**STATEMENT**

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**on the research, teaching and academic activity of Associate Professor Moris Fadel, DSc, candidate in the competition for the academic position of Professor in Professional Field 2.1 Philology (Theory and History of Literature), announced in the State Gazette, No. 65 of 17 July 2026**

1. General Assessment of the Candidacy and Compliance with the Requirements for the Academic Position

Associate Professor Moris Fadel, DSc, has a long-standing academic career in the field of theory and history of literature. He graduated in Bulgarian Philology and Philosophy from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2002, he defended his doctoral dissertation, History and Interpretation in the Thought of Paul de Man, and in 2022 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Sciences for his dissertation Detectives, Spies, Cold War: Crime and Spy Fiction in Comparative Perspective. He has been working at New Bulgarian University since 2005, has held the academic position of Associate Professor since 2010, and has served as Head of the Department of New Bulgarian Studies since 2020.

His scholarly output includes four monographs, publications in peer-reviewed academic journals in Bulgaria and abroad, studies in scholarly edited volumes, as well as editorial and co-editorial work. His monographic corpus comprises Paul de Man: Attempts at the Impossible (2002), The Animal as a Literary Provocation: The "Animalistics" of Emiliyan Stanev (2010), Detectives, Spies, Cold War: Crime and Spy Fiction in Comparative Perspective (2022), and The Broken Frame: The Unsettling of Representation in Literature (2025).

The submitted documentation certifies that the candidate fulfils both the national minimum requirements and the additional requirements of New Bulgarian University for the academic position of Professor. He has 50 points in Group A, 100 in Group B, 100 in Group C, 470 in Group D against a required minimum of 200, 120 in Group E against a required minimum of 100, and 135 in Group F against a required minimum of 100. Particularly significant is the body of research submitted under Group D, where the quantitative score exceeds the required minimum by more than twofold.

The scholarly value of this body of work is determined by its clearly formulated theoretical problems, precision of argument, and capacity to conceive the individual literary fact simultaneously as a text, a historical event and an intellectual problem. Moris Fadel's research reveals an intellectual formation marked by attention to the instability of meaning, the tension between rhetoric and reference, and those moments in which language unsettles its own foundations. This de Manian sensibility has gradually been reworked into a distinctive analytical habit and is present in both his theoretical and his literary-historical interpretations. His writing does not abandon the classical concern with meaning, but follows its mobility with literary-critical elegance.

The monograph The Broken Frame: The Unsettling of Representation in Literature (2025) is a new independent work, separate from the research submitted in previous procedures for research degrees and academic habilitation. It concentrates one of the enduring lines in Moris Fadel's work and offers the fullest account of the current stage of his research.

2. Research Activity and Contributions

The monograph The Broken Frame: The Unsettling of Representation in Literature develops the problem of representation as one of the central questions of modern literary theory and traces the various attempts to overcome it. Its theoretical horizon is delineated through Russian Formalism, William Empson, Michael Riffaterre, Paul de Man, and the later debate on the historical limits of literary theory, represented by Galin Tihanov. Its fundamental premise links the very emergence of

literary theory to the questioning of representation. From this arises the question of the possibilities of literary scholarship after the weakening of theory's claim to universal validity.

The methodological position of the book is clearly formulated in the introduction. Fadel articulates a literary-critical position that draws on the achievements of theory while preserving the analytical priority of the individual literary text. Concepts are tested against the particular work and operate within the limits of their interpretative productivity. This principle also determines the composition of the monograph: the individual chapters trace different forms of the unsettling of representation without reducing them to a single pre-constructed scheme.

A substantial theoretical contribution lies in the development of the problem of literature's resistance to signification. The first part examines different ways in which the literary text problematises linguistic and semiotic mediation. In Yovkov, understanding between characters, including between human beings and animals, takes place without the mediating reality of the sign. In Mandelstam's "Silentium", Fadel traces the aspiration towards a situation prior to form, prior to rule, and prior to representation itself coming into being. In Bagryana's translation of Akhmatova, Fadel identifies a triumph of the materiality of sound at the expense of meaning, while in his analysis of Ani Ilkov he distinguishes between "utterance" as meaningful speech and its medium, the act of "saying". In Pushkin's The Stone Guest, the statue is examined as an acting object that remains outside the logic of causes and effects determined by language. These interpretations trace different forms of resistance to language, signification and representation.

