

REVIEW

By

Valentina Angelova Dramalieva, Doctor of Philosophy, Professor

Philosophy and Ethics Section, Department of Political Economy, UNWE,
Member of Scientific Jury: Scientific Council Decision, Protocol 26/26.10.2020;
Order of the Director of IPS–BAS: ПД - 09 - 514/26.10.2020

Concerning: a Dissertation for Acquisition of Scientific Degree

**Doctor of Sciences in Higher Education Field 2. Humanities,
Professional Field 2.3. Philosophy, Scientific Specialty Ethics**

On the topic: **“MORAL DIMENSIONS OF PROPERTY
IN ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT**

(Towards Justification of a “Proprietary” Ecology)”

*Author: Stoyan Andreas Stavru, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Law,
Associate Professor, Department of Ethical Studies, IPS–BAS*

My review includes eight sections and complies with the requirements of IFS-BAS concerning requirements for obtaining scientific degrees. To prepare it, I read all the documents that were provided to me by e-mail: a dissertation; an abstract (in Bulgarian and English); a list of publications on the topic; a scientific autobiography; three certificates for compliance with the minimum requirements for: *Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Sciences, Associate Professor*; an author's self-assessment of the contributions to the dissertation; a diploma of Doctor of Philosophy; an application for opening a dissertation defense procedure; a protocol of an extended scientific seminar of the Department of Ethical Studies; nine publications (copies).

1. Information concerning the competition

I was appointed as an external member of the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stoyan Andreas Stavru on the topic "Moral Dimensions of Property in Ecological Context (towards Justification of a "Proprietary" Ecology)" to obtain the degree "Doctor of Sciences" by Scientific Council Decision, Protocol 26/26.10.2020 and Order of the Director of IPS–BAS: ПД - 09 - 514/26.10.2020. I was appointed as a reviewer of the dissertation at the first meeting of the Jury, held online on 05.11.2020. The dissertation was discussed and directed for defense at an extended seminar of the Department of Ethical Studies, IPS–BAS on 08.10.2020 (Protocol received).

2. Brief Biographical Information for the Applicant

Stoyan Andreas Stavru was born in 1980. His education is closely connected with Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski": Doctor of Contemporary Philosophy (2015); Doctor of Civil and Family Law (2009); Master of Social and Legal Psychology (2010); Master of Laws (2003). He has specialized in the same university: Jurisdiction (2003); Public Administration (2003);

International Law and International Relations (2003). He has professional qualifications: Trainer in Group-dynamic Training and Organizational Behavior (2009); Mediator (2007); Kendo Coach (2013); Mountain Guide (2006).

The education and scientific interests of the candidate are related to his professional realization - he is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Ethical Studies, IPS-BAS (former ISSK-BAS) since 2018. Before that he has been Chief Assistant (2016-18) and Assistant (2014-16) there. In addition, he has been a part-time Assistant at NBU (2016-18), as well as a part-time Assistant at Sofia University - Faculty of Law (2006-14) and Faculty of Philosophy (2011 - present), as well as at Sofia TU, Faculty and College - Sliven (2012 - present), BFU - Center for Legal Sciences (2012-13). His teaching experience includes lectures and seminars in the following disciplines: Bio Law; Medical Law; Legal Issues of Medical and Health Management; Law and Ethics in Digital Media and Games; Legal Issues in Clinical Medicine; Legal Issues in Pre-hospital Care; Ethical Dilemmas in Healthcare; Medico-legal Regulation of Human Life; Medical Futurology; Cyber Law; The Body in the Regimes of Law; Basics of Law; Legal Workshop; Civil Law - General Part; Property Law. He supervises Masters and Doctoral students. At the same time, he performs expert and consulting activities at the Center for Assisted Reproduction (MH) and at the Monitoring Council on the Law for People with Disabilities at the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria. Assoc. Prof. Stavru is a member of the Editorial Board of the online journal of IFS-BAS *Ethical Research*, as well as of the electronic edition *Challenge the Law*, and also of a series with the same title in the *Ciela* Publishing House. He is the compiler and scientific editor of several book collections.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stavru is a member of the General Assembly of BAS (2020) and a member of the Ethical Commission at IFS-BAS. He is also a member of the *Justice Development Foundation* and the founder of the *Challenge the Law Professional Website*. There are awards for his work.

