

STATEMENT OF OPINION

of

Prof. Dr. Mladen Enchev, member of the scientific jury of a competition announced in SG issue 102 / 07.12.2021 for the academic position of an *associate professor* in the area of the higher education 2 Humanitarian Sciences, professional field 2.1. Philology (Theory and history of literature)

The competition for associate professor in Theory and History of Literature is announced at the request of the Department in History and Theory of Literature of Shumen University by a decision of the Academic Council of the University. Dr. Nadezhda Stefanova Tsocheva is the only applicant in the competition. She defended her candidacy with a habilitation thesis and a number of scientific articles on wide scope of issues in the field of the Bulgarian literature of XX century and the beginning of XXI century.

The habilitation thesis presented with the title *Melancholy poetics in the context of the Bulgarian modernism and post-modernism* is a wide-scale study of the melancholy manifestation in the Bulgarian literature and its period of new and newest history. The text follows its ambitious tasks, commenting facts in the span of a century and a half, located in different areas of the esthetic paradigm of our national literature. It is focused on the modern and postmodern and the research refuses to isolate itself in the context of their occurrence in the literature, it is opened for its common cultural context in order to point out and analyze the connections and the influences of different arts (mainly the relation between the literature and fine arts) in their attempts to present melancholy as a problem.

The habilitation work is of a respectable volume, it consists of five chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. There is a detailed bibliography provided as well as some useful notes.

The introductory part introduces the problem in theory. The melancholy is commented in a historical retrospective of its manifestations in sense of the medical, emotional and cultural

perspective registers. The different points of view for the term, earnestly presented by the author, are a result not only of the natural diachrony of the public thinking from the times of Hippocrates to nowadays, but also arise from the essence of the melancholy itself. Its proteicity makes it not only difficult to locate it in time, but also difficult for differentiate from similar states of the individual and social conscious, placing every study of the melancholy as a scientific subject in front of big challenge. In this regard the text of N. Tsocheva is sufficiently skillfully balancing between the challenges of the theoretical content, although, in my opinion, more categorical semantic limits of the term would do the habilitation work even more focused and convincing.

The second and the third chapter contains the formal and actually the essential center of the work. Examining the manifestation of melancholy in the Bulgarian symbolism and avant-garde the author demonstrated the best features of her study approach – the cultural width of the view, the skills for comparison, attention to the detail, ability to present context as well as her competency in literature and history.

The paragraphs *Melancholy subject out of the pages of the "Artist" magazine and the Secession gardens* and the *Behind the shades of the clouds, the signs, the aroma...* make particularly good impression. In the first, Nadezhda Tsocheva intimately analyses the floral code of the symbolic art in its function to present a melancholy experience and in the second she makes observations on the artistic use of the perfume and aromas both in the same context and in the context of the possibility for such an use to inform about semiotic and cultural particularities of the Bulgarian modernism as a whole.

Among the merits of the habilitation work is the idea, and then its implementation, to study the poetics of the melancholy through the means of transformational strategies and role play experiments of the parody. I consider the approach, chosen by the author, for explicitly productive, having in mind the essence of the literature parody and namely to express receptive attitudes, to take a specific form of literature critique, to attack the parody original in its most known structural aspects.

The study of Nadezhda Tsocheva, *Poetics of the melancholy in the Bulgarian literature – modern and postmodern contexts* is the first of a kind attempt in the Bulgarian literature science. In unison with the idea, it is an original and serious work on the images and the presence of the

melancholy in our national literature and in the same time (and throughout with) an interesting addition to the knowledge for the esthetic phenomena of the modernism and the postmodernism.

Together with her habilitation work, the candidate also presented 23 articles for the competition, published in different media, including such abroad. Large part of them are related to the content of the habilitation work, showing that it is a result of a consistent and purposeful scientific interest and giving information for the process of its creation. Other part of the articles are focused on issues, relatively or entirely uncovered by the habilitation work. All of them witness for wide literal interests of the author, the extent of her study competencies, her skills to analyze a particular problem in the short genres of the scientific text. Amongst those works, the following make impression – *Technique and culture of the city. The image of the machine in the avant-garde context (Ch. Mutafov)* – with a convincing representation of the ambivalent image of the machine in the esthetic manifestations of it, as well as “*The human in front of God - - archetype models in “Hail” Peyo Yavorov, “The plague of God”, Elin Pelin and “Through the Plague”, Yordan Yovkov* – because of the well-used possibilities of the comparative approach in problematization and research of suffering in the Bulgarian literary classics, because of the semantics of floral in the court of Hadji Dragan involved as a scientific argument and last but not least because of the author's favorite relations between literature and fine arts.

With the arguments of everything said so far, in conclusion I share my opinion that the candidacy of Dr. Nadezhda Stefanova Tsocheva adequately meets the requirements of the habilitation. I declare my conscious decision to propose for her to be awarded with the academic title of associate professor and to vote in favor of this proposal.

Date: 16.03. 2022

The town of Shumen



Prof. Dr. Mladen Enchev