

REVIEW

by Prof. Petar Mollov PhD

of the dissertation by Sonya Bohosyan on the topic

"Dimensions of Loneliness in the Drama of

Jaime Salazar Sampaio"

Professional field: 2.1. Philology

Scientific specialty: Literature of the peoples of Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Australia (Portuguese literature of the 20th and 21st centuries)

1. Presentation of the dissertation author

Sonya Bohosyan graduated from the St. St. Cyril and Methodius High School of Humanities in Plovdiv, where she focused on foreign languages (first language – French, second language – English), literature, history, and philosophy. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Portuguese Philology at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," after which she completed a master's program in Translation and Editing in Portuguese and French at the Faculty of Slavic Philology at the same university. Since 2020, she has been a doctoral student at the Department of Portuguese and Lusophone Studies, and since October 2022, she has been an assistant professor of Portuguese language, Brazilian literature, and theater translation at the department.

Her professional and creative achievements to date are quite diverse and deserve to be highlighted, as they give an idea of her interests and abilities and are relevant to her scientific research: translator of Portuguese and French, author of scientific and popular science publications, she has conducted interviews with writers and book presentations, participated in projects, has won awards in translation and literary competitions and for theatrical performances, has won the special jury prize in the "Student of the Year" competition for two consecutive

years, is a collaborator at the Camões Institute in Sofia, and is a licensed tour guide in four languages.

2. Assessment of the qualities and contributions of the dissertation

Sonya Bohosyan's dissertation is structured in an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography, and is 210 pages long. It plows into an insufficiently explored field of research on the Portuguese author, despite its significance in his work—the theme of loneliness. Thus, the choice of topic promises to contribute to the critical analysis of Sampaio's works, where this theme is clearly present, namely in the 13 plays that the author has chosen for her corpus.

The first chapter, entitled "Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the Study," is the mandatory theoretical basis of the work. In it, the dissertation author first examines the various thematic concepts in order to form her view of the essence and characteristics of the theme as an element of primary importance in literary works.

Secondly, she examines views on loneliness from the perspective of various humanities—philosophy, psychology, sociology and cultural studies from different eras. This part of the theoretical chapter is particularly useful as it allows for a comprehensive overview of the concept of loneliness and its various dimensions, which is necessary for the analysis of the corpus.

The second chapter provides the reader with an overview of Sampaio's life and work, as well as the critical reception of his dramaturgy, and demonstrates excellent knowledge of the author chosen for study. The third part of this chapter is also entirely appropriate, providing an overview of the plays included in the corpus that are unknown to Bulgarian readers.

I find the analysis of the corpus to be very well organized. It is divided into two parts – Chapters Three and Four, respectively.

In Chapter Three, the plays are classified into five groups according to the respective motifs related to the theme of loneliness (murder, meaningless life, the road and travel, guilt, madness), which is examined separately in the dialogues and monologues, whose varieties or variations are indicated on the basis of the distinctions made by a number of theorists. This structure allows the state of loneliness and its consequences to be revealed through and in the discourse of the characters and its various manifestations to be highlighted in the individual characters – some of them have fallen into the trap of the past, which prevents them from moving forward, others are unable to communicate effectively, closed off in their own world, while still others have surrendered to alienation from their surroundings and found in their loneliness salvation from a reality that is unbearable for them.

In Chapter Four, attention is focused on the relationship between time and space and the problem of loneliness. In both cases, brief theoretical explanations are first provided regarding stage time and space, which the author then refers to in her analysis of the works, classified here into other groups that meet the new research criteria. This chapter adds valuable observations, now from a different perspective, on the dimensions and characteristics of loneliness in every play, showing its dependence on temporal and spatial parameters and the ways in which the characters perceive them, as well as the ways in which they influence them.

A valuable and enriching aspect of the analysis is that S. Bohosyan makes systematic comparisons between the works, which allows for a comprehensive picture of the interpretations of the theme of loneliness in the Portuguese author's work.

Soni Bohosyan's research shows the importance of the theme of loneliness in the works of Jaime Salazar Sampaio and its close connection with the construction of the characters and their psychological characteristics and states. However, the theme of loneliness is not isolated from other major themes in the

works, which the dissertation inevitably also addresses, as they are directly related to it – love, disappointment, hope.

It would undoubtedly be beneficial for Bulgarian Portuguese studies if S. Bohosyan's work were to be published and gain wider recognition in our literary circles. I recommend that, in preparing the edition, an inaccuracy be corrected regarding the reference to the book *Essays* by the Spanish writer and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, translated by T. Neykov and published in 1983. On p. 120, the S. Bohosyan situates the author's reflections on loneliness in the second half of the 20th century, but they refer to an earlier period, as the Spanish writer died in 1936.

Based on the observations made, I believe that Sonya Bohosyan's dissertation has the following main contributions:

- it presents the work of the Portuguese playwright to the Bulgarian literary community for the first time;
- it is the first extensive study of the theme of loneliness in his work on an international scale;
- it applies an original methodology based on an interdisciplinary approach – the works are analyzed through the prism of various humanities disciplines, which has made it possible to highlight the connection between artistic interpretation and the psychological characteristics of the personality in general.

I hope that Bohosyan's interest in this author will prompt her to translate at least some of the plays included in her thesis, so that Bulgarian readers, and perhaps viewers, will have the opportunity to experience his work.

The abstract accurately reflects the content of the thesis.

The bibliography is extensive, well-chosen, and includes the most recent titles.

The dissertation is presented together with all the documents required by law, which certifies that the procedure has been followed.

3. Publications

The doctoral candidate has six publications related to the topic of the dissertation: four of them are included in conference proceedings held at Sofia University, one is in conference proceedings held at the University of Budapest (Hungary), and one is in a journal indexed in ERIH Plus and CEEOL.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe that Sonya Bohosyan possesses the necessary theoretical knowledge and research skills to conduct independent scientific research. These qualities, as well as the contributions of her dissertation, justify awarding her the educational and scientific degree of Doctor.

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