

ATTITUDE OF REVIEWER

by Professor Nikolai Kirilov Mihailov, Ph D. , Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski
Member of a Scientific jury for the defense of dissertation work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Emilia Vasil Marinova** “**OBJECTIVE STUDY OF MORALITY AND CONTEMPORARY ETHICS**” to acquire the scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophical Sciences” (Professional Field 2.3 Philosophy)

The title of the presented dissertation also points to the important, relevant and even scientifically necessary task that the researcher sets. At the beginning of her work, Assoc. Prof. Marinova offers a consistent and reliable definition of her basic thesis - the concept of "objective methods": "It denotes all the empirical (N.M.) methods by which moral judgments, thinking, rules are studied. , also behavior, feelings, etc. They can be socio- psychological, psychological, sociological, but most often complex ” (p.7). Obviously, the author's attention in this case is directed to the study, establishment and research of the manifestations of "moral order" or "moral truths" (in the words of the famous British ethicist David Ross). Therefore, considering the study or research of morality itself as a scholarly goal of the dissertation is done through "research that has as its object the world of morality and is conducted with objective means" (Ibid.). This approach - the determination of ethics by the nature of research and in view of the methods by which it reaches its conclusions - is, on the one hand, known and used in Bulgarian ethical knowledge, as the dissertation also noted. On the other hand, the author proposes an extension and further refinement of this approach in contemporary ethical knowledge, including Bulgarian, since the methods mentioned above referred to another, different stage of it in Bulgarian philosophy. Which, I would like to point out at the outset, bears the mark of scientific conscientiousness and the marks of a long, consistent and undoubtedly fruitful work in this field by the author. Or, as Assoc. Prof. Marinova points out, the aim of her scientific efforts is to contribute to the broadening of knowledge about the manifestations of the diversity of morality in social reality, because "the link between objective study of morality and contemporary processes and trends in ethics remains insufficiently developed" (p.9).

The dissertation review proposal 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. The dissertation's publications are 11, including 1 monograph on its topic. All necessary documents for the procedure are attached. The thesis of the dissertation has an explicitly formulated hypothesis, indicating the model of research in it - the relationship of morality with the social psyche.

Indeed, as we know from George Herbert Mead, the individual Self is possible only because of its relation to the Others. At the beginning of his development, the author set herself ambitious, but achievable for erudite scientist like her - "the study of morality in certain (temporal, spatial, etc.) parameters that escape the ethical approach, but are achievable by the means of objective scientific research' (p.10). This focus on the author's attention alters the focus of ethical reasoning, in her view, leading her to analyze contemporary forms of applied ethics, practical ethics, development ethics, etc. For a long time I have known and followed the fruitful work of Assoc. Prof. Marinova in this truly new and, in my opinion, a necessary field of ethical research in our country. I cannot but note that both the dissertation work and the publications on the topic speak of a continuous systematic scientific work by Assoc. Prof. Marinova, who bears her fruits and earns her followers, especially among the younger generation of Bulgarian ethicists, scientists and people from different fields of science. I am also familiar with the monograph of one of the biggest names in world ethics - Peter Singer, "Practical Ethics" ("Ethics is not an ideal system that is noble in theory but not good enough in practice", Singer), whose last edition was released relatively soon. What unifies the approaches and interest in applied ethics - that of Singer and the one that researches Assoc. Prof. Marinova (Assoc. Prof. Marinova offers an interesting interpretation of the influence of the Australian author in Bulgarian ethical knowledge, formulating the concept of "pre-Singer academic period", p. 145), without affecting in any way the originality and originality of each, is the attempt to prove theoretically, using the methods of empirical research and description, the emergence of a new kind of ethical knowledge that examines the manifestations of morality in societies through the concrete - action, choice, action, decision, upbringing. Aristotle also defines phronesis as a particular kind of practical reason, a human capacity to act according to choice and intention. Therefore, the concept of "applied" ethics in the sense that the dissertation imposes, will mean the application of this ability in diverse and often contradictory everyday situations, but which are objectively conditioned by society, the social psyche, professional activity, social practice, etc. The purpose of both the dissertation and any possible objective study of morality in this context is to describe the social circumstances, including the impact of the social mentality, in which the moral regulation must manifest and to suggest a preferred or desired action against them. Assoc. Prof. Marinova prefers to emphasize the motivation of the act, "here the task is narrowed down and focused on one single aspect - the objective studies that are involved in the psychology of morality" (p. 14). This puts a specific focus on the overall work and helps the author "hold" her thesis in the otherwise diverse stages and topics she goes through. I should note here a tendency in the

whole scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Marinova, namely that she often regards morality itself as the object of study by various sciences dealing with the description and analysis of social facts - sociology, social psychology, cultural studies and more. Many of the proposed publications outline precisely this attempt at social knowledge to highlight "moral objects" (Bernard Williams) that can be explored using appropriate methods and the results obtained to help formulate "valid" or "credible" judgments, and accepting a practical moral choice in a situation of uncertainty, hesitation or even risk, one of the highlights of the scientific interest of Assoc. Prof. Marinova. I find confirmation of these words in the part of my dissertation devoted to the most famous objective studies of morality, where Assoc. Prof. Marinova writes: "Theoretical (classical, hypothetical) moral dilemmas study the judgment of justice and build on the conflict of two moral norms or the rights of two persons" (p. 34). The dissertation has presented a sufficient number of arguments as well as its own analysis to support its position. However, this kind of objectivity, which the author seeks to justify, must be based on a theory that proves universality and claims impartiality. On the other hand, it is not only Kant who defines ethics as a practical philosophy ("it does not seek the principle of knowledge but a rule for acting on one's will"), because as such it is unthinkable without human "involvement" in actions and actions, personal justifying the choice. This is a topic of a long debate in the philosophy of morality in the world, in which Assoc. Prof. Marinova reasonably proposes her decision and, in my opinion, takes a party based on the detailed knowledge of the theses and ideas of the proponents of objectivism. I would interpret the idea of Assoc. Prof. Marinova this way - objective methods describe, but also prove the objectivity of moral necessity (norm), its knowledge and its regulatory action as a real goal of moral education and a way of socialization. In this statement, the dissertation also seeks the specifics of contemporary applied ethics - "Ethical cases today have the merits of an ethical instrument for influencing the choice of a decision as a result of their development in the direction of normative and normative functions" (p. 87).

