

REVIEW

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Regarding: competition for professor in the Professional field 2.3. Philosophy (Philosophical anthropology, Philosophy of Art, Metaphysics), announced in SG No. 67 of August 4, 2023.

1. Information about the competition.

The competition was announced for the needs of the Department of Philosophy at Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University, based on the Decision of Department of Philosophy from April 24, 2023.

2. Brief information about the candidates in the competition.

The only candidate in this competition is Associate Professor Dr. Ivan Georgiev Kolev, working in the Department of Philosophy, majoring in Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski.

Ivan Kolev was born on March 2, 1959, in the city of Burgas. He graduated with honors in 1986, and from the following year he was a teacher in the Department of Philosophy at the "St. Kliment Ohridski" University. He defended his doctoral dissertation on the topic "Being and possibility" in 2011 and received the academic title of associate professor in 2013. For more than three decades, Ivan Kolev has been an irreplaceable teacher within the specialty, preparing and lecturing ten different compulsory and optional theoretical courses. As his biographical information shows, during this period he was the author of 5 scientifically valuable monographs, 20 textbooks in various publishing houses, as well as of dozens of articles in Bulgarian and foreign scientific collections and journals.

Three other significant facts regarding the scientific and teaching life of Associate Professor Kolev are very important: First – his intensive activity in support of philosophy education in secondary schools, expressed not only in writing textbooks, but also in joint activities with teachers and students, as well as in initiating and conducting national and international olympiads in philosophy. Second - Ivan Kolev understands philosophizing as a dialogue between professionally engaged in philosophy persons, and this is reflected in his participation in dozens of scientific conferences (local and international) on various philosophical topics, as well as in his activity in organizing many of them. And finally. One

cannot fail to mention his activity in the creation of the Bulgarian Philosophical Society, as well as his skillful and correct organization of the administrative affairs of the Department of Philosophy as its head for two terms. I would also mention that Associate Professor Kolev's workaholicism is proverbial, and therefore we should not be surprised by his participation in the creation of several master's programs, in many international and Bulgarian scientific projects, in the editorial boards of several journals, as well as in dozens of SU initiatives and such in the system of secondary education; or with his particularly distinct attachment to the measures to preserve the philosophical memory in our country. This is evident in his activity at the jubilee celebrations of past and present Bulgarian philosophers, as well as in his concern for the archival preservation of their scientific achievements.

3. Fulfillment of the minimal national requirements for holding the academic position of professor.

The technical verification of the documentation provided for the competition clearly states that the candidate meets the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of professor. From the presented by Assoc. Prof. Ivan Kolev scientometric tables, it is evident that the set minimum number of points, mandatory for holding the position of professor, have been met and repeatedly exceeded. This means that the competition is completely legitimate and complies with the Regulations of the SU on the terms and conditions for holding this academic position at the university.

4. General description of the presented materials.

For his participation in the competition, Prof. Ivan Kolev provides two monographs:

Ivan Kolev. 2023. *Καρδιά. Philosophy of feelings*. Sofia: East-West. ISBN 978-619-01-1304-1.

Ivan Kolev. 2023. *Art as a phenomenal being. Deduction of categories*. Sofia: East-West. ISBN 978-619-01-1305-8),

as well as nine articles in prestigious peer-reviewed journals. Kolev also strictly observes the requirement that the proposed texts do not duplicate the content of those for which he obtained the scientific degree of doctor.

5. Analysis of the candidate's scientific achievements.

In accordance with my competences, I will direct the jury's attention only to the monograph "Philosophy of Feelings", especially since it is the most voluminous and representative text of the candidate's overall scientific activity.

First, I will mention that "Philosophy of Feelings" magnificently illustrates Kolev's characteristic research ethos - the devotion to philosophy resembling almost religious piety, his irrepressible permanent amazement at the wealth of meaning that every philosophical problem hides. In the years of my joint activity with Associate Professor Kolev, I also understood that the territory of his spiritual searches is not abstract and speculative philosophical knowledge, but the hidden depths of everyday reality. That is why I am not surprised by the subject of the professor's monograph. I find as a significant contribution of the candidate the comprehensive study of philosophical reflections on the phenomenon of feelings, their individual specificity and their nuanced relations to the world, such a comprehensive study is missing not only in the Bulgarian philosophical literature. Without pretending to be abstractly systematic and orderly, Ivan Kolev's text gives us a relatively complete picture of the amazing sensual variety.

I will begin by saying that the initial part, although devoted to the subject of philosophy and the meaning of philosophizing, is not self-serving. Assoc. Prof. Kolev understands philosophizing as inseparable from the personality, who, in the ancient sense of "persona", expresses his/herself as a path to meeting his/her identity (his/her own version of the world) with those of the Others. Precisely in this meeting the world of human feelings is unleashed. Thus philosophy, especially as anthropology, invariably comes to the problem of the sensuous phenomenon. The candidate's anthropological interests are complemented here by the emphasis on the so-called Cardiac anthropology, which, in the spirit of Pascal, symbolically opposes the logic of reason (the brain) to that of the heart (the source of living, warm sensitivity). Here I would like to ask the candidate how far this distinction is of a symbolic or ideal-typical kind, since from a physiological point of view it gives us nothing special.

The approach of Assoc. Prof. Kolev's is historical. It traces philosophical reflection on dozens of types of feelings from antiquity to the present day. In this regard, he methodologically closely follows the traditions of the so-called a "history of concepts" both in terms of their function in philosophy as well as of the cultural-historical horizon they reveal. A positive resource in this study is the detailed disclosure of the phenomenological manifestations associated with each feeling. As an example, I will give the analysis of the characteristics of anger in Aristotle, in which its modes of rudeness, violence and contempt are nuancedly distinguished.

Assoc. Prof. Kolev understands the complexity of the task of writing about feelings, due to the difficulty of expressing them. With the help of symbols and semantic descriptions, Kolev hermeneutically "reads" the significant emphases put on the contents of individual feelings by philosophers from different eras and paradigms. Thus, the history of concepts is a source of discussion on the essence of individual phenomena. In this regard, a huge resource that Ivan Kolev possesses is the handling of several languages - English, Latin, German, French. In turn, etymological analysis helps to reveal the cultural-historical context and the dominant emphases in the understanding of different feelings in different eras.

An interesting approach is also the unraveling of the web of concepts, i.e., different types of affects that are meaningfully intertwined with each other and complement each other's meanings. Productive in this connection is the antithetical approach (strongly advocated, for example, in Aristotle's analysis), where each feeling is examined in its opposite.

Further, if philosophy is, in the sense of Scheler and Deleuze, the creation of worlds through concepts, the systematization of concepts through which different feelings are reconstructed forms a truly rare "world" in philosophical literature. In this, I see in the text rather a rejection of the simple empirical description and an aspiration for a structural semantic approach, reflexive enough to convince us of the seriousness of the subject matter of philosophy of feelings.

In the context of Ivan Kolev's understanding of an anthropology of the modal human being (the human being understood as a series of possibilities, starting from the diversity of abilities to the dialogic encounter of different values and ideas), I especially like the book's insistence on temporal analysis of the phenomenon of feelings.

There is almost no separate feeling which is not considered in the projection of its significant relation to the past, present and future of the personality. The example of shame is symptomatically clear. Shame is not only remorse about what we have done (the past), but also about what we are doing now (the present) or are ready to do (the future, even as a thought). And I would also add the relation to the eternal in the sense of an ideal and a norm for thinking and behavior, only in relation to which the experience of shame is possible.

It should not be forgotten that, in addition to the temporal analysis, there is also the reconstruction of a kind of topography (places) of feelings. For example, when a feeling is in place (that is, it is appropriate) - let's say in connection with Aristotle the statement that benevolence is more urgent in relation to weak and needy people than in relation to strong and self-confident ones.

The chronotopic type of research that Kolev conducts is also the basis of a kind of situational analysis, i.e., the analysis of the adequacy of individual feelings (often extremely difficult to identify due to the subtle nuances of their use) for certain life circumstances. For example, feelings like "love for others" are often unacceptable in relationships between strangers. In one situation, it is adequate to emphasize the mild type of feelings, in another, on the more dynamic and abrupt emotional reactions. I also note as a contribution of the text that Kolev is aware of the available, especially in the eras of extreme philosophical rationalism, critical objections against sensuality. An example is the analysis of the Stoic identification of feelings as various unreasonable manifestations of man. I suspect, however, that the entire text is a vindication of a little-explored area of human existence such as the sensual, and in this capacity it continues the organismic approach to man coming from Aristotle, according to which ideal intellectual goals are fundamentally grounded on a series of life experiences of the soul. In any case, for Kolev, philosophical wisdom necessarily involves bias and does not rest solely on contemplative and objectively distanced scientificity. Therefore, the typical for different periods ideologies are realized on the basis of a paradigmatic type of feelings, as well as vice versa - in the paradigmatic history of feelings, the model of thinking characteristic of the era is precipitated.

