STATEMENT

on the dissertation of Yana Ivanova Dimova

on REPRESENTATION OF HISTORICAL PERSONAGES

IN THE NOVELS OF FERNANDO CAMPOS

Yana Dimova's work represents the first study by a Bulgarian author on the work of this Portuguese writer, which, in itself, is a contribution to Bulgarian Portuguese studies.

In the Introduction the aims, objectives and methods of the study are clearly stated - to analyse the artistic techniques and strategies used to construct the representation of the narrators and key characters in Fernando Campos's five historical novels, forming a kind of cycle as they trace the rise and decline of the Portuguese Empire. The author applies literary approaches based on semantic, semiotic, cognitive and narrative frameworks to explore the character category. She notes that this type of research on the selected works has not been done before, which undoubtedly adds to the contribution of the work.

The first chapter presents the theoretical framework within which the research will be set. It is worth noting that it is based on a very broad theoretical foundation, laid out in detail and excellently structured. At the same time, all the aspects included in this chapter are directly relevant to the development, there is nothing superfluous to distract attention from what is essential to the chosen topic, as is not infrequently the case in the dissertations of young colleagues.

This apt selection demonstrates a good grasp of the theory and an ability to extract from it what is useful and necessary for the particular study.

The second chapter situates the works to be analysed within the wider context of the Portuguese historical novel from Romanticism to our own time, as well as within the narrower context of Campos' work. Of course, with regard to the first framework, we could not expect exhaustiveness; the aim of the author of this work is to present an overview of the development of the genre in Portuguese literature.

The third chapter is the core of the work. In it, historical characters are classified and analyzed, with attention paid to the role of the author's paratext, the types of narrators, and the main male and female characters. The author's ability to apply the theoretical propositions set out in Chapter One to the analysis of the corpus is well demonstrated here. The conclusions reached are clearly stated and convincingly formulated. The analysis makes it possible to appreciate how varied and complex Fernando Campos's approaches to constructing historical characters are, a testament to his mastery as a novelist. The author rightly highlights the role of

introspective discourse, stream of consciousness, inner monologue, and suppressed discourse in both achieving psychologism in the construction of characters and in conveying certain messages to the reader.

The fourth and final chapter successfully complements the previous one by focusing the reader's attention on the main themes of the novel cycle. Here, the author shows how Campos's narrative techniques and strategies reveal to the reader Portuguese society at the time of the Empire, social relations, the roles of men and women, the Church, and marginalized groups, and, also, contribute to the problematization of historical truth characteristic of the postmodern historical novel.

The summing-up presents the main conclusions reached by the analysis of the corpus and once again highlights the novelist's achievements as a creator of realistic historical characters and his ability to create a convincing picture of the historical past.

The appendix of historical data on individuals and events is a useful guide for the reader of this dissertation, and the author's decision to include it is very appropriate.

The bibliography - 216 titles - is extensive and well chosen.

The abstract faithfully reflects the content of the work and highlights its contributions in summary form.

The overall impression of Yana Dimova's dissertation is definitely positive. The theoretical preparedness, the competent application of theory in the analysis, the clear presentation of the observations and conclusions show qualities of a scholar that the author of the work will certainly develop and enrich.

As the main contributions of the dissertation it is worth highlighting: the comparative study of the representation of historical characters in the five novels of Fernando Campos, considered as a complete novel cycle; the original methodology used in the analysis, illustrating the means and strategies of constructing the artistic representation of historical characters in the corpus studied; highlighting the merits of the works studied.

The author has seven publications related to the topic of her dissertation - four of them in conference proceedings from conferences held at Sofia University, one from a conference at the University of Library and Information Science, one from a conference at the University of Budapest and one in a Bulgarian journal). She fulfils the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

From all of the above logically follows my positive evaluation of the work, which gives me grounds to support the awarding to Yana Dimova of the degree of Doctor in Professional

Field 2.1. Philology (Literature of the Peoples of Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Australia - Contemporary Portuguese Literature, 20th - 21st centuries).

Sofia, 19.06.2024

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