Review of the dissertation

" READING THE PERIPHERY

THE ARTISTIC SPACE OF THE BORDER IN ADAM BODOR'S FICTION"

for the degree of Doctor of Education and Science

Doctoral student – Monika Galabova

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Professional field: 2.1. 2.2. Philology, Doctoral Programme.

Monika Galabova is one of the promising names in young Bulgarian Hungarian literature. Her name became known through her participation in a number of translation competitions, in which her translations were noticed and awarded. The combination of Hungarian and Bulgarian studies also contributes to her good professional training, as Monika has a Master's degree in Bulgarian studies after her studies in Hungarian philology.

It is gratifying that Monika Galabova combines these activities with her teaching work. Since 2018, she has been an assistant professor in Hungarian Philology. As far as I have had feedback from students of the specialty, I can say that she is a well-liked lecturer who certainly has something to give to students.

This dissertation is the fruit of Monika's affinity for Hungarian literature insofar as it is devoted to new and unconventional readings of three novels by Adam Bodor. In this sense, it is important both for research on the writer in a broader sense and with regard to the Bulgarian ultra-literary space, as it expands the volume of secondary texts on Bodor in Bulgaria. It also fits into the good traditions of Bulgarian Hungarian studies.

What I can say as a general impression is that the dissertation is written according to all the rules of the genre and perfectly combines theorism with historicism. In other words, Monika Galabova demonstrates precision and good literary scholarship, presents theories through which she reads the novels, and - which is the strongest part of her dissertation - shows how these theories work within the novels, presenting extremely thorough and multidirectional analyses. These, by the way, go beyond theoretical grids, and cover her ability to work with works of fiction and launch unconventional ideas in interpretation.

The theorists Monika Galabova has drawn on are Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel Foucault and Yuri Lotman, whose theories, and especially the concepts from their theories that work for her purposes, such as chronotope, heterotopia and semiosphere, are very well translated and illustrated through the concrete analyses. Interestingly, the PhD student justifies the separateness and insularity of the Bodorian space, on the one hand, in chronotopic terms, through the ideas of Bakhtin and Foucault, and on the other, in linguistic-cultural terms, where Lotman's concepts are in turn drawn upon. And here we cannot fail to take into account something that Monika Galábová herself emphasizes - the theorists involved, as well as their ideas, which - as mentioned - are applied in the analyses - are a novelty in the critical and research reception of the Hungarian author. Notwithstanding, of course, that there is no lack of other works by Bodor that have been conceptualized through one or another of the theories of one or another of the literary scholars listed.

In particular, I would like to highlight the unravelling of the line of how temporal-spatial situatedness affects the speech acts of Bodor's characters. The conclusion that the PhD student draws is that "space not only determines their language, but also imposes a kind of regularity on the process of the effacement of their previous identity, followed by renaming in accordance with the canons of the region, as well as contributing to the deepened deficits in individual and, respectively, collective memory."

The result of bringing these concepts together and applying them to the readings has resulted in the construction of a truly interdisciplinary work in which the merits of close reading, structuralist, semiotic and discursive analyses are demonstrated to us. This interdisciplinarity I mention is supported by the thematic nature of the analyses, which highlight concepts and themes such as border, identity, crisis, own and other. Of course, these are interpreted with Bodor's texts in mind, but insofar as the thesis works with them, a future continuation of the theme could broaden the theoretical framework by focusing on ideas of postcolonial studies. The theories of scholars such as Homi Baba would provide new directions for analyses and help to bring Adam Bodor into the most current literature searches. Other important themes that have been highlighted, such as man-nature, symptomatics of the animal, etc., contribute to this. They correspond directly to the searches of contemporary ecocriticism and to the ideas of authors such as Giorgio Agamben, and can also be seen from another angle.

As far as the analyses of specific artistic texts are concerned - let us emphasize this again - they do not simply illustrate particular theoretical theses, and do not simply prove how theoretical concepts work, but are themselves valuable readings which, in their totality, set another perspective on the reading of an important not merely Hungarian but European writer. Also worthy of attention is the very interesting and multi-layered analysis of the theme of time and memory in Bodor,especially focusing on the non-functioning of communicative memory in Bodor, which prevents the formation of a collective/society.

The dignity of the proposed work is also the language in which it is written. It is clear, concise, and multi-layered. The dissertation does not suffer from the chatty referencing common to this type of writing and demonstrates independence of thought and position.

The contributions are very correctly highlighted. The publications are sufficient in number and in serious journals, and the abstract correctly conveys the ideas and content of the dissertation.

On the basis of all that has been said so far, the author's conscientious writing, her purposeful search, her ability to analyse thoroughly and with flair, as well as the good literary erudition she possesses, I take the liberty of voting with conviction that Monika Emilova Galabova be awarded the degree of Doctor of Education and Science in Professional Field. Hungarian Literature.

Prof. Amelia Licheva, PhD