

Statement

by Assoc. Prof. Iassen Zahariev Zahariev, Department of Philosophy and Sociology, New Bulgarian University

on

the competition for occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty 2.3. Philosophy, announced in the State Gazette 97/13.11.2020, with candidate Sin. Assistant Christo Petrov Gyoshev

I. Assessment of the minimum national requirements

The information provided shows that the candidate meets the standards of the minimum national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor" in Professional field 2.3 Philosophy. The candidate has the required number of points in all groups of indicators in accordance with the requirements for participation in a contest under the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for the Conditions and Procedures for Acquiring Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions.

II. Research / Creative work and results

The research and creative activity of the candidate is in the field of moral and social philosophy. Undoubtedly, the main emphasis should be placed on the presented monograph "Identity and Normativity".

The book is an indisputable contribution to the presentation and elucidation of a key problem not only for modern philosophy - the problem of identity. The author skillfully outlines from the very beginning the context of his research, pointing out the different possibilities for interpretation of the concept. The starting point in the study is John Locke's psychological concept of personality. Then, it is developed towards Derek Parfitt's theory that is one of the main accents in the book.

However, the main purpose of the study is not to present different concepts, although even in this form it would be very useful. The author's aim is also to trace the normative consequences that result from the adoption and development of these concepts. In this sense, the title of the work is well chosen and aptly conveys the content of the book.

Gyoshev traces in detail the origin and development of the psychological concept of personality, in which memory works as a gravitational centre, holding in the field of consciousness the various moments of individual experience. Basic concepts such as "assimilation", "consciousness", "I", "person", "personality", "quasi-memory", etc. are skillfully defined and analyzed. At the same time,

the connection between the various contents embedded in these concepts and their moral implications is not left out. Can we accept, for example, and on what grounds, that two or more persons coexist in the same person, and how does this assumption relate to the question of moral responsibility? The text is full of specific moral cases, as well as many thought experiments. It is also impressive that using the latter, the author simultaneously analyzes the validity of the thought experiment as a methodological tool in philosophical theory in general.

The analysis and arguments in favour of Parfit's reductionism occupy a central place in the text. This is the compositional and semantic centre of the book. Gyoshev asserts that the question of identity cannot be kept within the framework of a single concept, which is constantly preserved despite the changes that occur in the personality. This illusory substantial unity of the personality is reduced to a multitude of separate facts, more or less interconnected in the flow of "psychological continuity." Thus the question of personality is reduced to the connection between the various mental facts, which can be described without the aid of the notion of personal identity. The acceptance and defence of this thesis lead to a series of counter-intuitive conclusions and moral consequences. Both the ideas of personal interest and responsibility and the whole "practical rationality" that gives meaning to both our past and future experience are in question.

A thorough analysis and explication of these consequences, paradoxical from the point of view of common sense, is one of the indisputable merits of the book. Parfit's reductionism leads to the need for a complete "redefinition of our understandings of rationality and morality." Gyoshev not only traces the various aspects of this effort but also shows his own attitude towards it. The text does not end simply with a summary of the main theses, but finally offers a look at both the possibility of the moral acceptance of reductionism and the possible perspectives in the development of the reductionist view.

The theoretical statements in the book are presented in a clear and convincing form in the light of specific critical arguments. Gyoshev's book is a contribution to the study of identity.

Hristo Gyoshev's research program and publications in the field of social philosophy show the same depth and consistency of thought demonstrated in his monograph.

II. Teaching

Hristo Gyoshev fulfills all the requirements regarding the hours of teaching and the measurement of the student's approval at NBU. I would like to add in respect to this criterion his active engagement in numerous seminars organized by the Department of Philosophy and Sociology.

IV. Administrative and community service

Hristo Gyoshev is an active participant in the administration. First, he was director of the philosophy program from 2006 to 2012. Since 2017, he has been the head of the Philosophy and Sociology Department, doing an excellent job. It is worth emphasizing that as a Head of the

department Gyoshev has created and organized two new bachelor programs - Philosophy in English and Philosophy as a distance learning program.

VI. Conclusion:

Considering the above, I firmly believe Christo Petrov Gyoushev's application for occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty 2.3. "Philosophy" is more than convincing, which is why I fully support it.

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