Further I find that Ivan Kolev is definitely proud of the concept of the so-called Cardiac phase of human sensual development. For example, he speaks of the psalmist feelings united around the meaningful symbolism of the heart. Here feelings spring as if from the personal interior and therefore characterize not so much specific types of human abilities, as in Aristotle, as an inwardly experienced intimacy. This builds the special pathos and poetics of their sensual palette. Central to this palette (at least this is how I read what Ivan Kolev wrote) is sincerity, understood ontologically as a personal encounter with God, as an emanation of immediate faith in him, which requires complete individual dedication and renunciation of any posture and external evaluation.

In this direction, however, it is sub-questionable for me the inclusion of the topic of asceticism in Kolev's book precisely in the chapter on cardiac feelings. Firstly, because the ascetic work is externally inspired and officially normative, and secondly, because, unlike the cardiac intentions, ascetic practices are always reflected and even rational, since it is not by chance that they remove the unreasonable manifestations of the soul. The domain of asceticism is the confronting of passions, among which some are by no means feelings (e.g., avarice or gluttony), others are natural tendencies of the body (lust), and still others are directed precisely at preventing certain heartfelt feelings, such as despondency and sorrow. In

this aspect, it may be more appropriate to separate the topic of asceticism and that of the feelings of the heart to culminate with Thomas Aquinas' view of the priority role of love.. Further, the tracing of the philosophical history of feelings continues with the theme of affects in early modernity. The new option, which is added to the theme, is its enrichment in the mechanistic interpretation of Hobbes' effects and Spinoza's deterministic understanding of the phenomenon.

The historical-philosophical part of the book ends with the theme of the emancipation of feelings in German philosophy of the 18th-19th centuries, especially important, in my opinion, is the emphasis on Kant's ability to feel as different from cognitive, sensory and practical abilities, as well as the expansion of sensual objects to the aesthetic sphere and that of moral and legal judgment. It is also undeniable the development of the theme in Scheller's modern anthropology, both with the idea of their personal character and in relation to human values.

I confess that for the first time (I think the book is only comparable to the magnificent text of André-Comte Sponville, *A Little Treatise on the Great Virtues*) that I have encountered such an intellectually enriching philosophical text. If there is any major contribution of the book of Assoc. Prof. Kolev, it consists in the fact that in it such a wealth of articulations of feelings is revealed and considered that it becomes not only possible, but also mandatory to construct a significant vocabulary of this phenomenon and to create the foundations of a discipline that considers human feelings as an autonomous area of human existence. But that is not all.

As if to theoretically legitimize the legitimacy of such a discipline, Kolev reveals its metaphysical (with the ideas of the hierarchy of feelings and their immanent temporality) and anthropological potencies. And the final typology of the related with the being, personal, and connected feelings is a systematic conclusion to this magnificent study. Moreover, this work fits organically into the meaning of the previous theoretical ideas of Assoc. Prof. Kolev. Basic in this direction is the emphasizing of the anthropological unity of the corporeal and spiritual, in the context of which the sphere of sensitivity is another of the many possible manifestations of human existence, understood as the being of omnipossibility. It is in this aspect that the conception of man presenting a kind of universality, that is, a "man of the world" (an idea coming from the Renaissance of Balthasar Grasian), becomes understandable. Thus, along with his purely corporeal, sensory and mental existence, man also forms a world of feelings, in which he expresses himself no less authentically.

Finally, in order not to sound too pathetic (like the spirit and ethos of the phenomenon of feelings), I would still address Assoc. Kolev a question that I did not find an answer to in the text. This is precisely the question of what distinguishes a large part of the feelings, analyzed by different authors, from the virtues and respectively, the vices of man; and is the problematics of feelings really not so much anthropological, but also predominantly ethical?

6. Conclusion

The reading of Ivan Kolev's book "Philosophy of Feelings" reaffirmed my extremely high opinion of his philosophical and theoretical qualities and I find that it is an excellent expression of his huge – as quality and as volume – activities of teaching, research and administrative efforts over the past few decades. In this sense, I fully support and vote positively for his acquisition of the academic position of professor, which is the purpose of this competition. In this regard, I would sincerely advice my honorable jury colleagues to do the same.

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