3. Compliance with Minimum National Requirements

Stoyan Stavru shows compliance and even exceeds the minimum required points by groups of indicators for the educational-scientific degree "Doctor" and for his academic position, as well as for the scientific degree for which he applies - "Doctor of Sciences" in Higher education field 2. *Humanities*, Professional field 2.3. *Philosophy*.

The reports show that he has: for the educational-scientific degree "**Doctor**" - **95 points** and exceeds the requirements by 15 points; for the academic position "**Associate Professor**" -

450 points and exceeds the requirements by 50 points; for the scientific degree "**Doctor of Sciences**" - **520 points** and exceeds the requirements by 150 points (especially for BAS).

I got acquainted in details with the tabular references sent to me for these scientific degrees and academic positions and had found that the publications and citations mentioned in them were not repeated.

On the topic of the dissertation (in the Abstract) nine publications are indicated, of which one monograph (Veshti v prirodno sustoyanie: sobstvenost i otgovornost za vredi v konteksta na chl. 50 ZZD. S., Siela, 2020, 318 s.), five studies, and three articles (2007-20) in prominent scientific journals and collections. The list shows that the publications are different from those with which Stavru has participated in previous competitions for: *Doctor of Philosophy; Associate Professor*. The author not only attached a list, but had sent copies of the publications. It is good to note that in accordance with the new requirements for the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" he has published a monograph, which is different from the dissertation.

In his scientific autobiography, Assoc. Prof. Stavru has indicated *two hundred and nine*, as a total number of published articles and studies, other than those with which he had participated in competitions (2004-20). In addition to this impressive scientific presence, he has participated in twelve research projects (2012-20), most of which are active. For the last two years (2018-20) he has participated in thirty scientific forums with reports or public lectures.

4. Content Analysis of the Scientific Achievements of the Candidate

Since traditionally the dissertation is a major component in the "Doctor of Sciences" competition, I will focus the content of my review on it, evaluating the scientific results on several established indicators that follow.

4.1. General Description of the Dissertation and the Abstract

The dissertation has a volume of 344 pages, structured in: Research Framework; Part I. Introduction; Part II. Main Exposition, developed in six chapters; Part III. Conclusion; List of Used Literature - 468 titles, of which: 168 in Cyrillic, 300 in Latin, 58 from the Internet. 12 tables and 3 figures were used. 914 footnotes were made. There are two types of Content in the dissertation - short and extensive, which helps to orient in the text, given its large volume. There is also a List of abbreviations used. The text is up-to-date - in compliance with Bulgarian and international laws, valid as of 01.10.2020.

The specified volume, structure and sources meet the formal criteria for a dissertation for the acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences".

The Abstract is in a volume of 73 pages, formed in three sections: **I.** General Characteristics of the Dissertation (includes nine parts: Main Thesis; Relevance and Significance; Object, Purpose, and Tasks; Methods; Scientific Novelty; Distinctions and Positioning; Practical Significance; Scientific Contributions; Volume and Structure); **II.** Content of Dissertation (Research Framework, Part I. Introduction, Part II. Main Presentation - six chapters, Part III. Conclusion); **III.** Publications on the Topic.

The Abstract, although with a larger volume, meets the requirements and fulfills its purpose. The author also presented an Abstract in English.

4.2. Dissertation Topic

The chosen topic is challenging - the title unites seemingly incomparable quantities: morality, property, ecology, proprietary. But insight into the subject shows that these concepts are in fact closely interrelated, revealing at the same time various aspects and levels of problems. This gives the author a reason to look for and find new opportunities to establish connections and interdependencies in the public space in order to achieve certain significant goals. He approaches the problems of property, ecology, morality, and law in an original way. Apart from being challenging, the topic is typically philosophical and atypically legal, and at the same time - relevant, interesting, and useful. It is also confirmed by the text.

The author examines the ownership of living organisms ("non-human life"), while analyzing its relationship with ownership of inanimate nature. These aspects of the property have a pronounced moral (ethical) aspect. But at the same time, they are poorly studied and neglected in both Ecological Ethics and Ecological Law. An important goal of the dissertation is to draw attention to this gap and to look for options for filling it. Such an option is the idea of Proprietary Ecology - it protects nature through regulations affecting property. No less relevant is the idea of analyzing the moral and legal status of pathogens and viruses, which directly affect not only ecology but also man's attitude towards nature, as well as the relationship between people themselves. To control some of the problems caused by these organisms, the author proposes special property regimes to be integrated into the legislation. In the dissertation there are many current and fresh ideas, which, however, seem completely applicable.

