
ЕСТЕТИКАТА ВЪВ ФОРУМИ, КНИГИ И СЪБИТИЯ

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THE SHIFT FROM ONE-DIMENSIONAL TO A MULTIDIMENSIONAL COMPREHENSION OF THE (IN)HUMAN IN LITERARY- ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The problematization of the manifestations of the “inhuman” as an immutable part of the „human“, even of the “too human” (Nietzsche) is a challenge that few scholars would take. Such an intellectual effort suggests taking a strong critical position to entire schools and trends in the humanities, in which the idea of the existence of an insurmountable monolithic boundary between the human and the inhuman has a fundamental character. This critical position is clearly outlined in the new **Nonka Bogomilova’s book *(In)Human: Literary-Philosophical Perspectives*** (Sofia: Paradigma, 2018). The book discusses the relation and interpenetration between the human and the inhuman phenomena in the light of a literary-anthropological approach that overcomes the limitations of rationalism in its various disciplinary and interdisciplinary forms.

The book begins with a preface in which Bogomilova tells us that there are two forms of the human at the centre of her research: reason/cognition and love. The philosophers have always been deeply interested in these two forms, but in most cases this interest and the various interpretations of the human that result from it remain closed within the frames of the philosophical striving for rationalization, methodologization, and a higher level of theoretization dominated by abstract formalism and conceptual schematism that narrows the horizon of these interpretations to one vision, one opportunity, one solution. Focusing primarily on these cognitive tools and their absolutization, rationalizing philosophy rarely manages to reveal the complex and contradictory nature of the already mentioned two forms of the human and above all - that of love. What it seeks (in many of its trends) is to sum up, to reduce to abstraction and to universal category the diversity and complexity of man and human relations.

Without neglecting the cultural significance of this universality-oriented way of approaching and conceptualizing the human condition in its rich and varying aspects Bogomilova argues that it could only explain the ideal but not the real manifestations of such phenomena as love, since human passions and relationships do not lend themselves to philosophical-theoretical schematizations. This often evolving one-dimensionality of philosophical interpretations is a deficit that, according to Bogomilova, can be compensated and even overcome with the aid of the classical works of fiction, which are able to exaggerate the sense of philosophy to the sometimes lost relationship with real life. Good literature helps us to understand the complexity of multilayered phenomena as love, whose contradictory, complex and sometimes tragic nature often escapes the theoretical schematics of philosophers. Bogomilava stresses that, if in the philosophical interpretations of love the positive and utopian projections, the idealizing schemes often prevail, in literature, love is present as real, not ideal, as an earthly, not merely a divine phenomenon. It is in literature that the complex and contradictory character of human relations, „in which there exist not only the divine, but also the devilish and the

(in)human – selfishness, a play of power and obedience, cruelty, inconsistency, duality, tragism“ (Богомилова 2018: 9), is recreated.

But looking for support in literature, Bogomilova does not ignore philosophy, nor does she diminish its contribution to the understanding of man and his being. What she offers us is rather an enriched by fiction philosophical-anthropological approach to the realm of the (in)human that does not remain closed within the existing monolithic and one-dimensional (philosophical or theological) interpretations of human realities. On the contrary, that approach goes beyond these interpretations, emphasizing the contradictory character of human nature, which can hardly be revealed through universalistic explanatory schemes. Bogomilova's approach is directed to the understanding of the (in)human in its complexity, diversity and ambivalence. The manifestation of this multidimensionality of the (in)human can be identified with all those literary works to which Bogomilova directs our attention in the second and third chapters of her book. Through her analysis of these literary works, Bogomilova points out to us the deficits of the one-dimensional, narrowed understanding of the (in)human.

In an interview posted on her publisher's website, Bogomilova defines the conception of her book as “a literary rebellion against the monolithic one-dimensional man against the unifying ideal that has been imposed to him for centuries by ideologies and religions” (<http://paradigma.bg/post/87-anketa-s-prof-nonka-bogomilova-za->). Considering the whole rhetoric of her book, we can conclude that this “literary rebellion” is also directed against the rationalist attempts to downplay the cognitive functions of emotions and to overestimate the functions of reason. This is evident from the following statement: *Introducing reason and logic in the understanding of the world, overestimating the conditions and essence of human knowledge, the rationalizing trends in philosophy often underestimate or even eliminate the role of emotions, instincts, impulses in human attitude and knowledge of the world* (Богомилова 2018: 23). According to Bogomilova this underestimation impedes our ability to understand human nature in its entity and multidimensionality. That is why she chooses a different approach of problematization of the human, based on the idea that human life is driven not only by forces as reason, knowledge and thought, but also by forces as illusions, passions and love, which are in a way their opposites. Both types of forces have contributed to the mastery of the world - in the first case cognitively (rationally), in the second - emotionally (irrationally and subconsciously). And here is the role of literature, which directs our attention to those emotional forms, through which man masters the world and interacts with the others (Богомилова 2018: 24), and “in which the multiplicity and paradoxical complexity of human nature are manifested” (Богомилова 2018: 25).

Professor Bogomilova's new book draws a clear distinction between one-dimensional and multidimensional treatment of human nature, which makes it valuable and meaningful both in methodological and conceptual terms. Based on the literary-anthropological research, this book contributes to a better understanding of the complex relationship between the human and the inhuman, and in particular, between the forces that drive man in his life. Finally, this book is highly recommended to anyone, who wishes to better understand the antagonisms in human nature and its contradictory components, often polarised as rational versus emotional, conscious versus subconscious, etc.