

## **OPINION**

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

on the dissertation of **Vladimir Dimitrov Teoharov**

entitled

**„Metaphysics and Psychology of Spiritual Ages”**

for obtaining scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophical Sciences”

In Professional Field 2.3. Philosophy (History of Philosophy)

### **1. General impression of the dissertation**

Although I am not obliged to do so, I would like to thank at the outset the colleagues at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University for giving me the opportunity to suffer the collision and ultimately to experience the peculiar (insofar as it is not only intellectual) feeling of pleasure in reading this extremely provocative and inspiring work, with its all-pervasive erudition and experimentation, which consists of 263 pages, symbolically divided into three parts, containing four, five and thirteen sub-sections respectively. Listening to Mahler's Third Symphony helped me come into a final consonance with the three leading theses of the dissertation, though in many places I needed atonal support by Schoenberg's Pieces for piano to follow the course of their defense. My acquaintance with Bernhard also helped, but only to realise my facilely reading of his works.

### **2. Substantial analysis of the scientific contributions**

As a member of the Scientific Jury, I am obliged to state that, formally and sufficiently substantively speaking, the dissertation fulfills the basic legal requirement (under Art. 37 of the RA of DASRBA) to obtain a Doctor of Sciences degree, namely to represent a “significant and original contribution to science”, achieved through “theoretical summaries and solutions to major scientific or applied scientific problems that correspond to the contemporary achievements.” First, the dissertation aims to solve the applied scientific problem of actualising the possibility for systematical typology of the dynamics of European culture that underlies our co-existence. The magnitude and originality of Dr. Teoharov's achievement is directly related to the dimensions of the consciously-assumed risk of conducting the philosophical and scientific experiment of

the dissertation, insofar as I view it as a radical (speaking in the spirit of dissertation – both tremendous and wise) attempt at transcendental philosophical Reconciliation of Kant’s project of a Critical metaphysics with its more or less psychologised metacritical versions that set on relativising the faculty of reason with a view of the problem of finitude, and accordingly of the paradigmatic ontological and transcendental theological tenets about the linguistic essence, inter-essentialness and interestedness of human existence. Whether the experiment is successful with a view to its scientific results I find it too untimely to ask. However, for the purposes of the defensibility of this experimentation, I find its genuine philosophical setup and stylistically original conduct as being quite sufficient and convincing in view of the applied metaphysical perspectives of Kierkegaard's experimentalising psychology and Nietzsche's experimental philosophy, comprehended in turn in the context of what is taught in Kant's lectures on metaphysics about the reasonably acceptable manifold of *metaphysica applicata*, as well as through the lens of his late project of transcendental theology.

In view of the conducted substantive analyses and syntheses in the dissertation, I find it particularly impressive that according to the author's self-assessment in the abstract, the experiment was conducted through exactly (and certainly not accidentally!) 12 (twelve) contributions, which, in view of the author's hermeneutical methodological principle of synchronicity, also seems to be understood as suggesting the simultaneous ascent of steps/routes that internally construct the fabric of work. Let me summarise, despite my very modest competence in vast subject fields, remarkably outlined and correlated to inter-penetrability in the dissertation, and without putting any irony in my words, I can say that even the most provocative interpretative statements of its author are solidly protected in view of the methodologically fundamental route, highlighted as the penultimate contribution of the work, namely the original analysis of Nietzsche's experimental philosophical turn to his heuristic project of a perspectivist psychology of metaphysics. From this point of view, the thirteenth contribution can be revealed, which seems to me that inwardly upholds the scientific theoretical consistency of Dr. Teoharov's dissertation and can be defined as a program for practical-dogmatic metaphysics centered around Kant’s and Schelling’s idea of a synchronous age typology of the dynamic forms of European Spirituality and Culture, but mostly offers an

alternative to the post-neo-Kantian program, once signed by our common Bulgarian Teacher in Classical German philosophy Professor I. S. Stefanov. From this perspective, I can confidently say that the 13th contribution in question speaks eloquently of the superior qualities of the candidate as a researcher and lecturer who pays tribute to the Teacher, but does not hesitate to point to and steadily follow his own path to the Truth.

