree in Ivan Tsanev's poems).

Bilyana Kurtasheva does not abandon one of her enduring research themes - anthologies and anthologizing strategies, by tracing the uniform variations on the theme of death in the first poetry anthologies after 1944 and revealing the poetic unproductiveness of ideologized poetry. This part of the study reveals the way in which ideological uniformity cuts and narrows the possible references and "kinships of choice" before poets, or trivializes intertextual dialogue, turning references to Botev into unconscious parody. The implicit conclusion of the study is that ideology works as a kind of "anti-intertextuality", attempting to imprison the work in the propagandistic mode of use, which, however, leads to a loss of artistic qualities.

Overall, "On the Edge of Comparison" offers a variety of approaches and finds a cluster of productive perspectives analyzing the way we perceive literature and its functioning in the world. A conclusion would help to more clearly outline the perspectives and possibilities that the study reveals.

2. Other publications

Bilyana Kurtasheva has proposed for the present procedure, besides the research "On the Edge of Comparison", another 14 texts of her own, 4 of them are present in the book and the rest are completely separate research works. It is noteworthy that most of these publications are in foreign languages, they have been published in prestigious journals, e.g. the volume "Bulgarian Literature as World Literature", indexed in "Web of Science". In some of the publications we see a continuation of Bilyana Kurtasheva's interest in anthologies - a field in which she established herself as an undisputed authority with her doctoral dissertation. Such are the papers „Anthology Anxieties: Maturity and Mystification“ in the above mentioned collection about the Bulgarian literature as World literature, the article „Génération et canon dans la littérature bulgare des années 1920: guerre des anthologies, conflit entre jeunes et anciens“ in the collection *Génération de la rupture dans les Balkans et en Turquie au XXe siècle*, *Slavica Occitania*, 52, 2021, the article "After "The Shadow of the Balkan". New Findings about the German Connection in Slaveykov's English Anthology", the article "The Pledge of the Months: Bogomil

Raynov and the "Revolutionary Calendar" in Post-September Literature", dedicated to a little-known book by Bogomil Raynov from 1947, the article "What an Anthology of Bulgarian Poetry Compiled by Ivan Bogdanov Would Look Like".

In these texts Bilyana Kurtasheva builds on her observations on anthologies and the way they function in the literary field and creates a sort of extended intertext on Dalchev's famous statement that "anthology is a form of criticism". In the line of intertextual parallelisms, Kurtasheva's article from the 12th grade literature textbook for the Dialogical Readings module, offers an intertextual reading of O'Henry's "The Gifts of the Magi" and Georgy Gospodinov's "Oh, Henry". This adaptation of the intertextual type of analysis to the needs of a student audience is an example of a contemporary approach to literature that breaks stereotypes and the school routine.

3. Quoting from other authors.

Bilyana Kurtasheva has 4 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes and 7 more in non-peer-reviewed journals, all citations are by established scientists in articles of a contributory nature.

4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the results in practice.

Bilyana Kurtasheva has won competitions for research projects at the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen (IWM), Vienna (2017) and at the Center for Academic Studies (CAS), Sofia (2013). The results of the projects are integrated in her research output.

III. Teaching activities

1. Auditorium and non-auditorium employment, work in the electronic learning module "MOODLE - NBU", providing student internships and placements, work with students and postgraduate students.

Assist. Prof. Bilyana Kurtasheva is a full-time lecturer at the Department of New Bulgarian Studies at NBU, teaching literature and practical courses. Her courses are provided with electronic resources, for example in NBU Moodle for the course CREM012 The Essay - the New Pan-genre (from Montaigne to Derrida), MP Creative Writing.

As editor-in-chief of the magazine. "It follows" Bilyana Kurtasheva actively works with students and PhD students on their work for publication in the journal. In each of the 42 issues published so far since 2000 there have been at least 2 texts by students or PhD students.

2. Evaluations from student surveys.

The student surveys show a high degree of approval of the teaching work of Asst. Biljana Kurtasheva.

IV. Administrative and public activities

1. Participation in collective management bodies of the NBU.

Assist. Prof. Bilyana Kurtasheva is a member of the Council of the Department of New Bulgarian Studies at NBU.

2. Public activity.

The work of Bilyana Kurtasheva as a long-standing editor of the journal "It Follows", as well as her participation in various public initiatives and cultural projects makes her a recognizable figure in the academic and cultural public space.

3. Attracting students to the programme.

As a member of the New Bulgarian Studies Department Council, Asst. Bilyana Kurtasheva is constantly engaged in attracting new students and has contributed to the increased interest in the Department's programs.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate

I know Bilyana Kurtasheva as a dedicated scholar of literature and an intellectual figure committed to the cause of sustaining the social relevance of the literary word.

Conclusion

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analysis of their significance and scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions, I give my **positive assessment** and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Academic Council of NBU for the election of the Assist. Prof. Dr. Bilyana Radoslavova Kurtasheva to the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 2.1. Philology.

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