

Opinion

by Prof. Dr. habil. Amelia Licheva

on the dissertation of **Soni Agop Bohosyan**

entitled *Dimensions of Loneliness in the Dramaturgy of Jaime Salazar Sampaio*

for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

Field of Higher Education: 2. Humanities

Professional field: 2.1. Philology

Specialty: Literature of the peoples of Europe, America, Africa, Asia and

Australia

(Portuguese Literature, 20th–21st c.)

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Yana Andreeva

Doctoral candidate **Soni Bohosyan** meets the National Minimum Requirements for the degree and even exceeds them. The dissertation itself fully complies with the rules for preparing such a text and meets the criteria of scholarly rigor and defendability. The bibliography is substantial, and the abstract accurately conveys the content and contributions of the dissertation.

The chosen topic is original, as it has been insufficiently studied both in Portuguese literary scholarship and in the Bulgarian context. One can say that this is the first study in Bulgaria to introduce the dramatic works of one of the most significant contemporary Portuguese playwrights – Jaime

Salazar Sampaio. In the Bulgarian literary tradition, the theatre of the absurd and its French and English representatives are relatively well known – with a number of studies and many productions. This is not the case with Portuguese absurdism. In this regard, the dissertation expands our understanding of this type of theatre by presenting the specific characteristics of the selected author, and more concretely – the Portuguese contribution. Moreover, since we are dealing with a playwright who was active even at the beginning of the present century, through Sampaio’s plays we can trace modifications in the interpretation of the absurd provoked by contemporary realities.

The focus of the dissertation is the thematic principle, which investigates the manifestations of loneliness in language, in its relation to time and space, at the level of dramatic structure, etc. Such an approach allows for an in-depth and highly detailed view of Sampaio’s work. Parallels are drawn with world authors who thematize loneliness. For a possible continuation of this research, I would recommend comparisons with authors such as Maeterlinck, Kafka, Sartre, as well as Beckett, Ionesco, and Pinter, since this would further enrich the vision of the absurd in 20th-century literature.

Something I consider very important is the **theorization of the thematic principle**. I highlight this not only with regard to the present dissertation, but also because the synthesis of views concerning the definition of “theme” in literary studies – and more generally the relationship between theme and motif – remains a deficit in Bulgarian literary scholarship. The

doctoral candidate has discussed Bulgarian studies, but her review of the ideas and theories of Clayton Hamilton, Boris Tomashevsky, Northrop Frye, Raymond Trousson, structuralists and semioticians could be of significant help to both teachers and students in clarifying the terminology, given that Bulgarian school education in literature is based entirely on the thematic principle. In this sense, I see here an unintentional, but very substantial contribution of the dissertation.

And speaking of theory in the dissertation, I must point out something rarely done in works of this kind and which is highly commendable – both with respect to thematic studies (as already noted) and to the philosophical and sociological readings of loneliness. Soni Bohosyan presents not only the leading global theories, but also, with exceptional precision and thoroughness, synthesizes Bulgarian studies. In this way, she forges connections between international and national humanities scholarship.

In conclusion: We can state that Bohosyan's research is the first comprehensive study of the theme of loneliness in the dramaturgy of Jaime Salazar Sampaio, filling an existing gap in both Lusophone and Bulgarian literary criticism. It combines interdisciplinarity – applying literary, philosophical, psychological, and sociological approaches to the analysis of loneliness – with close readings that examine the texts in detail, revealing the author's ability for deep interpretation and original insights.

On the basis of all the above, of the demonstrated scholarly precision and analytical skill, and of the well-grounded conclusions maintaining the

balance between text and context, I wholeheartedly support the awarding of the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** to **Soni Bohosyan** in Professional Field 2.1. Philology, Specialty: Literature of the peoples of Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Australia (Portuguese Literature, 20th–21st c.).

Prof. Dr. habil. Amelia Licheva