

PEER REVIEW

**of the dissertation "The objective study of morality and contemporary ethics"
by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emilia Vasil Marinova for the award of the degree
of Doctor of philosophical sciences in the Professional field 2.3. Philosophy**

Reviewer: Prof. Tanya Nedelcheva, PhD, Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Reason: This review was prepared in pursuance of Order of the Director of Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge at BAS, No RD-09-526 of July 17, 2019.

1. Information about the thesis

The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, notes and literature in a total volume of 258 pages. The list of cited sources contains a total of 301 titles, 210 of which are in Cyrillic (Bulgarian and Russian) and 55 in Latin.

Overall, the text is well structured. The internal logic layer is decomposed into separate elements in an adequate and proportionate manner, according to their semantic meaning, with clear formulation of goals, theoretical and methodological grounds and professionally conducted research.

2. Comprehensive analysis of scientific achievements

The dissertation deals with the psychology of morality - a very active interdisciplinary field developed today, but not in Bulgaria. It can even be said that there is a certain push for ethical developments in the psychology of morality.

The dissertation presented is the first attempt to outline the achievements of the psychology of morality. It introduces an additional specification, focusing on objective research methods trying to discover the effectiveness of socio-psychological, psychological, sociological and other – methods in the study of moral judgments, thinking, rules, behavior, feelings, etc. The dissertation makes an important addition by explaining why it focuses on "objective" ones. This is, in fact, the central setting in the dissertation that unfolds and presents its various theoretical perspectives. A leading regulatory idea in revealing the diversity of "images" is the objective study of moral phenomena.

Above all, the dissertation achieves a complete and harmonious unity of different at first glance grinding space. This diversity is evident in the content itself. The first chapter focuses on the methodology related to objective studies of morality - the competencies of the psychology of morality, popular objective studies of morality, quantity versus quality. In the second chapter, the focus is shifting and is already on ethical regulations in objective studies of child morality - ethical correctness, the principle of prudence, sparingly does not mean no effect, virtue is also ethically framed. Chapter three analyzes a number of aspects of L. Kohlberg's concept, but not at all, but in the context of teaching and relevant practices in contemporary Bulgarian schools. The next part of the dissertation is devoted to the objective studies in Bulgarian ethics. Here, the development of Bulgarian ethical thought in the present and above all in the last few decades is mainly traced. An important element of this part is the interpretation of applied ethics. The fourth chapter is devoted to socio-psychological research and their relevance to ethics: Morality and the social psyche with a view to cultural history, Moral rise as an occultation, Dependence of morality on the social psyche, Social psyche and external moral regulation, Some important social forms of morality of influence, the Moral subject as an "open project", from the genetic to the functional reading, Jean Piaget's "Two Morals" and whether this is just a metaphor, Real Autonomy.

The semantic unity of these thematic fields is not formal, but real, and is due to the professional ability to maintain a unified research point of view, to find those aspects of the studied objects that are relevant to the overall logic of the development. It is this semantic coherence that is one of the qualities of development.

A significant contribution is the ability of the analyzed problems not to be contextless, abstract and I would say harmless, but in accordance with the Bulgarian specificity, with the

Bulgarian practice. This is evident not only from tracing the vicissitudes in the development of ethical research in Bulgaria, but also from the rest of the text. This is what I would call Bulgarian development ground. It attaches particular value to the analysis against the background of today's dominance of some of the Bulgarian humanitarians of the contextlessness, ie. "Stories" irrespective of the Bulgarian realities in the respective field. This trend is already threatening and dangerous, because it increases the white spots and increases the amnesia of what the Bulgarian researchers have achieved. In this regard, Prof. E. Marinova demonstrates academicism, which is far from the superficial manifestation of some "local patriotism", but manifests in a deep insight into what Bulgarian researchers have done.

I cannot but mention as positive the quality of the text and the numerous insertions of personal experiences and events of the author's life. In my opinion, this measured autobiography gives a special color and importance to the thesis. I will only add that today the autobiographical relief of an event is becoming more and more relevant.

