

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Begzad Baliu, University of Pristina "Hassan Pristina", Faculty of  
Education

for dissertation of Safete Shala for acquiring the scientific and educational  
degree *doctor*

Dissertation topic: "Artistic Texts in Literature Textbooks for Kosovo Schools"

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Dear Members of the Commission,

Dear Mr. Mentor, Professor Rosana Bejleri,

I am honored to I have been officially elected as a member of the Commission for the defense of Safete Shala- Doctorate Candidate.

I have worked at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pristina "Hasan Prishtina" for 20 years. Where I was working as a professor for the Bachelor level in the courses of Albanian Language and Literature master's program.

Furthermore, I have followed the school textbook's scientific research in teaching and didactics for many years, being one of a reviewer of one of most successful projects within the University. The topic of the master's degree in literature focused around textbooks used in Gymnasiums in Pristina during the period of the years 2000-2010. Moreover, different projects and comments given for the extensive publications for high school textbooks in Kosovo, where I was working as a co-author to the current textbooks for secondary schools: Albanian Language 10, 11 and 12 high school levels. As I concluded from the assessment of the literary text in high school textbooks for 2000-2010, I emphasized two notable aspects of the manuscript. Firstly, Professor Isak Shema, well-known as the mentor who supervised the preparation of the text. Secondly, I observed that the presented text included didactic and historical-literary research, indicating that the researcher has provided insights equivalent to the doctoral thesis.

Candidate Safete Shala: I have carefully read Shala's doctoral thesis: Artistic Texts in the textbooks in Kosovo (p. 245). Two significant issues shape the interpretation of the history of literature and University teaching: their substantial contributions to research and the ongoing discussions in recent years about literature and the development of them in school textbooks. The value of this manuscript also lies in the fact that it has studied the method of presentation for

literary texts within these textbooks, as well as an independent assessment of this regard, emphasizing the achievements and shortcomings.

The manuscript of researcher Safete Shala has a structure consisting of four chapters, including an Introduction, Conclusion and References.

After the Preface, the manuscript opens with the first chapter, which includes the main components of the study methodology:

- The introduction,
- The law of topic selection,
- The object and aims of the paper,
- The methodology and structure of the paper.

Also included are keywords, expressions, and the scientific contribution to the dissertation. It is evident from the reasons presented in her thesis, the scientific concepts on which she has built the structure of the topic, the methodological approach she has chosen, and what she wants to reach in her research. The candidate has diligently equipped herself with a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and methodological aspects of her topic, specifically focusing on the literary texts found in Reading Books 1-12, commonly used as school textbooks.

In the second chapter of her thesis, the candidate deals with the pedagogical character of its literature nature and non-literary texts included in the textbooks. It is about her findings on the pedagogical research of school textbooks, the curricular character of literature programs and the literary-artistic and aesthetic values of literary texts. Additionally, she incorporates the intrinsic content of the Reading Book, the role of literature as a document, its literary value, and the body of knowledge and interpretation surrounding it.

Her research on the relationship between language and literature is essential in this context. She explores its linguistic, literary, and stylistic interpretations, its application in historical-literary contexts, and the generation of a new language. Her work also delves into didactic language interpretation, learning of linguistic richness, and teacher discourse's role in the classroom.

The third chapter of this research investigates how students enable their creative freedom and their engagement with literature intersect. It explores their psycho-motor skills and the

challenges of writing culture in Kosovo, as well as the significance of education and the noble purpose of literature. As a result, the role of printed educational texts Books, along with the function of literature in disseminating knowledge and information, holds immense importance to the future literature of Kosovo.

In the third chapter of Safete Shala's thesis, she explores another dimension of her research on literary and non-literary texts in reading books. Her research now focuses on analyzing Albanian literature in reading books, ranging from Primer to Reading Book 12. The presentation of these texts has become systematic and analytical, with complete data provided for each text, even if they do not meet the parameters of bibliographic units. What stands out about the texts chosen for the Primer is the absence of their authors in the texts, even though they are not generally texts of a popular character. It is different with literary texts (prose and poetry, drama and essay), whose authors work in a complementary way.

