

STATEMENT

by

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appointed as a member of the academic jury for conferring the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in professional field 2.1 Philology,

Doctoral Program "Bulgarian Literature" - Bulgarian Literature

from Liberation to the Second World War

Topic: The Nomadic Subject in the Works of Matvey Vulev: Nature and Machine

Doctoral Candidate: Martin Plamenov Kolev

Faculty of Slavic Philology

Form of Doctoral Studies: Regular Doctoral Program

Academic Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boyko Penchev Penchev

I will disregard the information that is generally recommended to be included in such types of documentation, such as the candidate's biographical data, description, and evaluation of the technical materials presented, including the abstract, participation in conferences, the number of publications, etc., as it is available in the paperwork provided for the meetings and meets all the requirements for the dissertation to be admitted for defense.

Martin Kolev's dissertation is one of the most provocative and impressive doctoral texts that I have had the honor to evaluate. He is to such an extent outside the matrix of the research mode that Bulgarian literary studies have used and applied over the years that it requires a corresponding critical reflex. Building the backbone of his "theoretical and conceptual toolkit in similar thematic and temporal scope of the used directions" based on "rarely used concepts in Bulgarian literary science by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari" (p. 181), the doctoral candidate approaches creatively the topic of his dissertation – intrinsically it resists any critical reaction, regardless of the position of any other critical reading using a

different theoretical and conceptual approach. The *interpretative trap* mentioned elsewhere (p. 15) here snaps in the opposite direction and effectively disarms any opposition that might challenge the formulations. Who would challenge Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari? Of course, the same applies to the psychoanalytic reading. In this case, it is essential to consider how and to what extent their hermeneutic formulations are adequately applicable to the interpretation of a Bulgarian author. I think that overall, Martin Kolev is convincing in his formulations when constructing *alternative approaches* (p. 184); I will explain the reasons for this as well as add possible reflections from Bulgarian literature, which in my opinion would only enrich and add further weight to the work.

The doctoral candidate claims that his approach is not literature-centric, but "the research uses a complex methodology, including methods such as typologization, close reading, comparative-comparative analysis, the method of specific situations (case study), and others" (p. 10). In this sense, I have only some reservations about what Martin Kolev exactly understands as *specific situations* (case study), as in no case in his work was I able to identify the presence of such.

On first reading, what makes an impression are the precisely structured six chapters and varying number of sub-chapters to each of them, which circumstantially and succinctly fix the respective topics, entirely in the spirit of the specific research and discursive approach that the doctoral candidate has assumed. The chapters are balanced and in terms of their volume.

Chapter One – *The Nomad Figure through a Sedentary Gaze: from Object of Observation to Postmodern Subject*, sets the theoretical parameters for the terms *nomadism* and *nomadology* (developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, p. 8), which serve as the backbone for the entire study and to which constant allusions and references are made. My only comment here pertains to footnote 25 (p. 33), which states that Marcel Proust's "Time Regained" has not been translated into Bulgarian, which is not accurate. The book was published in 2012 by Panorama Plus Publishing.

"World and Home": Variations on the Theme of Nomadism in Bulgarian Literature before World War II establishes the three constructs in the work, from which types of images and their gestures in Vulev's texts will later be functionalized. However, when generalizing the specifics of Bulgarian emigrant literature with the idea that there is no happy emigrant song and reaching references to contemporary literature (pp. 44-45), I want to note that there are still exceptions, namely the excellent

books by Isabela Shopova, also mentioned by the doctoral student in figure 3 (p. 64). The thesis that "[w]hile in 'great' literatures personal work (family, marital, etc.) tends to be connected with other, no less personal works, and the social environment serves as the setting and background, every movement of the small literature machine is politically charged" (pp. 57-58) is convincing and true, and more examples from Kiril Hristov could be added in this regard. The connection made between the nomadic model as *a kind of shadow of the native* (p. 61) is also interesting.

