

Promotion Report for Madeleine Danova, Associate to Full Professor

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I have reviewed and read all of Dr. Danova's material for promotion to full professor. I am summarizing her qualifications below. I team-taught a course with her in 2002, when I was a Senior Fulbright Scholar at Sofia University. Since that time I have seen her at three international conferences, one in Sofia, one in Venice, Italy, and one in Rome. Though for years I was on the committee for promotions in the Arts and Sciences at my higher educational institution and I am well aware of the criteria here, I must state that I am not entirely familiar with the procedures for promotion in Bulgaria. I can say that she exceeds the criteria at Westminster. I have published three books on the William and Henry James family, so I am quite familiar with the scholarship in that area, and I have an acquaintance with scholarship on Native American studies. I am less versed in mass media and communications.

Dr. Danova meets the basic criteria in the statutes regulating the awarding of academic degrees and positions. She received her Ph.D. degree in 2000 from Sofia University; she has been an Associate Professor for four years; and, she has submitted a scholarly book (*The Jamesiad; Between Fact and Fiction: The Postmodern Lives of Henry James*. Sofia: Polis, 2011) plus articles.

In terms of the additional criteria, I will start with her teaching. I have not had the opportunity to observe her teaching since 2002, when we taught a course on "Henry James and Film" together in 2002. At that time, I saw her teach every week, and I was impressed with her demeanor, her knowledge of the subject at hand, and her ability to teach this subject to students. Since 2007, she has developed multiple new courses. For the MA in Program in Communication, she has created at least seven new courses, including courses on international mass media and culture and courses on North American literature (with a focus on race, ethnicity, film, and media—I should note that all these approaches would be

considered very up to date here; she is exactly on track with subjects taught in American universities). I thought the courses on Canadian literature, with a focus on Canada as one of the world's first official multicultural societies, particularly interesting. Her use of Canada as a sort of laboratory for analyzing and constructing dynamics of race, ethnicity, gender, and aboriginal relations, could be applied to other cultures in transition. For some reason, American scholars have neglected Canadian writers and culture, but this focus is crucial to understanding migration and colonization on the North American continent. In addition to developing these useful course offerings, she is using new technology to deliver content: several of her compulsory survey BA courses are now entirely converted to Power Point as well as part of one MA course, and an MA course on Race and Ethnicity is now on-line. Parts of the elective courses from the MA Program in Communication are also now converted to a Power Point format. She has supervised more than 30 MA theses and has one Ph.D. student defending his dissertation this year. She has shared her teaching expertise with colleagues informally and has also organized several workshops on distance e-learning. Extracurricular activities include, among other things, helping foreign students start an Association for Foreign Students at Sofia University, taking MA students to the Fulbright International Summer School, and organizing open lectures given by American, Bulgarian, and Canadian diplomats.

Besides developing and updating courses, Dr. Danova has participated in curriculum development, helping Sofia University offer better programs to students. She was on a committee to create an interdepartmental BA Program, European Union and European Integration. She designed the courses for the Module, European Languages and Cultures. In another effort, she headed a team that created the English curriculum for a new BA program for Biology and English teachers. Finally, she heads a team designing a new BA Program in Language and Cultural Diversity, as part of the development of distance learning programs. This should start in 2012, in cooperation with the University of Foreign Languages in

Beijing, China. I should note here that distance learning innovation is now an integral component at almost all American universities.

In terms of the research required for promotion to full professor, I see she has worked hard in this area. She has given twenty-two conference papers and presentations since 2007, and a number of these researched activities have led to the publication of a book and of published papers. I heard her give one of these papers in Rome this past summer at the Fifth International Conference of the Henry James Society. This talk concerned contemporary reception of Henry James in Bulgaria; she was well organized and very poised during her talk. Competition for papers at this particular conference was intense, I know, so it is an honor for Sofia University to have had her there. There were almost no other conference participants from Eastern Europe. I also heard a paper she delivered in Venice at the Third International Conference of the Henry James Society, but that was in 2005, before the scope of this review. Most of her papers concern American Literature (mostly Jamesian Studies but also other topics) and Canadian literature, though others concern Mass Media and Globalization, again topics that are current. A few of her papers focused on pedagogy, demonstrating that her research has practical ends in terms of better preparing her students. She has presented papers in various locales, including Paris, Cracow, Finland, and Sarajevo. She sometimes considers issues of gender in her research, including a paper given at the International "Federation for Research in Women's History in Sofia" in 2007. Even language teaching has formed part of her on-going researches, as witness a paper given in Sofia, "Communication, Innovation and New Methods in Foreign Language Teaching." Her openness to new ideas and grasp of theory is revealed in this long list of researched presentations.

I have read her book and articles published since 2007. In all they reveal an impressive command of theory and an attention to issues currently important in literary studies. Her book, *The Jamesiad*, deals with an important subject for today's international James scholars, the reception and dissemination of Henry James as both author and cultural icon in contemporary texts. The book flows well, and I

particularly liked her close reading of the nine novels she treats. Her analysis of the postmodern blending of genres and the idea of biofictions works well. There are some shortcomings in the book. I thought she could have highlighted queer theory more and also could have discussed the rapidly changing views of James's sexuality in greater detail. Occasionally she needs more overt transitions, as well as fuller discussions of Baudrillard and Deleuze and Guattari. Also, I expected to find a reference to Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" somewhere in the text, and I took issue with her argument that questions of immortality during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the same thing as the cult of the occult. These are minor objections, however, and the book as a whole flows smoothly and presents a solid argumentation of the elision of traditional genres in today's fiction and biography. I found her articles for the most part well written and engaged with important topics. In nearly all of them I wanted more plot summary and more extensive references to primary texts, in terms of both direct and indirect citation. She always has sophisticated insights in commentary but needs to apply theory more specifically to the texts in question. In general, most of the articles seem truncated. In "Encountering the Other: The Images of Germany and England in the New Media of Bulgaria—New Strategies of Development in the Print Media," the first part of the article adds another dimension to her scholarship. It is informative and useful. However, the second half of this article shifts to another topic, without an adequate transition to link the two halves. While the paper makes a solid contribution to scholarship on new communication in Bulgaria and as such must be very useful, I had trouble following the argument in the second half. I thought the best article was "Life after Death: James and Postmodern Biofictions." This was very solid work and appeared in a substantial collection of essays with Cambridge Press, edited by well respected James scholars. This research boosts her vita and suggests that she can conduct research at the level of a full professor.

Her editorial work deserves mention. This kind of work credits the university and helps promote scholarship both in Sofia and beyond. She co-edited a book, *Intercultural Communication: Proceedings*

*of the International Conference of the Bulgarian American Studies Association and the Bulgarian Society for British Studies, Plovdiv, 2006* (Sofia: Polis Publishing House, 2009). Currently she works as Editor-in-Chief of the literary journal *Vox Litterarum*. Such publications offer colleagues and graduate students a chance to disseminate their research, helping create a climate conducive to the exchange of ideas so crucial to graduate programs.

Finally, Dr. Danova has contributed to the university by assuming administrative duties. From 2007-2011 she served as Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University. From 2005 to present she has been Co-Director of the MA Program in American and Transatlantic Studies, and since 2008 Director of both the MA Program in Communication and the BA Program in European Union and European Integration. I cannot comment on her performance in these various positions, but I do know that they are usually very time-consuming and without adequate financial compensation, so I assume that this work counts as part of her service to the larger university community. When I taught at Sofia, I found it a dynamic educational institution, and this happens because of committed faculty.

I conclude that she has met the criteria for promotion from Associate to Full Professor, so I am voting for her to receive this promotion.

Respectfully submitted,

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