

REVIEW

Ref. competition for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” in
“Literature for Children”,
field of higher education: 1. “Pedagogical Sciences”,
professional field “1.2. “Pedagogy”,
announced by Trakia University, Stara Zagora, in State Gazette, issue 88/20.10.2023
Review Author: Assoc. Prof. Anton Penchev Stoykov, PhD

1. Legality of the Procedure

In accordance with Order No. ПД - 4381/ 06.12.2023 of the Rector of Trakia University, I have been appointed as an internal member of the Scientific Jury in connection with a competition for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” in “Literature for Children” in the field of higher education 1. “Pedagogical Sciences”, professional field 1.2. “Pedagogy”, announced by Trakia University, Stara Zagora, in State Gazette, issue: 88/20.10.2023.

For the period of running the competition, all procedural rules applicable in connection with enforcement of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the accompanying regulations of Trakia University have been observed. Senior Assistant Professor **Plamen Penev Penev**, PhD is the only participant in the announced competition. As seen from the different scientometric indicators, the minimum national requirements for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” have been covered.

2. Candidate's Career Profile

Senior Assistant Professor **Plamen Penev Penev**, PhD has earned his higher education degree at the Veliko Tarnovo University St. Cyril and St. Methodius with the qualification “Master in Bulgarian Language and History and a Secondary School Teacher”. In 2008, he was conferred the educational and science degree “Doctor” in the scientific specialty 05.04.02 “Bulgarian Literature” after defending his doctoral thesis entitled “Ivan Tsanev’s Poetry in the Context of the Contemporary Bulgarian Literature”. In 2020 after winning a competition, he stepped into the position “Senior Assistant Professor” at the department of Pre-school and Primary School

Padagogy at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Trakia University. He is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Writers.

3. Candidate's Scientific and Scientific and Applied Production

From the statement of information for compliance with the minimum national requirements for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" submitted by Senior Assistant Professor Plamen Penev, PhD, it is seen that the candidate's scientific activity meets the required minimum and with regards to some indicator groups even surpasses the required minimum. Under Group "A", the candidate's score is 50 points out of 50, under Group "C" – 100 points out of 100, under Group "D" – 670 (where the requirement is for 200), under group "E" – 85 (where the requirement is for 50).

Submitted also is a statement of information for compliance with additional indicators.

In this competition for occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" in "Literature for Children", Senior Assistant Professor Plamen Penev, PhD, participates with four monographs where he is a sole author, one of them presented as a habilitation project. On the basis of his doctoral thesis defense, submitted are two published books. Submitted are 23 sole authorship publications published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collections. No publications, published in scientific journals refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information are submitted. In the submitted published materials, the citations are correct. I find no plagiarism.

The project stated as the candidate's habilitation project for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" is the monograph published in 2023 and entitled "The Child and the Child's. Evolution of the Child's Self in the Bulgarian Poetry. Between the Literature for Children and the Other Literature. (1950s - 1990s)".

In it, the author aims at bringing out and highlighting views, topics, motifs and concepts from the children's poetry literary annals from the second half of the 20th century until today. An interesting approach which the author skillfully uses is the differentiation of the Bulgarian authors and their poetry collections in the presence of world-known names, and hence, tries to define the Bulgarian specifics of the literature for children in particular. All this is observed through the child's evolution as an image and through the prism of the child's perception of the world. In his

monograph, both the child and the child's are in the role of constant poetry concepts, seen as main characteristics of the child's world, life and mentality, and analyzed in their constantly changing evolution over the periods studied by the author.

An interesting and innovative author's notion is the inclusion also of authors who do not write particularly for children but "have an inner connection with the child theme".

In the "Critical Chronicle. The Life of Concepts" which was published in 2012, attempts for analytical understanding of the Ivan Tsanev's "children's" poetry stand out and in a broader sense, of the poet's "child theme". The "child's share" was sought in the resourceful integrity, encompassing also the creative pursuits of a whole constellation of famous authors, including E. Canetti, Hr. Trendafilov, I. Tsanev, D. Debelyanov, B. Hristov, etc.

