

## OPINION

**About the scientific production of assistant professor Sylvia Borissova-Spasova, Ph.D., a single applicant to the call for the position of “Associate Professor” at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology – BAS, field of research 2.3. “Philosophy”, field of specialization “Aesthetics”, announced by the Department “Culture, Aesthetics, Values” in State Gazette, No. 67, 28. 07. 2020, by Prof. D. Sc. Nina Dimitrova – Institute of Philosophy and Sociology  
(Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)**

The only candidate in the competition for associate professor announced by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology is the main assistant in this institute Sylvia Borissova, PhD in 2011.

The documents for the competition are well prepared; a table certifying the fulfillment of the minimum requirements for this position by the National Center for Information and Documentation is attached.

From the various references we understand about the diverse scientific activity of the candidate – the most impressive is her project activity: the projects are research, artistic and creative and those in the field of education and non-formal learning. Teaching practice, participation in scientific forums, translations and interviews are also described in detail.

In the announced competition Sylvia Borissova applied with one monograph, 3 studies and 5 articles.

Borissova's book "Aesthetics of Silence and Taciturnity", Sofia, Gutenberg Publishing House, 2019, was published with the financial support of the *Program for Support of Young Scientists and Doctoral Students*. (From the same *Program* Sylvia Borissova was awarded a prize in 2019).

The author defines the *aspiration* of the research as the realization of a systematic reading of silence and its subjective correlate – taciturnity, as cultural-philosophical problems in their various dimensions, mainly philosophical-anthropological,

existentialist and phenomenological-aesthetic. The distinction between the pair of concepts on which the proposed study focuses is made precisely. This is fundamental given their frequent use as synonyms.

Sylvia Borissova defines both silence and taciturnity as inextricably linked to the human presence, insofar as we are the ones who gave them names and distinguished them as phenomena among the others (see p. 103). What follows is a clear differentiation between the two, argued by bringing in foreign expert opinions. I would also add the opinion of the philosopher and culturologist Michael Epstein: "Silence has no themes and no author, unlike taciturnity, it is a state of being, not an action produced by the subject and relating to the object" ("Word and Silence: The Metaphysics of Russian Literature"), 2005.

The presented analysis of the carefully searched and impressive with its diversity literature on the chosen topic shows the professional competence of Sylvia Borissova. She did well to include in her research the specific Bulgarian contribution. In this regard, I would suggest her to pay attention to an essay significant for the Bulgarian humanities – the literary manifesto of Dimo Kyorchev "Our Sorrows" (1907), to the presence of the theme of silence in it.

The careful selection of specialized literature (grown since the late twentieth century) is not an end in itself; it clearly argues the relevance of the monographic study, which testifies to the gradual change of the situation, in which its theme is considered a "fundamentally marginalized discourse". This book also makes a definite contribution to this change.

In order to build the conceived garden from inflorescences of silence / taciturnity, Sylvia Borissova has made an effort to be as comprehensive as possible in bringing their available uses, the dissimilar approaches to them, their different readings, the proposed classifications (arrangements), etc. As a result, many hypostases of silence / taciturnity are formed. In my opinion, a very useful sub-topic for the study is the silence in the Christian / religious tradition, skillfully presented to us by Sylvia Borissova.

Everything done so far by the author (which I have tried to sketch) is the first stage of the endeavor – the procession of concepts along the *philosophical path*. This stage also

includes the study of the etymology and genealogy of concepts, traced in different languages. This study is deliberately situated in the middle of the book. From there, the path is *aesthetic*. The author's word is intimate, inalienable. The specific style and polyphonic poetry, used as illustrative material and as subject of penetrating analyzes, do not allow the book to be easily retold. At the same time, the high theoretical level is invariably maintained in each of the six parts of the monographic study, at the end of which an impressive list of titles in several languages is presented.

Sylvia Borissova's attempt to articulate the fragmented fragments on the topic of silence / taciturnity in a unified philosophical and aesthetic sense is, in my opinion, successful and in this sense her study "Aesthetics of Silence and Taciturnity" really fills a gap in this type of reflection on the phenomena studied, updating them "as significant categories within the framework of modern and negative aesthetics", as the author herself notes in the reference to the contribution moments of her scientific works. I consider this claim to be well-founded.

Usually, the opinion discusses (s) mainly the monograph (s) (as a habilitation thesis); here I will only mention that the other texts of the author are published in referenced and indexed editions: "Philosophical Alternatives", "Balkan Journal of Philosophy", "Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics", "Philosophia".

I also have excellent impressions of Sylvia Borissova's performance of the individual module (to the three-year planning project of the section) on the paradox in Adorno's aesthetics.

In conclusion: Based on all that has been said so far, as a member of the scientific jury in this competition, I strongly support his application for the post Associate Professor, field of research 2.3 *Philosophy*, field of specialization *Aesthetics*, so I suggest that the Scientific Council at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology elect her in this post.

19. 10. 2020

Signature: