

## **STATEMENT**

**by**

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**for the dissertation by Julian Petkov Rzsukanov**

**"Utopian Discourses in Dimitar Dimov's Novel" Tobacco "**

**for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"**

**in the scientific field of "humanities", direction 2.1 "Philology",**

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The proposed dissertation "Utopian discourses in the novel "Tobacco" by Dimitar Dimov" is a respectful volume of 380 pages and 17 pages bibliography with 208 cited titles in Cyrillic and in Latin. The dissertation is structured in three chapters, accompanied by an introduction, conclusion and bibliography. In the conclusion, 11 contributions of the work are presented. According to the requirements, an abstract of 56 pages is attached, which presents the basics of the dissertation - goals, objectives, analyzes and conclusions. 3 publications on the topic of the dissertation in electronic version are also attached. The dissertation and the abstract are in compliance with the Law, the Regulations for its application and the requirements of New Bulgarian University.

The dissertation "Utopian discourses in the novel "Tobacco" by Dimitar Dimov" is the result of many years research work on the two editions of the novel (1951 and 1955) and inevitably contains the impressions of his meetings as a teacher with the youngest readers – the high school students. The interesting thing about the work is that from the very beginning it offers a different interpretation of Dimitar Dimov's novel - a study of the strongly expressed utopian and even anti-utopian discourse. The work does not go through the established schemes of intellectual and psychological analysis or through the narrative about the collapse of bourgeois economic relations in

Bulgaria under the pressure of the new political realities after the Second World War. The research goes through the prism of a history of ideas, upgrading the familiar and established knowledge of the novel. Thus, the battle between the old and the new world takes on an inevitable cyclical and mythological character.

The author aims to show how in D. Dimov's novels political and social utopia turns into an anti-utopia. Each chapter is part of a rhizomatic, interdisciplinary construction, because it attracts diverse knowledge from the areas of cultural and political history, philosophy and religion, sociology and literature. The chosen methodology inevitably schematizes and simplifies the polyphonic character of Dimov's novel.

A diverse metatext is used for the needs of the research. However, this is both an advantage and a danger, because the critical concepts not always clarify the problem under consideration. Sometimes the theses shift in the direction of a philosophizing on the utopias in the novel. This leads to an interesting presentation of the utopian worlds in the novel at the level of political and religious ideas and their social applications. The author uses a rich intertext of historical, political, ideological and cultural facts. The emphasis is on the new world utopia, which in the two versions of the novel has a different density. In the second edition of the novel, utopia functions as a dethroned value, as a dystopia.

For me, the second chapter - "From Utopia to Utopia"- is the most significant and contributing to the study. It examines the sociological mechanisms underlying the transition from utopian to anti-utopian social thinking. Here is used a very rich analysis of the interwar period and of the eve of World War II. Presented are the socio-political changes in the old Europe, the emergence of such authoritarian ideologies as National Socialism, Hitlerism and Stalinism in Spain, in USSR, in Germany and Italy. The second part of the chapter examines the artistic level of two Dimov's novels „Condemned Souls“ and „Tobacco“, the boundary of utopia and anti-utopia in them. Interesting are the concrete analyzes plot and imagery in the novels, interpreted through the prism of the revolutionary processes connected to one or another political, philosophical, religious or social ideas - Francoism, the Jesuit Order of Loyola, Nietzscheanism, left-wing workers' movements and parties, Stalinism, etc. Thus, the author clarifies the archetype of the ideological utopianism.

In Razsukanov's research there is a journalistic bias, the repetition of observations and conclusions, as well as the excessively free and not always precise and thoughtful use of terms and concepts from different fields of knowledge. The list

of cited literature lacks established interpretations of Dimov's novels by Valeri Stefanov, Tatiana Ichevska, Anna Svitkova and others, as well as the two jubilee volumes on Dimitar Dimov by the Institute of Literature, which set a new line in the critical interpretation of his texts.

More serious claims can be made to the dissertation in terms of language, quotations, political jargon, etc. But these are still side effects at work. It is more important to highlight what has been achieved, namely the realization of a different from the established interpretations reading of Dimov's novel "Tobacco", which mixes unexpected contexts; the comparison of the two editions of the work and the involvement of other literary texts of the writer in the analyzes of the utopian plan of the novel; highlighting the strong anti-utopian discourse in its second edition; the bold attempt to propose a kind of philosophy of history of the twentieth century based on the study Dimov's utopias and dystopias.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that the dissertation of Julian Petkov Razsukanov has enough qualities to be awarded the degree "Doctor".

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