

OPINION

of

Nina Dimitrova, DSc, Professor at the Institute for Philosophy and Sociology
at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
regarding the dissertation of Assos. Prof. Vladimir Teoharov
on the topic "Metaphysics and Psychology of Spiritual Ages",
submitted for obtainment of the scientific and academic degree "Doctor of Sciences"
in professional field 2.3 Philosophy (History of Philosophy) at the Philosophical Faculty
of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

Vladimir Teoharov is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University, PhD. He has provided a comprehensive background on his lectures at other universities abroad, as well on his specializations. He is the secretary of the Bulgarian Kant Society and a member of the Nietzsche International Society. Teoharov is a renowned translator of philosophical literature and anthology compiler in the field of philosophy of religion. He is the author of three monographs (2005, 2008, 2018), as well as numerous studies and articles.

The dissertation discussed is a synthesis of the basic attitudes in these previous studies. They fall under the common denominator of the author's preferences for ideas of *fullness* over those of *perfection* (as factors shaping the dynamics of European culture). The tension between them is important for understanding the spirit of the dissertation. The concept that denotes human growth is *fullness*. (I can only assume that the attitude towards perfection could also come from its "degeneration" in *progressism* – because history which according to the Christian view is the history of salvation, over time, has initially transformed itself into a quest for perfection within the world, and gradually into a history of progress – as Gianni Vattimo notes).

The author derives the arguments in favor of these preferences from the thoughts of many of his "eternal companions" (if I can use Merezhkovsky's expression) – Kant, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Rudolf Otto, Gustav Spet, Jung and Freud, Thomas Bernhard, etc., etc. The findings of the studies conducted so far are incorporated into the fabric of the work presented. The relative isolation and fragmentation of the exhibit would probably be explained in the proposed structure – it is intended to fit the structure of Mahler's Third Symphony.

The dissertation research deals with the spiritual ages of man and his world, guided by the principle of "the synchronicity of the great Time of Culture". Thus, in the first part,

questions about the formation of man, the questions about Bildung, are central. The emphasis is on the concept of education in its broad sense of creation, growth – formation, i.e. as denoting fundamental human activity. As we know, Gadamer defines it as a leading humanist concept. In his view, the victory of Bildung over the Latin *fōrma* in Germany is not accidental, since "Bildung" contains "Bild". This is also shown in the dissertation. The English and French correspondence of the German word are among the meanings of the Greek παιδεία – education, upbringing, culture.

Reflections on the various nuances in the use of Bildung are also found in the second part of the work, in relation to the language variations in German classics.

The problem of growth, the *fulfillment* (I use this word in view of the author's preferences) of personality, is the search for oneself in the perspective of the actions of Christ. Discussing the personal and cultural ages of the notion of faith, Vladimir Teoharov distinguishes existential faith from that based on the cognitive act.

The analysis then focuses on the personal and cultural ages of understanding of God in the pre-Kant tradition. The author carefully and thoroughly analyzes Greek thought, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin. The analysis is followed by a careful review of the perceptions of religion, of the changes in them in historical aspect.

The second part is devoted to *Maturity*; the emblematic composition that marks it is Kant's article "What is Enlightenment?" discussed by Vl. Teoharov in detail. Referring to the Message of the App. Paul to the Corinthians, the author defines maturity as a race for an *imperishable* purpose, compared to the first age, which, again in the language of the app. Paul is defined as a race for *corrupt* purpose.

This part also discusses the problem of the unconscious. The purpose of the proposed annals is to reiterate the advantage of the idea of completeness (the author's basic attitude). Thus, previous research on the relationship between psychoanalysis – Christian metaphysics (the author critically discusses the work of Deleuze and Gatari "Anti Oedipus"), on the concept of Jung's archetype (sustained in the spirit of the Kantian tradition), on the relation psychology – theology, and others, is organically incorporated here. In support of his thesis, Teoharov repeatedly draws on Thomas Bernhard's novel "The Old Masters".

In this part, the author also raises an extrinsic dispute with Tseko Torbov regarding the translation of Kant's concept Anschauung as *наглед* (however, it is close to the 1915 translation of Nikolai Loski – *нагледна представа*). Teoharov's counter-proposal is to designate space and temporality as a priori incarnations of *pure insight* – this translation, in his view, seems both Jewish and Protestant (p. 85). I would like to comment here not on the

translation, but on the allegation of Kant's closeness to the Jewish tradition, to which I certainly have reservations. If the Jewish tradition steps on the definitive "God is", this, in my opinion, cannot be said of Kant, including his "Opus postumum", which was widely discussed in this dissertation. Respectively, I also express reservations about the similarly formulated scientific contribution item 5.

I have similar reservations about the "untimely excursion" on contemporary Protestant theology, included in the second part. A comparative study is proposed between Karl Barth and Paul Tillich on key terms. My impression of reading this paragraph is about the harmony in their views. But how is it possible with such serious differences; how the gap between faith and culture (resp. between religion and culture), as affirmed by Barth, relates to Tillich's *theology of culture*; isn't it better to trust the words of Barth himself, who describes his relationship with Tillich as "human closeness, but a theological distance"?

The third part of the work is devoted to *Wisdom*. The author's contention is that, at a fundamental level, there is a methodological correspondence between Nietzsche's third age of spirit and Kant's figure of legislative reason.

In a similar manner to the previous parts, different thinkers are compared here in pairs – Kierkegaard and Kant, Kant and Nietzsche, Bernhard and Kierkegaard. What is sought generally fits in with the reasoning behind the overall design of the study. In Kant and Kierkegaard, Teoharov finds this common in the rejection of school metaphysics; in that Kierkegaard *also* thinks that God is not some transcendent being, but an inner center of personality, conceiving the principle of the structure of existence (p. 134 – 135). Isn't this principle similarity to the idea of God contrary to the thesis of the Judeo-Protestant character of Kant's philosophy?

The author seeks the common between Kant and Nietzsche in functioning of the experimental method in philosophy, and – again – in the direction of a joint critique of speculative metaphysics. The parallel between Kierkegaard and Bernhard is drawn in terms of repetition as a figure of existence.

The final section includes some of the author's reflections on the *metaphysics and psychology of dialogue* – Martin Buber, on Gustav Spet's *metaphysical and psychological motive of Justification*, on the origin of the problem of the sacred – Rudolf Otto, as well as on the *perspectivism of the meetings of metaphysics – psychology*.

Among the many smaller and relatively distinct reflections on philosophy and poetry, I would distinguish those on the metaphysics and psychology of Hope, especially the excursion on Moltmann's "Theology of Hope".

The summary is sparingly done, but it accurately reflects the dissertation.

In conclusion: My overall impressions of the work are for an original philosophical study with clearly recognizable intellectual profile, also manifested in the formulation of the contributing moments. The result of years of in-depth interest, this research was conducted at a high theoretical level and executed in magnificent language for which every reader would appreciate. Without hesitation, I will support the ambition of its author to obtain the degree of "Doctor of Science" requested.

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