I believe that the chosen topic is suitable for a doctoral dissertation because it is a challenge to the theory and to the researchers, as well as to law as a regulator. It is interesting and useful both with its practical orientation to "challenge" the law and politics, and with the attempt to fill gaps in the theory, the research and the interpretations of these current issues. On the other hand, the topic provides an excellent opportunity for the author to reveal his research potential.

4.3. Dissertation Methodology

The author defines as **an object of the study** the ethical dimensions of human possession (property) of things that are living biological organisms or created as a result of geological processes, as well as - possible ways to comply with legal regulations in our ecological legislation with these ethical measurements. **The main goal** is to clarify the role that property could play in the legislative implementation of certain morally significant ecological policies. **Additional goals** are: 1) to contribute to conducting a scientific discussion on the issues under consideration and to reach concrete proposals for changes in the current Bulgarian legislation; 2) to fill a gap in the philosophical and ethical literature, from which to take advantage of the ecological debate and at the same time - to provoke adequate legislative solutions for the regulation of property in ecological direction.

In connection with these ambitious goals, the author sets himself **six main tasks**, to the achievement of which the six chapters of the dissertation are dedicated. Each of them is looking for options through which the "virtuous property" of various living and non-living organisms can serve as a guarantor of the ecological balance in the world. Six types of Ethics are formed, respectively: Landscape Ethics of the Home; Conservation Ethics of the Wild; Ethics of the Free Forest; Ethics of the Boundaries between Species and Heredity; Ethics of Future Generations; a combination of Bio-centric, Eco-centric, Physio-centric, and Holistic Ethics, including the Ethics of Extraterrestrial Life. In this regard are indicated ecological limitations of classical postulates of ownership in Property Law, and at the same time new ownership models are presented that can overcome them (e.g.: intergenerational trust (trusted property); culturally conditioned property; defensive and integrative property). The motivating goal of these new models is the transition from the *Ethics of Natural Resources* (nature that is useful to man) to the *Ethics of the Earth* (nature that is valuable in itself).

Methodologically, the dissertation is based on analytical and interdisciplinary approaches, combining Ethics, Ecology, and Law. Ethical argumentation is leading, which aims to change the legal regulator in order to solve important ecological problems. *Theoretical research methods* are used, as well as *other methods*, including: *normative, systematic, and logical. Inductive methods* are also used, as well as typical *philosophical methods: abstraction, doubt, criticism, problem thinking, and generalization.*

I believe that the methodology is adequate to achieve the set goals. It helps the author to show his research interests, skills and competence, as well as to develop, justify and systematize his ideas.

4.4. Dissertation Structure

The structure meets the requirements of in-depth research. It includes: Content (short and detailed); List of Abbreviations Used; List of Tables and Figures (all 10p.); Research Framework (24p.) Part I. Introduction (22p.); Part II. Main Exposition (190p.) in six chapters, of which: 1) Inanimate Nature: the Union between the Remarkable and the Ethics of the Home (18p.); 2) Microscopic Life: Pathogens, "Wild" Viruses, and Endless Humanity (41p.); 3) Wild Plants: to an Ethics of "Free" Forests (42p.); 4) Genes: Identity and Modifications of Biological Species (35p.); 5) The Earth: an Ethics Facing Future Generations (41p.); 6) Extraterrestrial Life: Ethics in Outer Space (14 p.); Part III. Conclusion (72p.); List of Used Literature (21p.).

Pages of individual structural elements (indicated in parentheses) give an idea of the distribution of volumes. It is obvious that the two introductory chapters, as well as the conclusion, have larger volumes than each other separate chapter. This shows their great relative weight to the whole dissertation. Obviously, it is important for the author to present and justify all the problems in their unity and interdependence.

It is noteworthy that the internal logic and the sequence of the individual parts correspond to the set goals and objectives, and the Conclusion is a summary of what has been achieved. The titles of the individual chapters are originally formulated. I think that the dissertation is well structured as a single work. The individual parts are well balanced both with each other and with regard to the whole dissertation.

