

## SHORT REVIEW

By Professor Dr. Habil. NELLY STOYANOVA IVANOVA –

A member of the scientific jury reviewing the applications for the academic position of professor of Bulgarian children's literature (2. Humanities; 2.1. Philology, Bulgarian literature – Bulgarian child literature) opened by The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen on 12.07.2019 (State Newspaper, № 55)

*Applicant: Assoc. Prof. Dr Mladen Stoyanov Enchev*

### **1. Legitimacy of the procedure**

The contest for the vacant academic position “professor” at The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen in the area of higher education, 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian literature – Bulgarian child literature) has been announced by The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen in State Newspaper, № 55 on 12 of July 2019 in accordance with all the requirements of both The Law of the Development of the Academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation of The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen.

The only candidate who has applied for this position is assoc. professor Dr. Mladen Stoyanov Enchev.

### **2. Biographical data**

Assoc. Prof. Mladen Stoyanov Enchev graduates Bulgarian philology from the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Shumen in 1981. He is a teacher at the village of Drumevo, Shumen region in 1981-82. His academic career starts at The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen in 1984 and until 2001 he has taken the following positions - assistant professor, senior assistant professor and chief assistant professor there. Mladen Enchev has PhD in philology since 1994. In 2001-2004 he has been associate professor and Bulgarian language, literature and culture lecturer at Presovska univerzita, Presov. From 2005 to 2019 he is an associate professor at The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen.

### **3. Presentation of the scientific publications of the applicant**

Mladen Enchev is the author of 82 publications: 3 monographs, 6 learning subsidiaries (3 of them in co-authorship), 60 articles and studies, 13 reviews and the summary of his PhD dissertation.

The applicant has submitted for review 2 monographs and 12 articles (6 of them published in Bulgarian specialized scientific editions – journals, 1 in foreign specialized scientific edition – selected articles, and 5 in Bulgarian scientific editions – collected papers).

The basic distinguishing characteristics of Mladen Enchev's more significant entries for the professorship contest are:

- In the habilitation **monograph "Ballad for Nangijala. Pragmatics of Death in Children's Literature"** (Sofia, 2018, Kragozor PH) the author consistently discloses the pedagogical "uses and abuses of death in the context of child perception and education through literature". The historic changes in the ideas about childhood and the attitudes of society towards children are read and interpreted through the study of the images and functions of death in child literature in the different periods of its development. Structured in three chapters, the monograph in depth analyzes rich and genre diverse material, including classic and peripheral works of Bulgarian and world literature. Following the psychological achievements and using the age informative arguments from child folklore the author confidently shares the view of the early age at which children encounter death and underlines the importance of its experience in childhood. That's why the theme is so significant in the intergenerational communication, the communication through literature not being an exception.

- In the **monograph "Lego. Bulgarian Literature for Children after World War II"** (Shumen, 2018, The Constantine of Preslav University PH) the author combining review and essay chapters constructs an original cognitive model for this literature "with a full knowledge of its subjectivity". The historic specifics of Bulgarian child literature after the Second World War is examined and well presented in the book. The dynamics of the changes in our national literature for children in the socialist period and after that is traced throughout the monograph. The literary samples are commented with the aim of clarifying how the socialist children's literature serves the ideological model of childhood and at the same time on its turn participates in this ideological construction. The study is interested in the

styles that follow the prescriptions of the methodological canon of socialist realism as well as in the literary tactics for deviation from the doctrinal decorum. The author surpasses the historic frames of the socialist past and describes in depth the processes in our national literature in the transitional period of the millennium with a focus on one of the most famous representatives of our nowadays literary works for children.

Among the **articles** issued in indexed and refereed scientific journals, with which Mladen Enchev applies for the academic position of professor, the following titles should be highlighted:

- **Money and childhood. *Bulgarian language and literature*, 3/2009, ISSN 0323-9519, p. 15-30.** The forms of meaning and the functions of money in the child's life of the so called traditional society are outlined in the article. Based on material from the Bulgarian literature (including Bulgarian children's literature) the author contemplates on the ritual (apotropaic) essence of the early child's contact with money, concentrates on the roles of money in the process of moral education and points it as a mediator between the child and his/her pleasure. The anomaly of the connection child-money in the traditional society is emphasized and money is characterized as a father's attribute and an instrument for realizing adult power.

- **Harry Potter and the phoenix effect. *Bulgarian language and literature*, 1/2010, ISSN 0323-9519, p. 26-36.** The author tries to find the reasons for the mass reading success of the series of novels about the little magician. Leaving aside popular suggestions like the excessive media coverage and the total advertising campaign of the publishing house, the explanations are sought in the qualities of the books themselves. "Harry Potter" is treated as a version of what Gianni Rodari calls the „fairy tales calques" but the depth (the level of the initiation ritual substrate of the fairy tale) of this calquing and the preserved memory (functional including) of its object are distinctly marked in the article. The continuity of the series with the genre tradition of Bildungsroman and the so called novel of secrets is indicated. The Adult readers' motives for their preferences of the series are also commented.

- **Macaronic Russian language in Bulgarian literature. Sketches of the portrait of one national feeling. *Bulgarian language and literature*, 4/2011, ISSN 0323-9519.** The article focuses on the historic oscillations of the emotional

relations of Bulgarians to Russia through the mediation of the ‘‘Bulgarianized’’ Russian language in the idiolects of characters from our national literature. The expressed opinion is that these oscillations depend on the vicissitudes of the political relations between Bulgaria and Russia and are directly influenced by the power context of those connections. The macaronic Russian speech is viewed in its functions of laughter downgrading character attribute and as an expression of nationally addressed feelings, varying from the initial Revival sense of love to the ensuing alienation and resistance. The main reason for this turnaround according to the author is that the Russian language appropriates the symbolism of power in the boundaries and at the expense of the native language. Being the language of power Russian loses intimacy, leaves the territory of what is considered understandable, my own and causes concealed or manifested hostility. If there is emancipation from the power aureole, the Russian language is not without chances to attract again the past favorable attitudes.

- (U) toponymy. *The City – Memory and Media. Public communication series*, 8, 2018, ISSN 2603-4506, p. 286 – 311. The author comments on the journalistic and literary images of the so called Children’s town that should be built near Sofia. The idea of it, restoring the memory of the cities of literary utopias, emerged in the late 1940s. The realization of the classic utopian dream of the perfect city, this time profiled in childish context, must physically illustrate the humane cosmogony of the victory-defying social order as well as the objectivity of the propaganda postulate about the performativeness of dreams under communism. However, after the enthusiastic bell-ringing in media, the work on the Children’s town was dying and the city of dreams remained only a dream, just an utopian illusion as if to foretell the future of the beautiful communist dream of a just and harmonious world. The article explores the relationships utopia – ideology, utopia – childhood, journalism and literature in the practice of one culture subordinated to the principles of socialist realism.

#### **4. Contributions**

I agree with the contributions of the works of assoc. professor Mladen Enchev summarized by him in the list attached to the documents with which he applied for the academic position of professor. His scientific achievements may be conditionally divided in two groups:

#### 4.1. Theoretical contributions

- In the *monograph* "**Ballad for Nangijala. Pragmatics of Death in Children's Literature**" offered as a habilitation work, the first attempt in the Bulgarian literary criticism is made the presence and the functions of death in children literary works to be studied. For the first time the typological similarities of the usages of the theme of death in religious, nationalistic and communist literary educational practices are commented. In the paragraph on Dora Gabe's "Sometimes" book for the first time in its literary studies the evidence for the infantile death-fear experience is found.

- In the *monograph* "**Lego. Bulgarian Literature for Children after World War II**" is made an attempt for almost synchronous review of what is happening in our national children's literature at the border between the two millennia. The articles devoted to the works of Victor Samuilov and Yulia Spiridonova, Lachezar Stanchev and Stanislav Stratiev are of an original character.

- In the *article* "**Macaronic Russian language in Bulgarian literature. Sketches of the portrait of one national feeling**" the originality is a result of the comment on the historic oscillations in the emotional relations of Bulgarians to Russia through the mediation of the "Bulgarianized" Russian language used in the idiolects of characters from our national literature.

In the *article* **(U)toponymy** the contribution is in the study of the connection between utopia and childhood, as well as in the founding and comment on the literary and journalistic images of the so called Children's town.

The ideas put forward in the works of Mladen Enchev are without any doubt original but they are also scientifically based and tested in his teaching and researching activities. They reveal the excellent knowledge of the achievements of the humanitarian and social sciences in the related to the studied problems fields. The publications testify to the scientific ethics of their author. The deep understanding of the scholars' different thesis ensures the solid argumentation of the proposed interpretations. Some of the ideas of Mladen Enchev have already been used and quoted in the basic texts and the bibliographies of monographs, articles, reviews, etc. by other scientists. It's no coincidence that the number of quotes according the applied citation list is about 30.

#### **4.2. Contributions to practice**

- The author's ideas have been shared in his teaching as lecturer and have found realization in the process of formation of the respective students' competencies for perception, understanding and interpretation of Bulgarian and foreign children's literature.

- With his scientific activities and his publications Mladen Enchev contributes to the development of the literary studies and the enrichment of the ideas in the contemporary interpretation of the Bulgarian and foreign literature for children.

#### **5. Teaching and research**

Mladen Enchev is in charge of the lecture and seminar courses in Bulgarian and foreign children's literature studies. The discipline is compulsory for undergraduate students majoring in Bulgarian philology and all the Preschool and Primary school pedagogical specialities, and optional for the students from English, Russian and Turkish philologies. He has supervised 15 bachelor thesis and from 2018 is an advisor of one Phd student. He is vice dean of the Faculty of Humanities. He participates in the management of university and national research projects and is a member of research teams working on international scientific projects. From 2008 to 2016 he has been editor in chief of Liuboslovie journal. His expertise has been applied in the activities of four scientific juries.

From the attached form for meeting the Minimum national requirements in accordance with article 2 B, paragraph 2 and 3 with the respective evidence and number of points for every indicator it is obvious that the applicant covers the different groups of requirements for the academic position professor.

#### **6. Conclusion**

**The scientific contributions of the ideas of Mladen Enchev**, applicant in the contest for the academic position professor at the The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen in the area of higher education, 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian literature – Bulgarian child literature) announced by The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen in State Newspaper, № 55 on 12 of July 2019 **manifested in his publications, the professional excellence and ethics in his teaching and scientific work**, are the reasons that let me confidently

recommend to the members of the scientific jury to submit to the Faculty council of the Faculty of Humanities a proposal for the selection of the candidate for the academic position professor in the area of higher education, 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian literature – Bulgarian child literature) for the needs of the The Constantine of Preslav University of Shumen.

15.10.2019

Author:



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