

Opinion

from Prof. Amelia Licheva, Dr. Habil., Sofia University, Literary Theory

Department,

regarding

selection procedure for the position of professor, advertised in the State Gazette No. 87 of 19.10.2021 in 2.1 Philology (Theory and history of literature – theory of literature); candidate: associate professor Dr. Todor Hristov

Overview of candidate's research work and output

Associate professor Dr. Todor Hristov is the only candidate in this selection procedure for the position of full professor. All required documents have been made available, and the file demonstrating compliance with the minimum requirements confirms that the candidate by far exceeds the minimum points required.

Associate professor Dr. Todor Hristov isn't simply one of the most interesting literary theorists in Bulgaria, but due to his qualifications in sociology, he is one of the most significant Bulgarian scholars in the humanities in general. His academic interests span a wide range of topics (as evidenced by the list of publications submitted for the selection procedure); his texts are innovative and provocative, and his ideas spark interest in MA and PhD students, who then go on to become his followers. It is worth highlighting that Dr. Hristov has publications in authoritative international journals and publishing houses.

I have the pleasure of having been his colleague for two decades now and I have been able to observe directly his work with students, as well as his merits as a scholar and colleague. Dr. Hristov is doubtless one of the best loved lecturers

who succeed in inspiring students to pursue literary theory. It is remarkable that he continuously edits and revises his lecture notes and designs more and more courses which meet current expectations, as well as catering for the interests of new generations of students. As a colleague, he is one of the most tolerant and upright people in our field, especially rich in ideas, a person who can always be depended upon.

In short, associate professor Dr. Todor Hristov is a scholar and lecturer who would be an asset to any department or university.

Assessment of the scholarly and practical outcomes and contributions of the academic work submitted for the selection procedure

The output included in this application is truly impressive. The unifying thread in it is its relevance – including the topic of terrorism, alongside conspiracy theories, power and authority, contemporary politics, epidemics, the topic of truth, fake news, etc.; all of this is examined in the light of the latest literary, sociological, cultural and political theories. One cannot overlook the influence of Michel Foucault on Hristov's own style, as well as the influence of authors like Deleuze, Guattari or Agamben. What is more, Hristov is equally conversant with the Bulgarian humanities scene and engages in dialogue with many Bulgarian literary and cultural theorists and sociologists.

Apart from abstract theory combined with skilful analyses of the modern world, there is something else – his work with literary samples and analyses of fiction, which boosts his ideas and provides a mirror image of the theories examined. This is what we discover in his habilitation monograph, 'The Sound and the Fury. Archeology of the domestic quarrel'. It illustrates another two approaches typical of Hristov as a researcher – his penchant for the popular and appealing to it in order to prove various hypotheses, as well as carrying out skilful discourse analysis. The above monograph features exactly such virtuoso discourse

analyses, which provide plenty of food for thought regarding speech acts deployed in various text types, as well as the analysis of the practice of quarrels, including the mode of impassioned speech. The latter is in evidence not only in the practice of quarrels, but also in numerous other instantiations of modern life – in protests and politics more widely, as well as in conspiracy theories. We witness brilliant reasoning about uttering what cannot be stated or articulated, of the sound and the fury, improvising with language, hearing what ought not to have been said, the motivation behind quarrels, clarifications beyond the original meaning and so on and so forth. It is important to single out the hypotheses concerning transformations in family therapy, as well as the deployment of a wide range of literary, medical, sociological, and public domain texts, alongside transcripts. Thus, it inevitably becomes apparent that this work evinces a high degree of interdisciplinarity; in terms of literary theory, special emphasis is placed on the approaches of new historicism and psychoanalysis.

Conclusion

In view of the candidate's research and teaching activities, of the large amount of impressive output and in-depth analysis, exploring his own threads in writing, it can be amply demonstrated that associate professor Dr. Todor Hristov is an innovative and eminent scholar, so it is with conviction that I vote in favour of conferring the academic title of PROFESSOR of literary theory upon associate professor Dr. Todor Hristov. I hereby propose that the esteemed Faculty Council of the Faculty of Slavic Languages approve his application.

Prof. Amelia Licheva, Dr. Habil.