This chapter presents several problems of theoretical, cultural, educational, and pedagogical nature within the historical, cultural, and informative context. The author's objective is to clarify her perspectives on the historical, literary, and pedagogical evaluation of Albanian literature in school textbooks.

The candidate has diligently presented different authors and their texts, conducting a thorough analysis of their content to provide substantiated evidence of the significance within a representative context. However, the representation of authors in our textbooks should strive to offer a comprehension of the notable writers in Albanian literature. Similarly, the published literary texts must adequately elucidate the genres and literary types created in Albanian literature.

The author discusses the shared values of the literary units in the textbooks in the fourth chapter. The author categorizes these units as texts by authors from Albania, authors from Kosovo, foreign authors, and texts by Bulgarian authors. The author suggests separating this categorization into a separate chapter, which would be a better approach, as it represents an original and exciting work.

While the candidate has elucidated some principles of this division in her speech, it is important to emphasize that, with a few exceptions, Albanian literature in the second half of the 20th century, both in the former Yugoslavia and Albania, has not fully acknowledged this division.

Albanian literature has historically evolved as a cohesive entity, even during complex periods of its development caused by historical events. Old literature was developed mainly in Northern Albania, Kosovo and Italy; The literature of the Beytezhians had been developed throughout the Albanian ethnic space; National Renaissance literature had been developed mainly in the diaspora (Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Egypt, Greece) and less so in Albania and Kosovo. Only realistic and modern literature had been developed throughout the Albanian ethnic space and in Italy. Politicians in the former Yugoslavia attempted to separate the Albanian literature of Kosovo from Albanian literature in Albania after the Second World War. However, Albanian writers Esad Mekuli and Adem Demaçi opposed these attempts. Even in Albania, from 1968 to 1990, there was an effort to create Albanian Literature of Albanian and Kosovar writers whose works would be published in the former Yugoslavia. However, The last volume of the History of Albanian Literature (Literature of Socialist Realization) in Tirana in 1980 excluded literature written outside of Albania. Researchers and writers in Kosovo reacted against this attitude (See, Professor Rexhep Qosja, 1967, 1972, 1980). In this course, she followed the typology horizontally, including Albanian and foreign literature. However, vertically which involves Albanian literary chronology, is seen in the context of foreign literature.

Lastly, the significance of this didactic research rests in the synthesis of literary motives in relation to the curricula of Kosovo. Additionally, the candidate has conscientiously and comprehensively summarized and analyzed the general thematic content of the literary units in the texts, categorizing them based on class levels and examining distinctively the content values portrayed in prose and poetry, as well as the common values.

All the texts were published for grades 1-12 level, by authors in Kosovo and Albania, by researchers with great scientific experience and by researchers with minimal experience in education and school didactics.

While she provides thoughtful assessments of these publications, there is an opportunity for her to offer more incisive and constructive feedback. Unfortunately, due to the biases of the book writers, there is a lack of crucial information and substantial knowledge about the authors and masterpieces of Albanian literature, which has had a detrimental impact on an entire generation of young people.

The significance of these examples cannot be overstated when it comes to comprehending the historical aspects of Albanian literature, encompassing language, education, methodology, and aesthetics, as they are indispensable for explaining the literary and aesthetic values of the literature. A separate bud, which could be a separate chapter on this topic, is a brief analysis of the works of the Bulgarian Canon. Albanian literature and Bulgarian literature, as well as our shared history in South-Eastern Europe, have their peculiarities and influences. The first reason is that many Albanian writers lived, worked, and published in Sofia. The second reason is that a part of the literature of the Albanian National Renaissance originated from Sofia. The third reason is that Sofia produced the most influential literary press and scholarly texts. Furthermore, at the beginning of the 20th century, efforts were made to translate Bulgarian literature and work by other Balkan authors into Albanian.

