

## **REVIEW**

**by Prof. Dr. Rumyana Damyanova, approved as a member of the scientific jury**

**by Director's order-38-134/ March 6, 2024,**

**for the dissertation work of Prof. DSc. Magdalena Kostova -Panayotova**

**for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor of Science"**

**by professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in**

**(Methodology of teaching literature)**

**on the subject:**

"Contemporary linguodidactological aspects of the continuing training of teachers of Bulgarian Language and Literature (BLL)"

The dissertation contains 391 standard pages and 302 bibliographic units. At an extended meeting of the "Humanities" department at DIITT, held on 28.02.2024, the dissertation work was discussed and admitted to public defense

I will quote a thought of Prof. Magdalena Panayotova from the Introduction of her dissertation, which can serve as a methodological basis for the reflections, theses and analyzes she offers: "Today, decades after the beginning of the transition, except for the modernization of schools and the invasion of new technologies, the corpus of literary material has not changed much, nor has the way of teaching it, which is commensurate with trusting the "experienced standard". The main problems of knowledge as a reproductive model, the mimetic nature of the teaching of literature, about which pedagogues are alarmed, have not been solved either" (p. 4). This position, stated at the beginning of the research, reveals an enviable academic preparation and rich scientific and teaching experience. The impressive scientific asset presented in her autobiography outlines a respectable competence both in the direction of the choice of research topics and in the pragmatics of teaching in Bulgarian language and literature, as the numerous publications - with an already established public existence - outline the canvas on which the proposed dissertation is stabilized labor.

The work offered for scientific defense on the topic - "Contemporary linguodidactological aspects of the continuing training of teachers of Bulgarian Language and Literature (BLL)" - can be considered in three main directions, which reveal the research skills of Prof. M. Panayotova:

- Conceptualization;
- Literary competence;
- Forward thinking.

Following these three directions, defended in the work, will outline the possibilities of M. Panayotova's research approach, but also the limits set by the established pedagogical experience and by the empirical material itself in harmony with the offered educational programs.

THE CONCEPTUALIZATION brings to life the problematic fields set by the topic of the dissertation work. The impression one gets from reading the work is that it clearly outlines the discussion topics in the work on the implementation of educational programs: about the possible student-teacher dialogue in equal positions, seen as "anxiety" and "how to make the mandatory interesting" ( p. 9), as well as the inclusion of the student as the "dialogizing Other"; for the ability to present the interpretation of the studied material intriguingly, in order to stimulate the student to think and build his own theses or to be able to choose the interpretations that are offered; about the fundamental question "what kind of educational product do we want to create as a society" (p. 10) and its expected realization; to confirm the understanding that in the educational process there are two subjects - a teacher and a student, and accordingly the responsibility is shared, etc.

The conceptualization of the large-scale plan for an adequate dynamic change in the educational discourse also covers the well-founded observations of well-known methodological researchers, proposed by M. Panayotova: about the manner of "minimizing" the material from university disciplines and transferring it to schools (Berkovska); about the classification of the methods of literary education proposed by R. Joveva: method of interpretation, comparative method, historical-typological method (p. 8); for the opinion that one of the important results of literary education is "to remove the opposition between a knowledgeable teacher and an ignorant student" (A. Damyanova); to what extent and how "linguodidactology is called upon to update its views on the functions of its system of

classical educational subjects and values, turning them into active participants" (D. Veselinov) and others.

Among the aspects conceptually presented by M. Panayotova of the problem of the educational model in Bulgarian schools is the important question of overcoming or gradually ignoring, seen by her as an "attempt to escape from the literary-historical approach", which reveals serious gaps: the absence of a clear paradigm in consciousness to the student about the progressive sequence of literary eras and phenomena, which is stated in current training programs. This complex case has its argumentation in M. Panayotova's categorically expressed opinion that, ignoring it, "the projection of the historical era through the literary work is lost, which is one of the goals of literary competences" (p. 5-6). In sync with such observations are the statements on p. 11 in the work "skills of the modern teacher: to stimulate interactivity of the student, to structure algorithms, to use electronic resources and social media," etc.