In the supplemented version of this edition published in 2014, the author's searches are enriched and significantly expanded. Some important aspects of the children's literature from the mid-twentieth and the early twenty-first century are highlighted.

In the books published on the grounds of the defended doctoral thesis, including two volumes with the same title "Two Books on Ivan Tsanev", the main topic is the analysis of the creative development and the poetic nature of Ivan Tsanev's poetry. Along with this, the author reflects on the intersections with the 60s -70s and 80s-90s poetry, disregarding the generally accepted bipolar notions.

In the second volume, the author again draws the attention to Ivan Tsanev's "children's" poetry collections in the context of his entire production. In fact, Plamen Penev's author searches rest on the child's genesis as a unifying and comprehensive theme, present in the works of Ivan Tsanev but also of a large number of many other authors, on whose works he performs a critical analysis.

As a whole, the author's analyzed scientific works and books have been complementing our literary history since the second half of the twentieth century in both conceptual and textological aspect. The author suggests his own sociocultural, aesthetic and ideological read-through, expanding the context of the imaginary aspect in its cultural settings, and also allowing it to be perceived in depth.

The publication activity with regards to the scientific periodicals includes 23 titles, all of which are sole authorship publications in scientific journals and collections of scientific

conferences. These are published mostly in refereed editions, which is a proof of their scientific value. In the majority of them, the author's searches, as reflected in the books and monographs, are expanded. They further enrich the thematic problem research dimensions of the author's searches with shades from the literary life, among which the theme of the authentic child in the so-called "poetry for adults" creeps in again.

4. Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

The theoretical and empirical contributions in the submitted scientific production can be summarized as follows:

1. The ideological and textological analysis of literary works significant for our recent literary history is enriched by means of analytical set-ups aimed at finding the actual contributory dimensions of different authors, of their creative worlds, as well as of entire generational communities;
2. The literary works and the decades in which they were produced, are examined on a multi-aspect basis, allowing their in-depth analysis;
3. After they have been traced, the etymological primary basis of the creative works in terms of their genuinity, language, emotionality, figurative and metaphorical associations, have been put together as one.

5. Citations

A reference is made to a total of 8 citations in the documents submitted, three of which are in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information.

6. Teaching and Teaching-methodological Activity

The scientific and research searches of Senior Assistant Professor Plamen Penev, PhD, find their natural continuation and reflection in the author's curricula through conveying to the fellow students the observed trends and concepts of particular authors. Such are the curricula in the subjects "Bulgarian Literature for Children", "World European Literature for Children", "Fictional Reality and Tropes in the Literature for Children", "Creative Writing". By them the author aims at conveying to the students the knowledge about which piece of literature is valuable and how they can recognize it.

A major aspect is the author's concept that students should be able to get of feel of the very process of creating of a work of literature, of the technology for the creation of a fictional text. In terms of their content, the mentioned curricula successfully achieve the intention for "translating" the educational and pedagogical language into the profile of the authentic literature.

Senior Assistant Professor Plamen Penev, PhD delivers lectures and practicals in the above subjects to the students in the Bachelor's and Master's programmes.

7. Recommendations

I reckon that Mr. Penev, PhD has sufficient scientific experience in order to prepare and publish a teaching aid to help the training in the subject "Literature for Children" for the students taking part in the programmes "Pre-School and Primary Pedagogy", "Pre-School Pedagogy", "Primary School Pedagogy with a Foreign Language", and Social Pedagogy.

8. Conclusion

I have known Senior Assistant Professor Plamen Penev Penev, PhD as a tutor, colleague but also a scientist. He has a good reputation in the pedagogy community. The topic of his publications is relevant to the topic of the announced competition. His scientific and pedagogical activity meets the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Regulations on its enforcement.

Granting my positive evaluation with regards to the candidate's educational and teaching activity, the scientific significance of his publications and the subsequent citations, **I strongly recommend to the Scientific Jury at the Faculty Council, Faculty of Pedagogy to appoint Senior Assistant Professor Plamen Penev Penev, PhD on the academic position "Associate Professor"** in "Literature for Children" in the field of higher education: 1. "Pedagogical Sciences", professional field "1.2. "Pedagogy".

01.02.2024

Review Author:

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