

SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
Department of SOCIAL, ORGANISATIONAL, CLINICAL AND
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

REVIEW

By Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Dimitrov, PhD

To the 3.2. Psychology (Social Psychology) PhD thesis

Of Aleksandar Dobrev Petrov

Themed: (free interpretation) „The Societal Role Structure as a Phenomenon of the
Collective Projection”

The dissertation submitted for public defense was prepared by Alexander Dobrev Petrov, a full-time PhD student in the Department of Social, Organizational, Clinical and Educational Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", under the supervision of Prof. Lyudmil Georgiev, Dr. Habil.. The dissertation is written on 209 pages of "pure text", which represents a meaningful and well-written scientific product, it contains 2 graphic visualizations (tables), yet 62 sources are cited, of which 56 in Cyrillic – 48 of them in Bulgarian and 8 in Russian, as well as 6 in Latin, all of them – in English. The presented text consists of: an introduction (10 pages), 3 full-fledged and complete chapters (a total of 187 pages) and a final part entitled "Conclusion" (9 pages). The doctoral student has additionally presented the contributions of his work.

The first thing that the text impresses with is the highly literate writing style, yet the presented material is very comprehensive and ‘catching’. The PhD student has escaped from excesses and excessive pathos and presents a rich and very meaningful product, fascinating to read. A valuable asset of the work is the sharing of personal therapeutic experience and case analyses.

The first chapter reviews the factors that structure the community. It is divided into five parts, examining respectively: the structuring factors of the community, the drive factors, the socio-economic factors, where tribal ties, the state structure, equalities and inequalities are examined in their roles as structurally determining factors for the community, next – the factors related to and resulting from identification are examined, and finally attention is paid to need, object desire and compulsion.

The focus of the second chapter is on the effective acts of the individual as a result of their intentions. ‘Pre-mental’, mental and ‘post-mental’ structures are examined. The five parts focus on: neurotic, psychotic and perverse structures, individual and supra-individual respectively, later – the functioning while playing a role, next to that – structuring the supra-personal structure and its interactions with the personality, further – structuring the community through the potential of the personality and its surrender, and finally – the redistribution and partial loss of autonomy in the surrender of social and biological capacities as a process of differentiation and structuring the supra-personal space.

In the third chapter the PhD student continues to work on the process of self-differentiation of the supra-personal structure, with the three separate focuses being on: first – defined by him as a “self-differentiating role structure”, based on the collection and additional redistribution by the community of the capacity surrendered by the individuals themselves, then – on the freedom and ‘non-freedom’ resulting from this, finally – on the so-called “epistemological perspective”, according to which the Signifier is recognized as the Signified.

The final part reviews the main arguments for the role structuring of the community, based on the phenomenological order of projected individual unconscious desires and conscious needs in a common, suprapersonal space.

I am deeply convinced that the public defense reviews are valuable feedback. Therefore, I would like to recommend the PhD student to continue to deal with the issues he has worked on while preparing this dissertation, and to further transform it into a monograph. One of the reasons is that I believe that the therapy practice examples included are one of the key valuable aspects of the work and they definitely are going to drag the attention and nurture the interest of a broader pool of readers.

The text actively interprets the Role Theory, examples of role behavior and role performance are given. I find that Alexander Petrov well defines the main part of the concepts he works with, skillfully poses, clarifies and interprets important, relevant theories, for example, Role Theory, Group Theory.

I would like to make a few specific remarks:

- In many places there is an unnecessary insertion of the cardinal numeral "one" which appears to be a text parasite (*citations in Bulgarian version of the review follow that is inappropriate to translate and interpret here, in the English version of it!*)

- It is necessary to specify the source of citation of one place in the text (p. 18): "In a modification of this concept (*it is probably Zhivko Oshavkov's classification of human groupings, presented previously*) Nikolay Tilkidzhiev considers the following structure of the community" it is not clear where Tilkidzhiev makes the modification the PhD student mentions.

- There are variations in the Bulgarian spelling of Claude Levi-Strauss's surname – sometimes it is with a hyphen, sometimes – without, and in the bibliography the author is enlisted as ‘Strauss Claude-Levy’, instead of ‘Levi-Strauss, Claude’.

These remarks, however, do not affect the indisputable relevance of the text, its interpretative qualities and the significance of the scientific work. The Lacanian discourse on social interactions is particularly interesting. And the thing I find highly valuable in the here revised dissertation is that it neither reduces nor over-banalizes at all, but very carefully interprets micro- and macro-social situations through the prism of the already considered classic French psychoanalytic school and its achievements from the middle and the second half of the last century.

Last but not least: the PhD student presents an adequate and correct abstract of his work, and also applies a sufficient number of completely relevant publications. Particularly interesting is his point of view, expressed in one of the articles – “Social Role and Subject”, published in the electronic journal of the Varna Free University, where the “psychic work” in the transformation of the individual from omnipotent – into a social being is considered.

But in conclusion: I highly appreciate the research and interpretation work put into writing this dissertation. This is a work that shows undeniable scientific and practical skills and theoretical depth, but the work also reflects the stable support provided by the scientific supervisor. An inspiring collaboration that has produced a wonderful result! Therefore, I propose awarding him the PhD degree.

21.04.2025

Sofia

Reviewer:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

/Assoc. Prof. N. Dimitrov, PhD/