

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Ivaylo Georgiev Dimitrov, PhD (IPS-BAS)

on the dissertation of **Alexander Lyubenov Gungov**

entitled

“Circularity in the Philosophical Logic of the Continental tradition”

for obtaining the scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophical Sciences”

In Professional Field 2.3. Philosophy

The dissertation "Circularity in the Philosophical Logic of the Continental Tradition" by Prof. Dr Alexander Gungov has an impressive volume of 416 pages. The bibliography includes 114 titles in Bulgarian, Russian, English and Italian languages. The submitted abstract adequately reproduces the content of the dissertation, which is divided into an introduction, four chapters divided into paragraphs and subsections, and a conclusion.

Prof. Gungov's dissertation, remarkable in terms of the scale of its design and scope of execution, aims at proving that the philosophical logic of the so-called continental tradition is grounded on one basic principle, namely – the principle of teleological circularity in thinking. For this purpose, an attempt is made for a comparative analysis between the logical ideas of the "most significant representatives" of the tradition in question - G. W. F. Hegel, H. G. Gadamer, K. H. Marx, E. Husserl, and M. Heidegger.

And here appears the first confusing inconsistency – contrary to the expectations induced in the abstract and the introduction, only Gadamer does not have a chapter dedicated to him, but only a paragraph (§5) of the chapter on Hegel, in which, in a little more than three pages, the author proves that philosophical hermeneutics is a variant of Hegel's speculative logic which only further develops its characteristic teleological circularity. Yet, I understand his choice—Gadamer's authority implies at least his nominal presence in the list of foundational figures of the continental tradition in philosophical logic. From this perspective, I not only understand but also sincerely welcome Prof. Gungov's decision not to include the name of I. Kant in the list in question. Indeed, from a historical-philosophical point of view, it seems inappropriate that the analyzes of the transcendental logic and transcendental criticism in the phenomenological tradition should not be preceded by at least one paragraph dedicated

to the founder of their classical, pre-speculative version. And yet, the ambitious program and monumental scope of the study are fully relevant to the straightforwardly Hegelian genealogical reading of the logical principles of phenomenological philosophy, which makes the distinctly clear absence of the original critical-philosophical (super)position in the dissertation fully explainable.

This absence of the prominent (at least for me) philosophical authority in question allowed me to take the neutral position of a relatively well-versed reader. In this way, the representational merits of the dissertation became obvious – a concise, clear and accessible text, testifying to the substantial teaching experience and indisputable philosophical erudition of the author. To varying degrees, each of the four chapters could be prepared for independent publication and serve as a useful introduction to the legacy of the respective founder or implementer of Hegelian teleological-circular philosophical logic in letter and/or spirit. I am also convinced that the publications devoted to the logical ideas of Husserl and Heidegger expounded in this way will reawaken the old debate about the Hegelian roots of the phenomenological tradition and the controversial success of radical attempts to neutralize or annihilate them. The lack of critical distance to the undeniable influence of Hegel's speculative logic will play in this respect the positive role of a negative stimulus for a lively discussion. However, if the dissertation in the form proposed for defence is being prepared for publication, I would recommend a new, more solid introduction to the fundamental problem of grounding in-and-of philosophical knowledge. However, this implies deriving his solution through teleological circularity in Hegel by means of a comparison with the linear and non-speculative circular approaches in logic, starting from Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza and Kant (according to A. Kojev - see p. 90 ff.; see also Kondova L., *Philosophical Alternatives* 6/2002, p. 154 ff).

However, it was a serious challenge to assess the merits of the dissertation in full accordance with the letter of the law (Art. 37 of the RA of DASRBA), according to which the Doctor of Sciences degree is awarded for "significant and original contribution to science" achieved through "theoretical generalizations and solutions of major scientific and applied scientific problems that correspond to the contemporary achievements". The author points out seven contributing points in his work, some of which I accept with certain reservations. The major scientific problem of grounding in

genuine philosophical logic is undeniably present. The scale of the theoretical generalization (although contrary to my research mindset) is truly impressive, allowing me to accept the first two contributions of the work. However, I still find it controversial to what extent teleological circularity is really a "guiding" principle of logical conceptions in phenomenology that presupposes the "fundamental unity of logic" in the continental tradition. It seems to me that, in view of all the contributions, the uncertainty remains due to the over-exaggeration of Hegel's influence, one-sidedly at that, without an attempt to present critically the attempts to push it back or break with it, or the receptions of Hegel in the contemporary analytic tradition. Moreover, the course of the exposition is so purposeful and ultra-economical in the selection of the supporting commentary literature that in large parts of the study the author's original contribution to the analyzes remains hidden. The intrusive sense of a reference text is compounded by a detectable refrain from discussion and a lack of critical distance from the original or commentary texts. And such is otherwise implicitly present, e.g. the omission of S. Bachelard's thesis that self-reference in the formal logic of analytical criticism is not circular but helical; or in the unstated upgrading of her epistemological analysis of Husserl's transcendental criticism in the direction of a general ontologization in view of the notion of an active constitution. The counter-argument against N. Abbagnano's criticism with regard to Heidegger's concept of the possibility of existence, announced as a contribution to the dissertation, is developed in no more than three pages, and therefore I can hardly accept it as significant, even if it is original.

According to the defence documentation provided, Prof. Dr Alexander Gungov meets the minimum national requirements for the Doctor of Sciences degree. I have no joint publications or projects with the candidate.

Conclusion: The dissertation "Circularity in the Philosophical Logic of the Continental Tradition" by Prof. Dr Alexander Gungov meets the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophical Sciences degree and as a member of the Scientific Jury I will vote positively for awarding it to the author.

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