4.5. Contributions of the Dissertation

I agree with the author's opinion that his merit to science (scientific novelty) is that it fills a gap in our literature, where there is no monographic or dissertation work on the moral foundations and limits of human possession (property) of living biological organisms, as well as natural resources considered in their eco-system unity. In addition, I would like to point out the following:

1. The various ethical considerations regarding the value of inhuman life and inanimate nature are being reconsidered.
2. In order to substantiate the moral value of nature (animate and inanimate), another approach is sought - different from referring to it as having rights (legal subjectivity of nature).
3. Ownership is presented not only as the most important economic and social factor today, but also as the most reliable engine for the development of ecology.
4. The ethical dimensions of the way in which people own (have ownership over) living organisms and different parts of inanimate nature are sought.
5. Various models of possession of living organisms and of inanimate nature are offered.

6. The link between Ethics and Ecology is being rethought: the question is what is permissible in the possession and use of both living organisms and parts of inanimate nature.
7. The connection between Ethics and Law is pragmatized: ethical considerations are also referred to as arguments for legal regulation (for rethinking existing or creating new laws).
8. The relationship between Ethics and Law is "restarted": the practical possibility of Ethics to impose the desired (such as: moral values, moral norms, moral models, moral goals) in society through the mediation of Law is indicated.

I believe that the author's scientific contributions are significant, although he himself modestly places them in the category of "enrichment of existing knowledge".

I agree with the argumentation of each of the twelve contributions, highlighted by the author (Abstract, p.15-17).

4.6. Recommendations

The author has taken into account most of the comments made at the extended seminar of the Department of Ethical Studies for discussion of the dissertation. I think that in this reworked form the work is more systematic and readable. I have no specific recommendations that would affect my overall assessment. It remains a technical recommendation to automatically link the text and the table of contents so that each page or title can be reached by just one click. This would greatly facilitate reading and orientation in the dissertation - especially since the circumstances require everything to be in electronic form.

I recommend that the dissertation be published in order to reach a wider audience, which is good for its practical applicability.

5. Reflection of the Candidate's Publications in Literature (citation)

Assoc. Prof. Stavru has pointed a total of fifteen citations for participation in the competition, nine of which are in monographs and collective collections, and six are in non-refereed journals with scientific review. Also indicated are two published reviews of his works in unrefereed journals. The total of 135 points exceeds by 15 points the minimum requirements for this criterion. The citations meet the requirements for the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" and at the same time show that the author's scientific publications have a good reflection in the literature.

6. Critical Remarks of the Reviewer on the Submitted Works

I have no objections in principle to the dissertation and the submitted works for participation in the competition. Of course, I do not accept all the views and theses of the author, but the differences are within the limits of scientific discussion.

7. Personal Impressions of the Candidate and Other Data

I know Stoyan Stavru since 2016 from his participation in the competition for Chief Assistant at the Department of Ethical Studies of ISSK-BAS. I follow his development: publications, participation in conferences, projects and other scientific forums. Everything happens too fast with him, but it is obviously a logical result of education, intelligence, and effort. I have an excellent opinion about his career development, his original presence in the scientific community, his challenging publications, and his overall multifaceted work. Impressive are his broad interests in various fields, his rich awareness, original thinking, great ability to work, ingenuity, and consistency.

8. Conclusion

I think that Stoyan Stavru will convincingly defend the topic and his ideas before the Jury in order to receive the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences". He fully deserves it for the research and proposed solutions in the dissertation, as well as for his other publications and scientific activities. In all of them the author has shown his abilities to work independently and purposefully; to study and make sense of both theoretic and empiric, and to look for the connection between them; to interpret the data, ideas, theories, and laws in good faith; to analyze, argue, and systematize; to develop his ideas logically and understandably. He shows a wide awareness, interdisciplinarity, critical and original thinking, bright personal positions, non-standard solutions, reasonable conclusions. Despite the complexity of the issues under consideration and the heavy terminology from various scientific fields, the language is clear and understandable, and Stoyan Stavru's style has already established itself as his trademark and cannot be mistaken. My overall assessment is positive.

The presented work has the merits of in-depth, convincing, original, and debatable but at the same time - useful dissertation work. The author demonstrates solid philosophical, ethical, and legal knowledge, as well as research skills. At the same time, he fully meets, and even exceeds, the minimum national requirements for this degree. **I vote to be awarded the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the Higher education field 2. Humanities, Professional field 2.3. Philosophy, Scientific specialty Ethics to Stoyan Andreas Stavru.**

04. 01. 2021

Sofia

Signature: .....

(Prof. Dr. V. Dramalieva)