

REVIEW REPORT

from Assoc. Prof. **Temenuzhka Gantcheva Teneva, Ph. D.**

(Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen)

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the appointment of the academic position "Associate Professor" in Theory and History of Literature, professional field 2.1. Philology, field 2. Humanities

Nadezhda Stefanova Tsocheva, Ph. D., senior teacher at a high school of natural sciences and mathematics «N. Popovich» Shumen participated as a candidate in a competition for associate professor, announced in the State Gazette, issue 102 of 7.12. 2021 and on the website of the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen (Shumen University) on behalf of the Department of History and Theory of Literature at the Shumen University. Her documentation for the competition meets the minimum national requirements in Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria. The necessary references for their fulfilment and for the original scientific contributions of the candidate are presented.

I have had the pleasure to witness the personal and professional development of Nadezhda Tsocheva starting with her studies at Shumen University, continuing during the years of her work as a teacher of Bulgarian language and literature, as well as an assistant professor in the Department of History and Theory of Literature at Shumen University. I have seen her as a mentor supporting the first attempts of future teachers during their internships, I have enjoyed the success of her debating teams with excellent presentations at national and international forums, I have heard the high praise of high school and university students for the knowledge, she have helped them acquire. Her wide range of interests and activities reveals the curiosity of a creative person, who attracts followers. A projection of this versatility is the publishing activity of Nadezhda Tsocheva. She declares herself with topics from literary and culturological fields of Bulgarian and Slavic art in authoritative peer-reviewed Bulgarian and international publications. The quality of the publications is evidenced by the significant number of citations they have by other Bulgarian and foreign authors.

The most significant thematically coherent part of Tsocheva's articles and studies receives new presentation and furthers readers' perspectives in the monograph "Poetics of Melancholy in the Context of Bulgarian Modernism and Postmodernism". Considering the book as a research synthesis allows us to see in one place both the paths taken towards the most active periods of our literature (modernism, avant-garde, postmodernism), and the achieved impressions of its image, examined through physical, aesthetic, linguistic, and philosophical dimensions of the melancholy as a generalized manifestation of the uplifting (even in failure) national and existential suffering.

Even the table of contents of "Poetics of Melancholy ..." impresses with the large-scale outlines of the research fields (temporal, authorial, interpretive) and the multilayered nature of their saturation. Starting with sadness as a "key concept, emotional code in the attempt to make sense of the Bulgarian mentality" (p. 7) the book derives (archeologizes) the meanings of melancholy from their historical existence, interiorizes them in the soul and spirit of their aesthetic manifestations, in order to transform them into the diverse names of our literature from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day, discovering its postmodern uses "at the intersection ... between melancholy experience and national trauma" (p. 11).

The alternation between the high and low meanings of melancholy in the aesthetics of symbolism, avant-garde, postmodernism is maintained by combining the historical with the thematic approach, expressed by returning to already commented authors and works in different contexts of their review (eg Geo Milev's letters as a manifestation of melancholic decorativeness and later – his "Expressionist" calendar in the linguistic interpretations of the phenomenon; modernists presented in the first chapters, and their dialogue with today's authors through the biblical symbolism in the last chapter).

The research theses are formulated in conversation with the most authoritative statements from the Bulgarian and world literary theory and criticism, visible not only in the references and the impressive bibliographic list, but also in the many explanatory notes, some of which add information equal in importance to the main text. A fairly complete book collection from the studied more than 100-year period can be compiled from the commented works. The original theoretical observations presented in the individual chapters and the subtopics in them add new research perspectives to the authors, works and problems, radiating the contributory nature of the monograph. The "invocation" of many artistic details in the individual and dialogical interpretive moments confirms not only the rich well-read culture of

the author, but also the transformation of a significant volume of our literature into personal knowledge and empathy. The impact of Nadezhda Tsocheva's speech is added to the depth of her observations. It is infected with the decorative elegance of melancholic removal and at the same time it is very accurate, clarifying the essence of the topic in the metadiscourse.


The last two chapters of the monograph are especially significant from my point of view. Because if a lot has been written about our modernist literature in one way or another, Dimitar Dimov's novel, expressing the value crisis of the historical, social, existential transition in the 50s, is not read through the prism of this manifestation of melancholic aesthetics, according to which "The Self/.../ desperately seeks the signs of the new whole in the disintegrated fragments of his life" (290). And the desire to compensate for this unhappening with the completion-rewriting of Dimov's "Unfinished" novel by his daughter in "Adriana"- a wonderful sequel-antithesis in the field of deconstruction, from which the opposite of the prototype is born, is also a confession of love for him. The dialogue of modernity with the consequences of its disintegration through biblical universals is also interesting - the image of the lily bearing the character of melancholy contemplation. The closing of the research framework with "The Physics of Sorrow" and other used and abandoned Time Shelters of Georgi Gospodinov is a very valuable and fruitful finishing touch to the melancholic diversity in the book by Nadezhda Tsocheva. The only thing I missed in her remarkable work is a personalisation of the "Bulgarian" melancholy (especially in its modernist manifestations), in a way similar to R. Likova's "grounding" of Bulgarian symbolism.

I would recommend upon supplementing the circulation of the book some minor imprecisions to be corrected: unreasonable repetitions (p.152, p.163, p.201, p.297), and inaccuracies (aroma in the role of memory can not "visualize perception" - it may give it physicality? - p. 121; quoting Yavorov on p.129; "the highest harmony of complete **mis**(?)understanding between the artist and his ideal" - p.186).

In conclusion, I want to confirm my conviction that Nadezhda Tsocheva has proven her qualities as an in-depth researcher of literature with a high level of theorizing the issues, a successful teacher, a loyal colleague and a valuable person.

Given the above I propose Nadezhda Stefanova Tsocheva, Ph.D to be appointed "Associate Professor" in Theory and History of Literature, professional field 2.1. Philology, field 2. Humanities.

08.03.2022

Member of the jury: 

/Assoc. Prof. T. Teneva, Ph.D/