The second part of the monograph examines the mechanisms through which language itself unsettles representation. In Dalchev's poem "Stone", Fadel traces a movement from referentiality to performativity. In his reading of Yavorov, the object of analysis is the relationship between the constitutive force of the I and its recognition through representation. In "Homeland", the geographical model of the native is dissolved, while the concept remains distributed between the meanings of word and time. In Liliev, irony is examined in relation to negativity, allegory, symbol and modernist poetics. What these interpretations share is their attention to the moment in which the literary text makes visible the limitations of its own semiotic means.

The methodological discipline of the book is also evident in the way Fadel limits the validity of his own thesis. The frame denotes the structure of rules governing representation within the individual work. Its disruption is not turned into a criterion of literariness or artistic value. The unsettling of representation can also be identified in works of limited aesthetic value. The theoretical concept therefore retains its function as an instrument of interpretation applicable to texts that differ in character and in their position within the literary hierarchy.

I particularly value Moris Fadel's work with literary history. In his scholarship, literary history preserves the density of time, as the literary fact is considered together with its historical environment, critical vocabularies, concepts, norms and institutional relations.

This literary-historical precision is particularly significant in his work on the literature of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. In his analysis of Penyo Penev, the future is treated as a fundamental value of socialist normativity. Images of construction, morning, the young body and technology belong to the characteristic imagery of the socialist project of the future. Alongside these, Fadel traces the discontinuity of history, the autonomy of technology and the uncertainty of the future. In Alexander Gerov, old age is released from its conventional characteristics; sensibility and emotion remain active, while boundaries between different stages of life are unsettled. In the study of the figure of the communist leader, the analysis proceeds through concreteness, figurality and political signification, giving the theoretical problem of representation a specific literary-historical form.

The same historical sensitivity determines Fadel's work on the literature of the 1990s. Indicative in this respect is his publication "The Conservative Attacks on Bulgarian Literature in the 1990s" (2025),

while The Broken Frame returns to the debate on the literary canon (pp. 22–23), placing it within a clearly delineated literary-historical perspective.

3. Other Scholarly Publications and Research Lines

The scholarly publications that remain outside the composition of The Broken Frame reveal the broader range of Moris Fadel's research. Alongside the problem of representation, his work consistently engages with literary theory, Bulgarian literary history, the literature of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the processes of the 1990s, the theory and history of translation, crime and spy fiction, and the cultural politics of the Cold War.

The theoretical strand includes studies such as "Language, Man and World in Tzvetan Todorov's Poetics", "Literary Criticism as Therapy", and "Ivan Meshekov and Literary Phenomenology". His interest in Todorov, Paul de Man, Riffaterre, phenomenology and modernist criticism delineates a coherent theoretical horizon across different stages of Fadel's scholarly work. A substantial part of his publications is devoted to Bulgarian literary history. In "Panorama of Bulgarian Literature as a Model of Literary History", "From Modernism to Traditionalism", and "How Mihail Nedelchev Speaks about Yavorov", Fadel demonstrates well-established modes of literary evaluation, critical language and memory of the literary process.

A distinct research line is formed by his studies of crime and spy fiction, translation practices and the cultural politics of the Cold War. The monographic core Detectives, Spies, Cold War gives rise to later studies, including "The Success Story of Communist Literature: the Spy Novel" and "Translation and ideology: the translation of crime fiction in Bulgaria during the Cold War", in which particular problems are further developed and placed within more specific contexts.

Characteristic of this body of work is Fadel's approach to different literary traditions and to the artistic value of the objects under consideration. He does not rank Bulgarian literature against an external "world" standard, nor does he seek to legitimise it through compensatory comparison. Texts are placed alongside one another according to the specific literary-critical problem at stake. A canonical work, a genre text, normative socialist-realist production and a literary masterpiece may all become objects of equally precise reading. The significance of the literary fact derives from its place within the problem and from its capacity to make visible a historical or poetological structure. It is precisely this unforced way of approaching Bulgarian material that I regard as an important characteristic of Moris Fadel's scholarly style.

