

REVIEW STATEMENT

by **Professor Dr. Habil. Cleo Stefanova Protochristova, Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski**

on the materials submitted in application for the open position of

Associate professor at The Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

in the Sphere of HE 2. Humanities; Area of professional qualification 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian literature - The Bulgarian literature after WW1)

Following Order № P33- 2876 from 11.06.2019 of the Rector of Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski I have been appointed a member of the academic review board for the academic position of **Associate professor at PU** in the sphere of Higher education 2. **Humanities**, area of professional qualification **2.1. Philology (Bulgarian literature – The Bulgarian literature after WW1)**, which was opened for the needs of the Department of History of Literature and Comparative literatures at the Philology Faculty.

The single applicant for the open position, announced in the *State gazette*, issue 31 from 12.04.2019 and on the webpage of the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski, is principal lecturer Gergina Vasileva Krasteva, PhD, from PU.

The applicant has graduated from the University of Veliko Turnovo, where she received her BA and MA degrees in Bulgarian philology, after which she joined the ranks of the academic community at Plovdiv University: first, in her capacity of full-time PhD student from 2003 until 2006 when she defended her PhD thesis on the topic of “Aspects of poetic self-reflection in the poetry of the 1970s”, and, subsequently, as a lecturer in Bulgarian literature after WW1 and in Historical poetics.

For the purposes of the open position the applicant has submitted a habilitation work and twenty seven publications which had been accomplished after the defense of her PhD thesis. Nine of these are related to the topic of her habilitation, the other eighteen discuss various aspects of contemporary Bulgarian literature within the time-frame between the middle of the 20th century until the present. A significant number of the publications reflect the applicant’s participation in different national and international academic forums and projects. Taken together, these clearly reveal Krasteva’s long-standing, stable and in-depth interests in the chosen academic field.

Logically, a key part in the application of Gergina Krasteva plays her habilitation work – a monograph entitled “The personal and the anthological. Auto-anthologizing models and personal anthologizing presences in Bulgarian poetry in the period between 2008 and 2017”. The chosen

topic is directly related to and serves as a logical continuation of the author's stated and pursued with dedication academic interests in the history of contemporary Bulgarian literature and Bulgarian poetry in particular, on which her PhD work was focused. Without running the risk of being perceived as prone to exaggeration, I can safely claim that Gergina Krasteva is one of the most competent and thorough experts in contemporary Bulgarian poetry.

The work is ambitious, wide-ranging and warrants respect with its very starting point: namely, with the choice of auto-anthological models as a focal point of the study, since such a focus involves an analytical discussion of works that rely extensively on self-observation and self-judgment. Thus, the analytical procedures inevitably gravitate in a relentlessly centrifugal regime since the study of anthological volumes of poetry presupposes working in parallel with the poetic texts themselves on one hand and, on the other, with the vision of the poet about them, which conditions the makeup of the respective edition, but also with the stabilized assessment and evaluative views that result from the existing grids of critical reception. The next testing moment stems from the fact that anthologized volumes of poetry designed to construct and legitimize a desired image of the artist appear as projections of a complex amalgam of qualitatively different self-judgments, imagined creative identities and utopian goals. Therefore, it is the researcher's own strengths in auto-reflexivity that might shape a suitable strategy for the analysis and theoretical conceptualization of this heterogeneous material in its entirety.

The next indisputable merit of the work lies in the risk Gergina Krasteva has undertaken in disregarding the conventionally accepted boundary between literary history and expedient literary criticism so as to accomplish her study on a terrain which these two do not simply co-inhabit but also interact, constructing a complex, patchy milieu, the analysis of which presupposes adopting a flexible and highly adaptive research strategy that combines a range of perspectives and conceptualizations. Managing to maintain such a "double regime" in which immediate observations on current literary development runs in parallel and is supported by precise textological insights and rationalizations in the mold of literary history, which is next to impossible in the absence of a critical distance to rely on, is a truly serious challenge and a daunting task. Among the numerous achievements of the author, alongside her insightful readings and original interpretations of an impressive body of works, is the offered conceptual framework which aims to construct a typology for the various auto-anthologizing projects.

Another important achievement of Krasteva's habilitation work lies in its applicability to pedagogical goals. It is a universally acknowledged fact that university courses in the history of contemporary Bulgarian literature more often than not stop around the node of the 1960s and 1970s. In the face of this academic practice, Gergina Krasteva's study offers a great opportunity for

enriching our literary history with an original, solid in its contents, conceptually convincing, working model for the newest Bulgarian literature.

The importance of Gergina Krasteva's scholarly achievements and their public success is evidenced through the references to and citations of her publications; they are considerable in number and a significant part of them appears in some of the most prestigious editions dedicated to contemporary Bulgarian literature in works by leading specialists in the respective academic field.

In conclusion, I can add that as an applicant in this open competition Gergina Krasteva has submitted a significant number of scholarly essays which contain original scholarly and pedagogically applicable contributions. They have been published in prestigious journals and scholarly volumes, including such published by international academic publishing houses. Her theoretical studies can find practical application and some of them are directly geared towards the learning process. She is undoubtedly a highly qualified scholar and university lecturer.

With her pedagogical portfolio, the volume and scope of her academic production as well as the high degree of her public visibility, Gergina Vasileva Krasteva meets all the criteria for the position she is applying to as they are stipulated in the Law for the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Rulebook for the application of LDASRB and the corresponding Rulebook of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. The results she has achieved in her pedagogical and scholarly work also fully correspond to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Philology that had been adopted in accordance of PU's Rulebook for the application of LDASRB.

Having acquainted myself with the materials and scholarly publications submitted for the purposes of this position, having analyzed their significance and the contributions entailed in them with regard to their theoretical, scholarly, and pedagogical merits, I find it expedient to confirm my overall positive assessment, as expressed above, and to recommend to the Scholarly board to prepare a report proposal to the Faculty Council of the Philology Faculty for the selection of Gergina Vasileva Krasteva, PhD for the academic position of Associate professor at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in the Sphere of HE **2. Humanities**, area of professional qualification **2.1. Philology (Bulgarian literature – The Bulgarian literature after WW1)**.

30.08.2019

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Habil. Cleo Protohristova