Following the logical unfolding of the observations for the innovative implementation of the modern educational process, M. Panayotova naturally also formulated the main task of her work: "the text implements a teaching-communication model related to the new needs of literary education and the new socio-cultural features of the time in terms of the themes of new and contemporary literature: patterns of reading across a particular set of texts. These patterns imply the greatest degree of freedom, provocation, activity and curiosity" (p. 13). Thus she reaches the main conclusion: "The book lives in a competitive environment and the new means of information. The web and its possibilities in which speech, music and vision interact become central to the process of learning literature" (p. 9).

The main goal of the study, in accordance with the State Educational Standards (SES) of the Ministry of Education, is well-founded in the Introduction to the work - "to propose a corpus of methodological solutions and outline the characteristics of literary competence as an educational result in the dialogue of equal subjects teacher-student, applying models, in which communication with literature is seen as a non-linear, polyphonic, provocative interpretation of the literary work" (p. 12).

An important aspect of the conceptualization of the problem of innovative methods of modern teaching of literature is set forth in "Contents" as 1. "Classics, canon and modernity." The definition of concepts builds a very mature and thoughtful text, which combines teaching experience, academic awareness, innovative approach to phenomena and competence. In their

disclosure, the professionalism of M. Panayotova, created by both experience and scientific schooling, is evident. The conviction, expressed already in the first lines of this part, that "the attitude of each era to the concept of classics also determines the features of the era, its physiognomy" (p. 18) - becomes a fundamental postulate for revealing the understandings of classics, canon and modernity. A good impression is also made by referring to authoritative sources of scholarly presentation such as the output of publishing houses of the rank of Routledge and Garland. A very important aspect in this part is also the tracking of the understanding of Bulgarian literary studies about the canon, manifested in the last two decades, about the rethinking of the literary canon, about the works "outside the canon", precisely defined by Plamen Doinov as the "alternative canon".

With the postulate "the classics are alive" and penetrated into every sphere of modern culture - another important problem in modern literary studies emerges, which has received many interesting interpretations in the last 10 years or so. This is the formulation given by Prof. Cleo Protohristova - I believe that it has a place in this part of the work and I recommend that it be included - for the "literary years" in the Bulgarian literary development. This idea was picked up by the NBU, by M. Nedelchev and Pl. Doinov, developed in several separate editions, with which precisely the understanding of classics and canon received a new and very interesting interpretation, and also entered, through their emblematic studies, into the corpus of university education, and is often found in high school teaching of the individual authors; found its audience in quite a few scientific forums. M. Panayotova's statement, formulated as a thesis, that the classics are a "universal communication code" is also in this direction - I would also add a kind of cultural language of "mutual understanding" according to the term of Ferdinand Tönnies.

The issue of women's writing also finds its place in this part, which M. Panayotova skillfully weaves into the ideas of the modern vision of the literary process. I would recommend in this part to mention some of the emblematic editions that shaped the idea of women's writing since the Bulgarian Renaissance: M. Mladenova's book about Elena Muteva and the collection prepared by Doinov about Stanka Nikolitsa Spaso-Elenina, the collection "Mothers and Daughters", N. Kapralova's book "And your husband will rule over you...", "Archive of Elisaveta and Hristo Karaminkovi" (2013), the study of Kr. Daskalova.

