



OPINION¹

from Prof.D.Sc. Valentina Milenkova, SWU “Neofit Rilski”.

(scientific position, academic degree, name, surname, educational / scientific institution)

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in Philosophy.

with a dissertation on the topic: “Ethical Foundations of Man-Nature interaction”,

presented by Leonie Overbeek doctoral student in the Department “Logic, ethics and aesthetics” Faculty of Philosophy

with supervisor: Prof. Dr. Nikolai Mihailov

I. Evaluation of the qualities of the text of dissertation

The topic of the dissertation work is very relevant and significant, given the various environmental crises that the world is experiencing and which, in the conditions of globalization, more and more insistently impose the finding that climate changes and global cataclysms threaten the existence of natural ecosystems, part of which is the human one. People are still reluctant to show pro-environmental behavior and consciously participate in nature preservation campaigns. Environmental citizenship means increasing the sensitivity and level of commitment to the environment, but few people share it. The dissertation is aimed at researching the interaction of man with nature and taking responsibility for the consequences of this interaction, the main characteristics of which are ethics and respect. It is emphasized that respect is a fundamental value on which rests the responsibility towards life and the ways to preserve it.

The theoretical sources on the subject have been studied thoroughly and exhaustively. The PhD student knows the publications and research of the authors who work in the field of philosophical ecology, ecological citizenship and the ethical attitude towards nature and the natural world. The knowledge of the publications in the problem field and the information obtained are reflected in the overall theoretical concept of the dissertation work, as well as in the research vision that humanity is not something separate or above nature, reflected in taking responsibility, but that it is part of it and affects it through the use of technology.

The life stories of the two worlds that currently exist are traced: the "haves" and the "have-nots", called the first and third worlds. Their essentials also shape their habits towards life and nature. In the first world, people take certain things for granted, such as access to energy in the form of electricity or petroleum products to power everything from entertainment and cooking to getting from place to place. In the third world, people are lucky if they have clean water and sanitation. In this context, the PhD student finds that demanding an ethical interaction with nature from those who struggle to survive is perhaps part of the unthinkable privilege that those living in the first world have. On this basis, Leonie

¹ Note: The text in italics offers reference points for evaluating the research results. Recommended volume of the opinion - 2-3 standard pages



Overbeek problematizes that the first ethical interaction is to realize how the inequality of life can be addressed.

It is emphasized that the lack of understanding that extreme climate events are consequences of the refusal to reduce carbon emissions and pollution means an abdication of responsibility. The analysis shows that ethical behavior towards the environment means a connection between the articulation of values and practice, i.e. people's actions. This is, in fact, the central research question: If humans are to interact ethically with nature, what does that interaction look like, and why is it important for us to act ethically toward what many consider an impersonal force?

Reflecting on the answer to the main research question in the dissertation, the PhD student thoroughly examines the two concepts of sovereignty and ethical responsibility.

Jacques Derrida develops his concept of the sovereign, who is above the law, as he is the lawmaker and executor in political terms. With regard to individuals, each person is considered sovereign in a particular area; there is individual sovereignty, free will and rights. Derrida presents humanity's innate desire for sovereignty, which leads to the formation of anthropocentric values and to humanity having a special status. At the same time mankind struggles with its desire to be sovereign, or to abdicate sovereignty by submitting to government, provided it is protected from dangers by means of that sovereignty. The PhD student summarizes that standing above the law would have bad consequences. Therefore, sovereign people must have an ethical and moral behavior towards nature, and its arena includes three areas: at home, at work, in the public sector.

The thesis also examines the key theory of Hans Jonas and focuses on the formation of a new ethics based on the imperative of responsibility. The imperative of responsibility is an obligation to ensure that there will be future life, and it depends on humans because of the power they wield through technology. Environmental ethics refers to duties, values and supportive actions towards the natural world, as well as a sense of responsibility towards the earth and other creatures that inhabit space.

Combining the desire for sovereign decisions and legislation, with responsibility for the present and future of life, Leonie Overbeek concludes that the main attitude that will embody and encapsulate it in the field of environmental ethics is respect. It is emphasized that respect has a comprehensive character, it is not only self-respect, it is respect for other people, for nature, for the inanimate world and all phenomena, because all of them in their entirety are important and have a role in the world. It is concluded that by sharing this type of attitude, one can change the destructive habits and consumer choices one makes.

As a result of the analysis, a series of new considerations, classifications, understanding of topics related to the interaction of man and nature and the attitude of man to the world in which he/she lives, to the present and future have been obtained.

The PhD student has shown a very good level of knowledge of the literature on the topic of the dissertation, as well as of different approaches, concepts, and ideas, which shows excellent skills in working with existing information.

The dissertation text is fully compliant with the compositional requirements. It has 170 pages and is structured in: introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography.

A Reference for the scientific contributions and publications of the doctoral student has also been added. The dissertation is distinguished by excellent linguistic and stylistic qualities and is in accordance with the literary grammar, spelling and punctuation norms. The style is clear and the parts are logically connected, the exposition presents a variety of evidentiary material and formulates conclusions and generalizations.

The summary fully corresponds in terms of content to the dissertation work and meets the requirements for its presentation.

II. Contributions of the dissertation research

I can define the contributions of the dissertation research as enrichment and critical analysis of existing knowledge. Contributions are based on reliable information obtained through correctly selected methods



and their adequate and objective application. The contributions are related to the conducted research work, reflecting the overall conceptual author's vision.

I accept the made self-assessment of the contributions of the dissertation work and evaluate it as completely correct and objective, corresponding to the dissertation work.

3 publications that have appeared in the digital space are presented. The publications are on the topic of the dissertation and present separate aspects of the dissertation research, based on the results obtained from the methods used.

The dissertation is based on real events and problems. Comprehensive information emerges from in-depth analysis and synthesis, contributing to dialogue on environmental ethics. The conclusions drawn regarding the ethics of respect see it not simply as a theoretical construct, but as an approach on the basis of which various movements around the world are growing. In practical terms, the doctoral student contributed to ecological citizenship and pro-ecological behavior by creating a center where 12 families of bees are raised, contributed by writing reports, conducting seminars on Bulgarian beekeeping, etc.

III. Notes and recommendations

The dissertation is developed at a high theoretical level, with a variety of information obtained from the author's research and from the use of already existing analyses, theories and information.

I have no recommendations and remarks for improving the text.

I recommend that the dissertation be published as a monograph, given the in-depth analyzes and research carried out on the subject.

IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums

The 3 publications presented are in compliance with the requirements.

The requirements of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" for approving and disclosing the results of the research according to Art. 5, item 5 and the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, para. 1, item 4 and art. 69, para. 3 are accomplished.

V. Conclusion

The Ph.D.thesis "Ethical Foundations of Man-Nature interaction" shows that the doctoral student Leonie Overbeek has in-depth theoretical knowledge and skills for research work. On this basis, I confidently give my positive assessment of the presented dissertation and propose to the scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in Philosophy to Leonie Overbeek, the Department "Logic, ethics and aesthetics" Faculty of Philosophy.

Jury member: Prof. D.Sc. Valentina Milenkova

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