Finally, researchers of literary theory also highlight that the literature of socialist realism did not originate from Moscow but from Sofia. They often cite the work of Sterjo Spasse, the prominent writer, theoretician, and translator from Bulgarian literature, as a model example.

The rapid beginnings of the translation of Bulgarian literature in Albania and Kosovo and Albanian literature in Bulgaria since the 1930s are associated with the name of Sterjo Spasse and later Thoma Kacori, as well as being crowned with the first Bulgarian anthology in Albanian literature: *Anthology of Bulgarian poetry* (edited by Sterjo Spasse, Tirana, 1951. SHB "N. Frashëri". (On page 2): Printed under the auspices of the League of Writers of Albania, p. 185). Let us refer only to the first and most complete Bibliography of Sterjo Spasse by Professor Jup Kastrati. However, he had previously written interesting articles and literary works and had translated and written with great interest, mainly about Bulgarian literature. The literary creation of Sterjo Spasse was translated only after becoming the carrier of the cultural, theoretical-literary, social, political and state in Albania. Sterjo Spasse represented literary creators in the Literary Conferences of the Balkan and Eastern Bloc countries during a period when he was actively engaged in various activities. Activities such as representing the Albanian state for informative, cultural, literary, and political issues. As a result, his literary and cultural creativity began to be translated and published in 1945.

By referring to this Bibliography, we can understand that Sterjo Spasse translated 38 units, most of which were in Bulgarian, a language he was proficient in. Notably, from 1945 through 1961,

articles were translated into Bulgarian, covering topics such as Albanian literature, Bulgarian literature, exceptional authors of Bulgarian literature, cultural activities of the Albanian National Renaissance in Sofia, the history of Albanian literature, and literary developments in Albania. His first work, "Nusja me duvak" (stories), was translated and published in 1945. Further, the writer and researcher Thoma Kacori (an Albanian writer who lived in Bulgaria) translated his novels as soon as he published them in the Albanian language. Sterjo Spasse translated 56 items from 1935 to 1961, ranging from daily newspaper articles to voluminous novels, including works by his favourite Bulgarian writers and renowned world writers. In addition, he translated Bulgarian writers previously unknown in Albanian during this period, such as Javorov, Javkov, Botev, Karaslavof, Markov, and Vazov. Notably, this was the case with the novels "They were not alone" (1954) and "Afërdita Again in the Village" (1956).

The candidate Safete Shala has, therefore, successfully researched a part of the Bulgarian literature in the Albanian language, following the traces of its publications until 1952, and has made a descriptive and highly analytical description of the works of literature: Bulgarian "Selected Poems" by Nikola Vapcar (Tirana, 1952); "Poem" by Hristo Botev (Tirana, 1956); "Under the Yoke" by the writer Ivan Vazov (Tirana, 1958); "Wild stories" by the writer Nikolla Hajtov, (Tirana, 2004), "Pakëz Melhem bulgar", by Čudomir and Nikolaj Hajtov (Tirana, 2006). Finally, the candidate brings to the discussion the volume "Anthology of Bulgarian Poetry" (Tirana, 2001). In this vein, I suggest to Mrs Safete Shala that when publishing the topic, she should complement it with the volume "Bulgarian Novels" by Pavel Vezhinov (Tirana, 1991) and with the very popular novella "Baj Gano" by the Bulgarian writer Aleksa Konstantinov published in Pristina. It is worth mentioning that the first Bulgarian writer published in Pristina was Metodi Hristov, with the children's story "The Sky is High" included in an Anthology with foreign writers in 1966.

The Candidate Safete Shala, in her doctoral thesis, presents conclusions and recommendations that I find relevant not only for her scientific research but also for the potential publication of didactic texts for schools in Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, the Presheva Valley, and Montenegro, where Albanian children study and attain the Albanian language.

**Prof. dr. Begzad Baliu**

*Pristina, 2023*