

## Opinion

by Prof. Dr. Madeleine Danova

for the award of the scientific degree "Doctor of Science"

in professional field 2.1 PHILOLOGY in the scientific specialty "Literature of the

peoples of Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Australia"

at the Department of Slavic Studies, Faculty of Philology,

Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski"

### 1 / Data for the competition

The submitted documents show that all the requirements for an admission to public defense are met and Prof. Dr. Magdalena Petrova Kostova-Panayotova answers to all the requirements of the Law and the Rules of SWU for obtaining the degree of "Doctor of Science" - she holds the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", meets the minimum national requirements for the respective professional field 2.1 PHYLOLOGY and has submitted after a successful internal defense a doctoral dissertation.

### 2 / Minimum national requirements

The submitted list for compliance with the minimum national requirements for obtaining the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the scientific field 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology fully meets the requirements. According to indicators from Group A, min. 50 points, Prof. Dr. Magdalena Petrova Kostova-Panayotova defended her PhD in 1997. According to indicators from Group B, min. 100 points, the candidate has submitted a doctoral dissertation on the topic

"At the seams of literature (between East and West - borders and identities)." According to indicators from Group D, min. 100 points, Prof. Kostova has submitted articles published in peer-reviewed journals and other peer-reviewed publications, chapters from collective monographs and articles, a total of 650 points. According to indicators from Group D, min. 100 points, 44 citations in refereed and peer-reviewed publications are listed amounting to a total of 325 points. It is evident that the publishing activity of Prof. Kostova far exceeds the minimum national requirements.

### 3 / Dissertation work

The presented dissertation "At the seams of literature (between East and West - borders and identities)" is 362 pages and is devoted to one of the most widely discussed topics in the humanities today, namely what is happening in the so-called "border areas", in what is defined as "third space", or, as Walter Mignolo defines it, in "border gnosis", in "border knowledge". For him, these are the different ways used to describe the rejection of the attempts to erase the differences imposed by the one-sidedness of dominant interpretations, in many cases imposed by the colonial translation of the diversity of cultures and cultural practices in the past, which can still be discovered today. Mignolo builds his idea on the term "African gnosis" used by Valentin Mudimbe in his book *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* and includes a way of thinking about the conflicts of knowledge that are typical of borderline areas, whether epistemological, ethical, secular or religious seen as connected to actual walls and fences that divide the

nation, communities, and nature itself, to a great extent what Kostova's dissertation discusses and analyzes.

The fact that Kostova has chosen to test her hypothesis against the works of such writers as Kazuo Ishiguro, Salman Rushdie, Vidiadhar Naipol, Francois Chen, Amy Tan, Hanif Quraishi, Yoko Tawada, Amin Maaluf, Ana Mui, Hamid Mohsin and Michael Ondaatji on the one hand and Milorad Pavic, Orhan Pamuk Danilo Kish, Dubravka Ugresic. Goran Petrovic, Venko Andonovski and Momo Kapor, is a sufficient proof of the scope and depth of the present dissertation.

This is also indicative of the breadth of the author's thinking, as well as the developed sense of a literary critic, which does not remain closed within the narrow confines of a particular field of knowledge. The convincing analysis of the different worlds that these writers create in their works, and which rarely fit into the critical paradigms of Eurocentric thinking, testifies to Prof. Kostova's many years of work to build her own vision of a literary scholar. The conclusions reached by the dissertation confirm the author's conviction, expressed in her other publications, that all these works are "part of that model of cultures capable of turning their own marginality into a kind of center" creating thus an opportunity to become connected despite the actual walls and fences that divide the nation, the communities and nature itself and to be read as a "discursive heterotopia, an impossible space of the coexistence of the opposite, the distinctive and the incommensurable." (Blazhevich 2007: 96-97) », as Prof. Panayotova writes in her Abstract (p. 13)

Based on the above, I can confidently say that the presented work fully meets the requirements for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in the professional field 2.1 Philology in the scientific specialty "Literature of the peoples of Europe" , America, Africa, Asia and Australia ” and, therefore, I strongly support the award of this degree to Prof. Kostova on the basis of this dissertation, as well as on the basis of all the other publications submitted for this competition, as well as on the basis of her numerous citations and active teaching and administrative work.

Sofia,

January 19, 2021

Prof. Dr. Madeleine Danova