

Review for the dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ogniana Georgieva-Teneva

"Civic Values in Bulgarian Children's and Youth Poetry (1878 - 1918)"

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Moris Fadel,

New Bulgarian University

The monography by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ogniana Georgieva-Teneva "Civic Values in Bulgarian Children's and Young People's Poetry (1878-1918)", intended for the acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences", addresses a problem that the study of children's literature in Bulgaria has not dealt with so far: the attitude of children's and young people's literature to civic values.

The introduction carefully and in detail outlines the methodological and theoretical orientations that the work will follow. In outlining these orientations one of the main features of the type of research undertaken by Assoc. Teneva is revealed: the need of balance between the analysis of the aesthetic value of the works and the values they convey. One of the merits of the study is that the introduction clearly highlights the difference between the two. A work can be attractive as a value position but not of interest as an aesthetic realization and vice versa.

The first chapter of the work is dedicated to the relationship between the civic values of the work and its aesthetic content. I would emphasize that Dr. Ogniana Teneva bases her reflections on a detailed knowledge of foreign and Bulgarian contributions on the subject. Her text is dialogical. She constantly refers to various researchers, comments, and challenges their understandings. What is impressive is her knowledge of contemporary theoretical contributions on the relationship between the value base of a work and its aesthetic parameters.

Besides the contrast between the aesthetic characteristics and the values the dissertation outlines another conflict: between the subordination of collectivist models and the defense of individualist positions. It is well seen in the most contributory chapter in my view: on war and children's literature. The war is presented in a dual way: on the one hand, it is seen as a situation of duty for self-sacrifice in the face of the danger looming over the collective, but, on the other hand, in one of the poems for children appears the question "Who the evil person in battle has brought us...", signifying the awakening of the individual consciousness, able to see the multitude ("we") from a distance, critically.

The monography by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ogniana Georgieva-Teneva is valuable not only for the problems it poses, not only for the topics it comments on, but also for the perspectives it opens. It forces us to think of children's literature in a complex, ambivalent way: as evoking aesthetic admiration or rejection, and as convincing us of certain values, which, however, must also be understood in a complex way: as bound to institutions (prince, state, army) and at the same time as affirming the desire for separation from the institutional way of life.

I strongly recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ogniana Georgieva-Teneva the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the scientific field 2.1. Philology.

20. 06. 2022

.....

(M. Fadel)