LITERARY COMPETENCE. This direction of presentation of the problem of modern education in literature at work shows precisely the academic skills of M. Panayotova, revealed through the theses and analyzes of the "Golden" classic for additional or continuing training

of teachers in BLL" (respectively ch. 2), " A new classic to help teachers of the high school music course" (ch. 3) and "Out of the canon" (ch. 4). It is hardly easy to present in theses and analyzes the classic works of Bulgarian literature with authors from Botev to D. Dimov, defined as "golden". But M. Panayotova finds a very faithful approach to present them in such a way that they sound current and quite adequate to modern requirements. This is her decision, reflected in the titles, which are charged with the main task of presenting the emblematic highlights in the work of the authors under consideration: *Struggle, freedom and man in Botev's poetry*, *Drunkenness and madness in the novel Under the Yoke*, *Foreigner Bai Ganyu and the transformations of the national*, *Vaptsarov through the eyes of his and our contemporaries* and other. The poetry of Botev, who, as is known, is very difficult to write about, is presented with very precise observations. Presenting his poetics, M. Panayotova points out the contrasting oppositions, gives a very clear answer to the question of the choice and covenant of the rebel, looks for analogies with the complaints from folklore in "The Hanging of Vasil Levski", etc. The representative texts of Bulgarian researchers have also been carefully selected, and they need to be updated. In the part about Botev, I would also recommend referring to Roman Jakobson's text, which proves through anagram analysis that the title of Botev's last poem is contained in the text of the work itself, and was not composed by Z. Stoyanov.

The study of repeatedly read works from the Bulgarian literary classics – 'golden' and new - leads the reader of this part of the work to conclusions with a very wide conceptual scope. And in this I see another scientific contribution of M. Panayotova in her dissertation. She not only traces and reveals them, but, more importantly, traces through them the birth of a new type of thinking among contemporaries, a new and different type of reading of these classic works. In this direction, the analyzes of *The Peach Thief* by E. Stanev and *Ballad of Georg Henich* by V. Paskov are particularly distinguished - I perceive them as a kind of literary-historical opus. Similar words can be said about the part "Outside the canon", where the women's lyrics from the 60s of the XX century are also presented.

As a consequence of such observations, the conclusion is forced that literature - as it should be presented through the educational programs of the Ministry of Education and Culture - is not just a set of names and works, but is a gradual process "of crossing and reconciling contradictory motives and freedom and provocation are necessary to achieve interpretive delight". It is such a feeling that analyzes of the works of the "new classics" as a

performative gesture that overcomes the status quo and brings the new breath of modernity give rise to.

PROSPECTIVE THINKING. This type of research approach is not common, but it is clearly stated in the dissertation work of Prof. Magdalena Panayotova. He is present in the part with the question "Modern canon - is it possible? Perspectives and problems"(ch. 5). This part of the work foresees the opportunity to examine and study the latest representatives of modern Bulgarian literature. It is precisely considering the features and specifics of Zl. Zlatanov's and G. Gospodinov's novels, on the works of Zdr. Evtimova and M. Ruskov, A. Popov, M. Panayotova introduces into the educational corpus a very productive apostrophe of the literary-historical approach - what is happening with our literature today and how it should be read, understood, interpreted.

The prospective thinking of the scientist and teacher Prof. Magdalena Panayotova is even more categorically stated through the theses in the conclusion of the dissertation work. Affirming the important task of building in students "motivation and capacity for self-reflection", she confidently states: "There is no doubt that in recent decades the methodological emphasis of literary education affirms the idea of playful, free, variable learning, which emphasizes the dialogical model and the potential to modernize the educational being of literature" (p. 355). And this is Prof. M. Panayotova's answer to the changing "reading culture", to the role of the network and virtual games, to the transformations in the role of the teacher, to the transformed interpretation of literature.

Dear members of the scientific jury,

The proposed dissertation work of Prof. Magdalena Panayotova is inventive - it offers new opportunities for the implementation of literature education, it literally discovers new and established authors for the educational process, in harmony with the methodological emphasis introduced by the Ministry of Education and Science, it presents literature as a progressive process. Therefore, I strongly suggest that the dissertation work be published to serve modern literature education. The qualities of the dissertation convince me to categorically propose to the respected scientific jury to award Prof. Magdalena Panayotova-Kostova the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences".

April 2, 2024

Prof. DSc Romyana Damyanova