

## REVIEW

by a member of the scientific jury: Assoc. prof. dr. Ekaterina  
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for dissertation for obtaining the scientific and educational degree *doctor*

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Dissertation topic: Artistic texts in literature textbooks in Kosovo

Safete Statovtsi Shala graduated with a bachelor and master degree in Albanian Studies at the University of Pristina. She has many years of professional experience as a teacher in middle school and high school. Since 2007, she has been an associate of the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute in the department of scientific research, more specifically, planning the teaching material in pre-university education. She has published three monographs, participated in a number of projects of her institution and in scientific forums. She has been a PhD candidate at the Department of General, Indo-European and Balkan Linguistics since 2020. She appears at the public defence after a successful preliminary defence with a dissertation in Albanian and an extended abstract in Bulgarian, as well as all the necessary documents according to the legal procedure.

Safete Statovci Shala's dissertation *Artistic Texts in Literature Textbooks for Schools in Kosovo* sets itself the ambitious goal of describing, systematizing and analyzing the artistic texts in all literature textbooks for all grades in Kosovo. The second goal, formulated in the dissertation, is to make a comparative analysis of the texts by Albanian and foreign authors in order to discover the common and different moments in terms of value, aesthetics, content and pedagogy.

The excellent structure and arrangement of the dissertation, which consists of an introductory part, three substantive chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography, is impressive. The first chapter is introductory and presents the motivation for choosing the topic, the aims and objectives, the methodology and keywords of the topic. The topic is motivated by the lack of an extensive theoretical and methodological study of literary texts in textbooks in Kosovo, as well as by the accumulated professional experience of the author as a practitioner and expert in this field. I think the topic is really relevant and this is the first extensive study of this kind. The goals of the dissertation are clearly and precisely formulated in two points, but in terms of methodology, it is not clear how the PhD candidate applies the methods listed by her – inductive, deductive, analysis, synthesis, etc., moreover, the methods themselves are presented too generally.

The second chapter, *Pedagogical analysis of literature textbooks*, is very important for the research and is very correctly placed at the beginning, as it gives a general orientation to the problem. It gives an overview of the main goals of literature education in school, in which the competence and professionalism of the author is evident, as it is done with a critical and analytical position. Various aspects of mother tongue and literature education are examined with an emphasis on the role of literary texts. The PhD candidate very correctly points out the formative function of fiction not only for students and young people, but also for the development of a person's value system throughout their life. Therefore, she believes, the institutions should pay special attention to the content of literature textbooks both in thematic and aesthetic terms. The dissertation paid attention to the content side of literature textbooks, and we can notice some criticism of conservatism in this regard, as it was noted that the renewal of the content is too slow in Kosovo, especially in the primary grades. Another important aspect of literary texts is their function to stimulate reading in such a way that children become active readers throughout their lives. The so-called reading comprehension is a basic life skill. In order for the students to develop this type of ability, they must be adequately motivated. The role of literary texts in developing interpretation skills is also highlighted. While in scientific texts the

interpretation is largely unequivocal and established, in fiction there is freedom not only of the means of expression but also of interpretation related to the context. The dissertation also presents the acquisition of skills for written expression and language culture, which are aptly described as an external expression of internal knowledge. Attention is also paid to the mission of literature to educate children. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the relationships between literature, knowledge and information.

The third chapter, *Presentation of literature in school textbooks in Kosovo*, provides a complete overview of the textbook content. We must pay underline the enormous work that has been done to collect and present the materials: from the first to the ninth grade 182 literary texts in prose, 122 poetic works and 47 folklore pieces, and from the tenth to the twelfth 30 prose works by Albanian authors, 28 works by foreign authors, 72 poems by Albanian authors and 19 by foreign authors. From the quantitative data presented, it is clear that in primary education texts in prose dominate, and in high school – poetic works. In terms of authors, Albanian authors significantly prevail over foreign authors, while in high school (10-12 grades) the ratio is in favor of foreign authors. If the data from all classes are taken into account, poetry and prose are relatively evenly represented. The statistical data presented by the PhD candidate are accompanied by adequate comments on the reasons why certain literary texts are preferred at a given stage of education. The full description of the literary texts in this chapter is not a simple enumeration, but each work is followed by a brief analytical presentation.

In the fourth chapter, *General characteristics and values reflected in literature textbooks*, the works are grouped and analyzed thematically. The chapter begins with an overview of Albanian, Kosovo, and foreign authors in each grade. The thematic content of the textbooks is very well presented again in each year of education. Special attention is paid to the values and messages that are available in prose texts as well as in poetic works. After that an analysis of old and modern literature is made, taking romanticism as the starting point of modern literature. An interesting part of this chapter is the analysis of the eternal values, as the doctoral candidate calls them, which are embedded in the literary works in the school curriculum. According to her, foreign and Albanian authors show many common characteristics and patterns in the themes they develop, as these are universal themes that excite different peoples and cultures. We can summarize that the analysis in this chapter follows three directions – genre (poetry and prose), eras (classical and contemporary authors), common elements (in different eras, in texts by native and foreign authors).

At the end of the fourth chapter, a short analytical overview of Bulgarian literary works translated into Albanian is made: Anthology of Bulgarian poetry, *Bay Ganyo* by Aleko Konstantinov, a collection of short stories by Chudomir, *Wild Tales* by Nikolay Haitov, poems by Hristo Botev, *Under the Yoke* by Ivan Vazov, selected poems by Nikola Vaptsarov. The author focuses on classic Bulgarian works and points out that there is no work of so-called socialist realism. However, all the works were published in Tirana at different time periods (since the 1950s, the latest being from 2006) and are not available in Kosovo. The doctoral candidate motivates the decision to examine the translations of Bulgarian authors, even though they are not part of the textbooks in Kosovo, with the intention of comparing their ideas and messages with the already examined values in the Albanian and foreign works included in the educational program. This part is the connection between the topic of the dissertation and the fact that it is being written and defended in a Bulgarian university, but it stands a little apart from the general concept of the work.

The conclusion is analytical, very aptly presents the main conclusions of the text, but it is quite short. I can fully agree with some of the recommendations for improving the teaching material given by the author of the work.

The contributions of the dissertation, contrary to the conclusion, are too detailed, but correspond to the achievements of the work. The bibliography does not contain many sources and they are mainly Albanian.

In general, Safete Statovtsi Shala's dissertation is at a very good scientific level, with adequate terminology and style. The main achievement from my point of view is the good structure of the text and above all its comprehensiveness. In some places, the analysis is too short and seems superficial, but this is justified by the completeness of the text and the aspiration to cover the entire teaching material of literature in Kosovo. In the dissertation, in addition to qualitative analysis, there is also some quantitative data on fiction in Kosovo literature textbooks (e.g. ratio of prose to poetry), which I find valuable.

The volume of the work is more than expected – 290 standard pages, the abstract in Bulgarian faithfully reflects the content of the text in Albanian.

The publications on the topic of the dissertation actually go far beyond what is expected of a doctoral candidate – the list includes three monographs and numerous scientific articles. All publications, both monographs and articles, show Safete Statovtsi Shala's in-depth knowledge of the topic she develops. They examine various aspects related to the topic of the

dissertation – general presentation of literature in textbooks in Kosovo over a ten-year period (2000 - 2010), the loss of motivation among students, the management of secondary education in Kosovo, the school environment and its impact on the learning process, etc.

In conclusion, I believe that the dissertation has all the necessary scientific qualities, and I will vote for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree *doctor* to Safete Statovtsi Shala.

Assoc. prof. Ekaterina Tarpomanova