### **3. Critical notes and recommendations**

Dr. Teoharov's dissertation has given me a great deal not only because of the unexpected connections and trends outlined in the history of European thought and culture, but above all with regard to the possibility to critically re-evaluate my own interest in the Kantian program of Critical metaphysics in view of the proposed personal and spiritual age typology. Some specific analyses in the dissertation have become a source of critical inspiration for my own research agenda in the sense of warning about the extremes of the repulsion from the theoretical-dogmatic (speculative) metaphysics of tradition, such as: the key analysis of the concepts of force/faculty and action/suffering in relating Nietzsche's perspectivist metaphysics to Leibniz's monadological model; the interpretation of the concept of person(ality) in the parallel between Kant and Kierkegaard with a view to grounding the project of transcendental theology, etc.

However, it turns out that I cannot provide a substantial criticism of the work, since for almost every one of them I found justification through the lens of the defended project for perspectivist practical-dogmatic metaphysics. The most question (inserted in exclamation) marks and marginal notes to the text I jotted down against the proposed corrections in the translation of the concepts *Anschauung*, *Sinnlichkeit* and *Einbildungskraft* which are related to the interpretation of the problem of schematism and imagination with a view of the metacritical paradigm of the primacy and supremacy of language to the understanding and reason. However, such a bold move by the author was finally justified in view of the problems of education and culture, interpreted from the perspectivist reading of Kant's idea of transcendental theology, whereby the proposed philosophizing through the concepts of "insight", "sensuality/feelingness" and "faculty of embodiment/incarnation" somehow comes into consonance (here

Schoenberg helped decisively!) with the sought second contribution of the dissertation – the antinomy between the visual and auditory senses.

Moreover, puzzling at first glance is the lack of any reference to both the local and Anglophone traditions in the interpretation of the thinkers discussed, especially given the continued interest in the three magi of the dissertation (Kant, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche). However, I find the justification in the author's methodological self-restraint in view of the paradigmatic statement (5th contribution) of his work, i.e. there is a strict adherence to the discussion of only the most prominent representatives of the Judeo-Protestant synthesis that shaped the German Classical Culture. Exception seems to be made almost only for representatives of classical Russian culture, which the author deeply links with the German through the historical sense of guilt and in view of the anti-rhetorical pathos and completeness of European thought and culture. This attitude seems to me somewhat justified if I see it as a (too) hidden invitation for dialogue with the representatives of the local philosophical culture, especially with those of them who stands somehow beyond homelessness and provincialism exposed in the final excursus on “the transformations of Bulgarian homeness”.

Finally, I will make two brief remarks. First, it seems to me that all too often Kant's words must reveal irony, as is the case with author's assumption of implicit presence of the doctrine of two worlds of Nietzsche's metaphysicians within the Critical doctrine of method. Second, qualifying half of the contributions of the dissertation “as a precedent in world literature” seems to me an excessively strong claim that is difficult to defend/prove, especially in view of the excessive turnover of contemporary philosophical commentary rhetoric in the over-mature world race for academic recognition. In justification, however, I dare to suspect only wise irony on the part of Dr. Teoharov in the perspective of the last (12th) contribution and through the lens of the requirements of DASRBA.

#### **4. Compliance with the minimal national requirements for the scientific degree of Doctor of Sciences**

According to the reference submitted by the candidate to the National Center for Information and Documentation, Dr. Vladimir Teoharov meets the minimum national requirements for the degree of “Doctor of Sciences”.

I have no joint publications or projects with the candidate.

### **5. Conclusion**

The merits of the dissertation highlighted above, as well as the communicated (un)justified critical notes and recommendations, give me sufficient reason to vote convincingly and positively for awarding the scientific degree of “Doctor of Sciences” in Professional Field 2.3. Philosophy (History of Philosophy) to **Vladimir Dimitrov Teoharov**.

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