Of particular interest are texts dealing with the relation of social psyche and morality. The author emphasizes on it and sets vectors on a very fertile, but still undeveloped terrain. If her thesis is formulated, it can be said that factually sociopsychological research is deeply ethical. The articulation of this statement seems obvious, but an ethical reading of inherited socio-psychological research has not yet been made. Take Ivan Hadjiiski's works as an example - they are, without hesitation, socio-psychological but also ethical developments. And the texts of Anton Strashimirov - in fact, his socio-psychological typology of the Bulgarians is not an outline of the moral relief of the respective community group. The confluence and overlap of the socio-psychological (psychological) and ethical is so dense that their conceptual distinction requires very precise microscopic techniques. In this respect, I see a very promising field of research that will allow a new reconstruction of a number of sociological and socio-psychological analyzes by redefining themselves in the categories of ethics.

Another positive quality of development cannot be missed. It is not, in general, purely theoretical, but it focuses on the practical dimensions of the phenomena studied. This general orientation is due to the author's assumption that ethical research has a claim to universality and thus cannot capture the individualized moral practice of what man as a moral being does on a daily basis. These particular moral phenomena cannot be "captured" by the categorical ethical "network" and this is where objective research methods effectively intervene. They provide not only the specifics of the research, but also the practical workload of the

developments, because they are embedded in real everyday moral practice. Particularly relevant in this respect are those statements concerning training, upbringing of children, etc.

In summary, it can be said that the dissertation is a significant contribution and the first more comprehensive attempt to present the achievements in the field of psychology of morality, and in particular the objective methods of the study of morality.

In the dissertation the ideas of the cited authors are presented correctly and are mentioned according to the academic standards.

The abstract and contributions are adequate to the content of the dissertation.

In response to the legislator's request to determine the nature of the scientific contributions to the dissertation, I firmly state that they are "enrichment of existing knowledge" about the current state and perspectives of the problems of ethical knowledge in Bulgarian society.

3. Reflection of the applicant's scientific publications in our and foreign literature (according to his data)

The works of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emilia Marinova have been cited in various publications 72 times. 10 reviews of the person's work have been published. He is the editor and compiler of 18 collections. He is a leader and participant in 9 research projects. Since 2011 she has participated as an organizer and rapporteur in 22 scientific forums. A declaration of originality is attached.

4. Critical notes and recommendations

Of course, in such a content development, there are "places" that can provoke debate, but in this case I will make a more general comment that fits the given format. What gives rise to a sense of lack of reading is the emergence of a more general picture in the research field of the psychology of morality. In the most traditional summarizing analyzes in this area, several leading lines are highlighted - cognitive, behavioral and psychoanalytic. In fact, the dissertation only comments on the first trend with its main representatives, J. Piaget and L. Kolberg. This lack of a more general coordinate system is also evident in the study of the contributions of Bulgarian researchers. In my opinion, a common fourth characteristic can be introduced here, called "socially engaged research", which differs significantly from the other three. This is the general orientation of the development of the Bulgarian ethics in the study of

morality and it gives them a strong theoretical refinement, identity, specificity. And this must be emphasized and distinguished as dignity.

I would also like to make one proposal concerning the possibility of extending the parts of the dissertation related to the development of Bulgarian ethical research. In this respect, there is a broad field of research concerning the topics, problems, emphases, etc., characteristic of Bulgarian ethical research. The end result is a more comprehensive "History of Ethical Research in Bulgaria".

5. The reviewer's personal impressions of the applicant and other information not mentioned in the preceding paragraphs

I know Assoc. Prof. Dr. E. Marinova as a serious and accurate researcher with valuable ideas. Creative and cooperative colleague. He is the editor-in-chief of the online journal Ethical Studies. He is a member of various scientific organizations and unions.

6. Conclusion

Based on the above mentioned achievements and contributions, I recommend to the distinguished Scientific Jury to propose to the Scientific Council of the Institute for Research of Societies and Knowledge at the BAS to award Dr. Emilia Vasil Marinova the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" (Doctor philosophical sciences), professional field 2.3. Philosophy.

September 5, 2019

Reviewer:

Prof. Tanya Nedelcheva