In her work, Assoc. Prof. Marinova also examines the manifestations of objective studies of morality in contemporary Bulgarian ethics, in fact, mainly considering the Marxist period of its development. As is well known, in this period many of the researchers thought that ethics was scientific, and even some described it as a science, which Assoc. Prof. Marinova points out and analyzes in her research. The main thesis of some Bulgarian ethicists from that period of the history of ethics in Bulgaria is that the scientific substantiation of moral norms is impossible without their scientific (ie objective) study, description and search for regularities. "The norm is not a judgment, but an objective social phenomenon," one of the most well-

established ethics in our country writes at the time. This thesis, which has repeatedly appeared in the works of Bulgarian ethicists from the Marxist period of ethics in Bulgaria, has a clear scientific purpose and issues a well-grounded scientific position - opposing the idea of subjectivity of ethical values, which originated in the ideas of David Hume and developed for example in Sir Alfred Ayer's emotive ethics and the construction of a possible comprehensive ethical theory. The echo of this dispute and the Bulgarian ethical position of those times in it, researched and presented in detail by Assoc. Marinova, still resonates in the everyday life of Bulgarian philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and for me this is an argument in favor of the claim that its analysis in The author's various publications are not just a description, but a reasoned focus on a problem that seems to be "bequeathed" to the modern generation of Bulgarian scientists in the field of human knowledge. And he is still the subject of various analyzes and discussions, in which different perspectives form different preferences for research directions among Bulgarian ethics. In conclusion, Assoc. Prof. Marinova rethinks and proposes her arguments on "studies that have as their object the world of morality" (p. 222). In my opinion, as a scientist and researcher in the field of ethics, developed and synthesized throughout the long and successful scientific career of Assoc. Prof. Marinova, she faces two, if I may say so, temptations. The first is to come to the conclusion that morality can be defined and described as a special kind of social mentality with all the consequences for ethics. Second, to accept that if ethics is to provide 'objective' knowledge, it must rely on social facts coming from descriptions, objective attitudes, focus on experimental (empirical) analysis, but not conceptual. Which is also the philosophical approach to the study of morality. Here, in my opinion, it should be noted that before moving on to any study of morality, it must be defined conceptually and substantively, which is the great and even eternal task of the philosophy of morality. Therefore, I support the conclusions of Assoc. Prof. Marinova on the subject of the psychology of morality ("the competencies of the psychology of morality are psychological; the conclusions have the value of a psychological expert evaluation", p. 223), thus overcoming the first temptation, and the designation of methods as "objective" ("in order not to give preference to sociological methods", p. 222), thus overcoming the second. Morality, according to Assoc. Prof. Marinova, is possible as a social mentality; it manifests itself as such, but "moral autonomy puts morality before sociality" (p. 225). The interrelationships between the mentality and human behavior and actions are beyond doubt, and if we want to understand the morality of the perpetrator as I call him or the "moral subject" as Assoc. Prof. Marinova describes it, we must examine the behavior not only individually but in the context of the social choices, the social groups in which he or she is

involved, their social and psychological attitudes and, in general, the manifestation of personal experience and motivation in the social process. From this point of view, "from a genetic and cultural perspective, sociality not only precedes morality, but always stays with us" (Ibid.). I support this reasoning by Assoc. Prof. Marinova, since the ability of ethical reflection to give a perfect moral image, an ideal of pursuit that has an effective moral and social impact, is impossible without it "transcending" in social, political, economic or religious relationships between people.

In my opinion, the publications provided by Assoc. Prof. Marinova outline the importance of being ethical, consistent, conscientious and extremely competent in the field of scientific issues that she is researching. I believe that the complete and continuous work of the dissertation, realized in the scientific publications proposed as arguments, is a real contribution to the field of Bulgarian philosophy, and in particular to the studies of moral life and its various manifestations in society. If I can summarize, in a word, what is the most convincing proof of the importance of Assoc. Prof. Marinova's work for ethical knowledge in our country, then it is the long-standing and proven work with numerous publications (see the attached Tables and List of publications), the problems of the "meeting" of the individual with the social conditions of its formation and moral socialization. The results of her research, if I may put it this way, "open" the path of ethics to such forms that are extremely relevant today - professional, applied, decision-making ethics, ethical expertise, social risk, etc. For all the basic concepts with which he works, the dissertation has offered clear definitions, which are presented systematically and consistently in the presentation. I could also add to my personal impressions of my long-standing work with Assoc. Prof. Marinova as having not only indisputable academic qualities as a researcher, scientific integrity and responsiveness to colleagues, but also modesty, self-control and delicacy.

As a result of the analysis of the submitted works of Assoc. Prof. Marinova, the contributing moments in them, their practical importance for the Bulgarian ethical knowledge, the complete and systematic establishment of a researcher of the manifestations and mechanisms of moral regulation in social reality, the proven and qualities of a scientist and theoretician, as well as the high and authority in the scientific community, I unequivocally accept that Assoc. Prof. Emilia Vasil Marinova fully deserves to be awarded from the distinguished Scientific Jury the scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophical Sciences", for which I vote "yes".

Prof. Nikolai Mihailov, PhD
Sofia, 14.09. 2019

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