Beyond and Beyond: Two Perspectives for Examining the Nomadic Subject in Vulev's Texts clearly centers the interest in the texts of the studied author through the prism of the nomadic character as a migrant subject, the nomadic character as a nomadic subject, and through the prism of parameters for outlining reality in Vulev's texts. The interpretations here are convincing when generating the specificity in constructing the image of Anton Viktorov. However, it seems to me that the potential similarities with the "inventor" Ivan Bistrov by Boris Shivachev are overlooked, and there are countless such similarities, especially along the lines of the Deleuzian reading. In this sense, "searching for similarities between Vulev's text and Yovkov's text" (p. 74) also has a lot of potential, not so much in terms of cycles but in the different environment Yovkov found himself in after 1920. Special attention is also paid to the "ideological freeing from guilt" (pp. 71-76), which places the Vulev case in its ideological context, an aspect that A. Tashev examines in his study.

From the fourth chapter onwards, the dissertation closely examines Vulev's text and approaches it through various artistic images, motifs, character gestures and behaviors, character relationships, and their functionalities by employing a *Deleuzian reading*. Since I have no objections from this perspective, quite the contrary, I can only congratulate the doctoral student on the original interpretations in almost all cases and provide some comments and recommendations.

- When Martin Kolev notes that "[t]he wild nature is not just animated and anthropomorphic; it is exceptionally mobile" (p. 98) and provides examples from Vulev's stories, I believe that a comparison with the natural landscapes in Str. Krinchev's "In the Land of the Palms" could reveal exceptionally interesting connections, and why not, influences.
- In the section on the repeating-machine (p. 113), the work would only benefit from references to texts by Todor Tsenkov, Tsvyatko Raykov, and others, which, as literature, are disproportionate to Vulev, but the theses in the work will gain even more convincing reflections.

- When it comes to the *functions of the radio* (p. 166) in Vulev's text, I sincerely recommend the book by Prof. Dr. Stilyan Stoyanov "Literature and Technologies" (2014), where special attention is paid to Matvey Vulev and his report as "the first attempt to explain the mechanisms of radio broadcasting popularly by a writer, not an engineer" (p. 6). Not only the functionality of the radio but also other technical images such as airplanes, trains, electricity, etc., are thoroughly examined in Bulgarian literary literature.
- Regarding the story "The Bulgarian with Eagle Wings," the place and presence of the folkloric and literary functioning of the character of Master Manol in the Bulgarian context are circumstantially discussed. Instead of Asen Raztsvetnikov's children's poem, it seems more pertinent to examine Angel Karaliychev's story "Rosen's Stone Bridge" (1941), where an interesting interpretation of the character of Master Manol is proposed, as the parallels will emphasize some of the doctoral student's conclusions, while others will need further development.
- Concerning *female nomadic life* (p. 136) it seems necessary to me to at least mention the name of Lyuba Kutincheva, especially since it fits perfectly into the theoretical constructs laid out in the chapter.
- Last but not least, my only a bit more conceptual remark is related to the first part of the sixth chapter, *The Nomadic Model of Vagrancy in the Early Bogomil Raynov: (narrative) differences between forbidden and permitted paths*. I find it artificially constructed in the work and not functional enough in the overall structure of an otherwise excellent scientific text.

Conclusion: Martin Plamenov Kolev's dissertation thesis "The Nomadic Subject in the Work of Matvey Vulev: Nature and Machine" is a study that impresses with its maturity and originality. Using a complex conglomerate of methodological approaches to examine the artistic energies in the late Vulev's stories, the doctoral student, on almost all occasions, reaches convincing conclusions and solutions. After the publication of this work, Matvey Vulev will be read and studied through a completely different prism, which is an undeniable scientific contribution. This gives me every reason to recommend with complete confidence that Martin Plamenov Kolev be awarded the academic title of "Doctor."

Blagoevgrad September 15, 2023 (Assoc. Prof. Dr. Roman Hadzhikosev)