

ASSESSMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Mariyana Nikolova Stamova, Ph.D.
Institute for Balkan Studies with Center of Thrachology, BAS

Re: Safete Shala's Ph.D. thesis entitled "Artistic texts in literature textbooks for schools in Kosovo" for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Professional Field 2.1. Philology - Literature of the People in Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia (Albanian Literature)

The proposed thesis examines a number of important topics that are relevant to any educational system, not only to Kosovo, as it concerns a number of essential problems, ranging from reading and perception of literary texts to their psychological impact on children and young people in the shaping of personality and perception of the educational material in the full cycle from the first to the last twelfth grade of school education. Therefore, a huge volume of texts in modern textbooks has been examined and analyzed. The author's focus is on the textbooks actively used at present, because many authors participated and the books changed frequently in the past. The dissertation responds to the need of a comprehensive analysis of literary texts in Albanian language and literature textbooks, focusing on the literary value of representative literary works and excerpts according to age categories in school education - something that has not been done exhaustively before and is among the major contributions of the author.

Another field of the research is the comparative analysis of the artistic texts by Albanian and foreign authors in order to discover the common and different values, aesthetic models and content elements in them, as well as their functions in the pedagogical realm. The comparison of works from Bulgarian literature translated into Albanian is also of interest to the Bulgarian audience. This multi-layered analysis also requires the application of more than one scholarly methodology, which resulted in the demonstrated combination of different methodological approaches, which undoubtedly makes the work more efficient and in-depth.

After clarifying the objectives, tasks, methodology, contributions in the introductory first chapter, in the second chapter an overview of the literature curricula and programs for all classes has been made. The presentation unfolds how the manuals were compiled and which literary texts were selected. Special attention has been paid to reading skills as they and how vital it is “or teachers to know the reading process well and also to apply effective methods in order to educate students as active readers for life”. From a theoretical and psychological point of view, the question is posed how to motivate students to read independently? The author emphasizes that without this, reading would remain only a superficial skill, stimulated only by momentary necessity. Emphasis is placed on the development of language culture from reading to writing, as well as on the close connection with other areas of human knowledge, as well as on the educational role of the literary text.

The third chapter describes in detail the literary texts included in the textbooks of Albanian language, reading and literature in Albanian schools in Kosovo from the first to the twelfth grade, indicating the names of the authors, the titles of the works and the content of the specific excerpts from them. The analysis in the third chapter focuses on the content of the literary texts through classification by form – prose and poetry, and also through the prism of national and foreign authors. A general classification by topic has been applied to this chapter that familiarizes thoroughly the readers with the available materials. The statistical analysis contributes to a very large extent to the understanding of the nature of the systematization of texts in Albanian textbooks at all levels of secondary education.

In the fourth chapter the author has examined the common values between the artistic texts - didactic, aesthetic, human, etc., both at the level of internal-literary generalization, and in a comparative literary plan, old and modern literature, Albanian and foreign, Albanian and Bulgarian through the translations of Bulgarian classic authors into Albanian etc. The author comes to the conclusion that from the point of view of the comparison of Albanian authors and foreign authors, the main criterion for the inclusion of one or another author is the universality of themes, motives, aesthetics as well as the publicity of author names. Ethno-psychological features, as well as cultural, historical and religious differences, are grounds for including one or another text in order to enrich the students' worldview and mentality. Numerous specific examples from prose and poetry, from old and new literature for the respective grades are presented.

Without dwelling on all the contributions of the author, I will note only the most important ones, such as the comprehensiveness of the material, the application of the comparative-literary analysis

in its many aspects, the analysis of translations from Bulgarian authors, which propagates the opportunity for further comparative studies of the literature curricula in Bulgaria and in other countries.

My attention was drawn to the interesting topic which Bulgarian authors and which of their works are available in Albanian Language in Kosovo. Among them are many Bulgarian poets such as Hristo Botev, Hristo Smirnenski, Nikola Vaptsarov, writers - classics such as Ivan Vazov, contemporary Bulgarian writers such as Chudomir, Nikolay Haytov. This is a very curious and unexplored question and would undoubtedly be of interest to every Bulgarian scientist in the field of humanities. As well as for Balkan studies. The author herself recommends in her conclusion “To attempt for joint projects with the Balkan countries based on the literary content of the textbooks, that will bring children together through play and cultural enrichment.”

On the basis of the observations and analyses, the author concludes that the common motifs in Albanian and foreign works are based on common human values, bearing their national color as well. Among them are homeland, freedom, mother tongue. Universal themes such as social justice, kindness, humanity, sincerity, benevolence, compassion and solidarity are also represented very extensively. Without omitting the specifics and differences, the author claims that “Albanian and foreign works in their content are subject to universalism in human nature”, and the differences are exhibited mainly in their genre and artistic means.

Last but not least, the number of publications the author has resorted to, duly complements the research.

The above assessment allows me to propose the award to Safete Statovtsi Shala the scientific and educational degree “doctor” in Professional field: 2.1. Philology; Scientific Specialty: Literature of the people of Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia (Albanian literature).

Sofia, 11.04.2023

Jury member:

(Assoc. Prof. Mariyana Stamova, Ph.D.)