4. International Research Activity and Visibility

Moris Fadel's international presence is sustained and thematically connected to his principal research interests. Particularly significant are his appearances in French academic contexts, including the "Therapeutic Modernisms" forum, organised by Université Paris Nanterre and held at Université Grenoble Alpes, as well as other engagements associated with French university centres. Among his international publications, "Translation and ideology: the translation of crime fiction in Bulgaria during the Cold War" in mediAzioni, an international peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal of the University of Bologna, is particularly noteworthy. Also significant are his publication "On the Image of Roma in Radichkov" in Zeszyty Łużyckie at the University of Warsaw, and "Ivan Meshekov and Literary Phenomenology" in a volume of the Polish Academy of Sciences. These activities place his research themes within a natural international academic context.

5. Citations and Scholarly Reception

The submitted data on citations demonstrate reception across different scholarly fields. "Translation and ideology" is cited in the introductory text to the thematic issue of mediAzioni; the study "On the Image of Roma in Radichkov" is noted in the editorial text of Zeszyty Łużyckie; and

“Language, Man and World in Tzvetan Todorov’s Poetics” is cited in an introductory study in Acta Nova Humanistica. In the Bulgarian context, “The Conservative Attacks on Bulgarian Literature in the 1990s” is cited by Mihail Nedelchev in a study of changes in the literary field during the transition period. This reception concerns different strands of Fadel’s work and demonstrates their inclusion in subsequent scholarly discussion.

6. Teaching and Doctoral Supervision

Moris Fadel’s teaching activity is directly connected with his scholarly profile. His average score in student surveys over the last ten semesters is 5.59. He has produced original teaching materials and also teaches in English in the course “Critical Reading”. Fadel has supervised 13 successfully defended graduation theses and has served as reviewer of five graduation theses. The topics cover Bulgarian and foreign literature, the literature of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria, and creative writing.

Two doctoral dissertations have been successfully defended under his supervision: Tsvetina Tsakova’s Constructing Female Identity in the Novels of Charlotte Brontë (2019) and Yuliyan Razsukanov’s Utopian Discourses in Dimitar Dimov’s Novel Tobacco (2021). His teaching profile also includes the public lecture “Realist Forms of Representation in Contemporary Bulgarian Literature”, delivered to the academic community of New Bulgarian University in March 2026.

7. Academic and Organisational Activity

Moris Fadel’s academic activity is associated with many years of work on the development of the programmes and institutional profile of the Department of New Bulgarian Studies. He has served as Programme Director and, since 2020, as Head of the Department. He is a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty for Basic Education and of the Academic Council of New Bulgarian University, and chairs the committee for GENB courses at the Bachelor’s Faculty. He has made an active contribution to the launch of the Master’s programmes “Literature, Publishing, Media” and “Creative Writing”, as well as to the specialisation “Teacher of Bulgarian Language and Literature”.

This work also includes editorial and co-editorial activity in publications such as On the Way to Heidegger, History of the Literature of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria: Models and Practices, Experiment and Memory: Georgi Markovski, Miroslav Yanakiev. Bulgarian Versification, and The Writers of the University, as well as the organisation, jointly with Professor Georgi Fotev, DSc, of the scholarly conference “The Freedom of Ukraine” in 2025. These activities form part of sustained work towards building an academic environment and introducing new topics into university and scholarly life.

8. Conclusion

The submitted research output, teaching activity, international visibility and academic experience of Associate Professor Moris Fadel, DSc, delineate a mature, firmly established and authoritative profile in the field of theory and history of literature. Particularly significant are his ability to connect the theoretical problem with the specific literary text, the precision of his literary-historical reading, and the freedom with which he works with texts differing in status and artistic value.

On these grounds, I give a positive assessment of the candidacy and support the appointment of Associate Professor Moris Fadel, DSc, to the academic position of Professor in Professional Field 2.1 Philology (Theory and History of Literature).