

REVIEW

of the research achievements and publications of
Assoc. Prof. Boyan Krassimirov Manchev, DSc

For the competition procedure for Professor in the field 2.3. Philosophy
at the New Bulgarian University

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Darin Tenev
University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Prof. Boyan Manchev, Doctor of Sciences, has applied for the competition for a professor with a major habilitation thesis, besides which he has presented eleven monographs, some of which were published not only in Bulgarian but also in French, Italian, English or Japanese, as well as 99 studies and articles, some co-authored, published in more than six languages. He has presented also three co-authored monographs, three fiction books and five publications of which he is the author. 31 of the studies were published in referenced scientific publications. Prof. Boyan Manchev has participated in numerous conferences and scientific forums, he has been the leader and participant of many projects, international and national, he has supervised many graduate students. He has been invited on many occasions to give lectures at prestigious foreign universities on three continents – Europe, Asia and America. He was program director and later vice president of the International College of Philosophy - Paris. He is a member of various international scientific organizations and part of the editorial board of four of the most authoritative European journals for criticism and philosophy. I would like to stress from the start that the candidate not only meets, but exceeds all formal requirements – both related to scientific and pedagogical activities – of the competition for the position of professor. I would add that the candidate is a key figure not only in the European academic context, but also in the field of contemporary art.

The main habilitation work presented for the competition is the great book *World and Freedom. Transcendental Philosophy and Modal Ontology*, over 700 pages long.¹ Therefore, in the lines below, I will focus primarily on this important monograph. But it should be pointed out that *World and Freedom* is part of a large philosophical project developed by Boyan Manchev for

¹ Боян Манчев, *Свят и свобода. Трансцендентална философия и модална онтология*, София: НБУ, 2023. The pages for all quotations from this book will be given in brackets in the main text.

nearly thirty years – since his doctoral dissertation from 1997 and *The Unimaginable*, published in 2003.² As part of the unfolding of the same project, I also see his translation, editing and compilation activities over the years, from the publication of Jean-Luc Nancy's *Corpus* (Sofia: LIK, 2003) through the thematic issues of the journal *Rue Descartes* on Metamorphosis (2009) and the Subject of the Political (2010) to the recently published edition of H.F. Lovecraft (Sofia: Meteor, 2022), where all the glossary, comments and afterword are also his. In recent years, the word “project” has in many ways been discredited by the usages of the cultural administration and by the growing bureaucratization of scientific activity, but Manchev’s philosophical program reveals a project in the strong sense of a philosophical risk, opening new horizons. If I had to name this project most succinctly, I would call it the Modal Ontology Project. The phrase “modal ontology”, borrowed from its fleeting appearance in Jean-Luc Nancy's *Corpus*, and developed conceptually by Manchev for over twenty years now, can be seen as a point of intersection for the various directions in which his philosophy unfolds, a thread that connects his philosophical fantastic, figurology, philosophy of the image, criticism of contemporary art, analyzes of literary works and the philosophy of literary theory, philosophy of theater, work on the history of philosophy and, last but not least, hypercritical and metacritical readings of philosophical heritage.

In a narrower sense, Manchev's modal ontology can be said to be composed of two closely related directions. On the one hand are philosophical fantastic and figurology, and on the other – metacritique and hypercritique. Schematically speaking, Manchev’s figurology starts from the understanding that the figure is “a dynamic category that, in transcending the fictional figurative form, appears as a critical potential of the form to think itself, as well as to operate as a tool for reflexive intervention in the field of production and the operation of the forms themselves”.³ In other words, figurology deals with the self-reflexive transformability of forms. This allows both a philosophical rethinking of the role of mythical and literary figures such as those of Arachne, Pandora or Eros, to reveal their conceptual potential, as well as going below the rigid order of established philosophical concepts to highlight their dynamic basis. Philosophical fantastic is properly concerned with this second side, which does not simply consider but demonstrates (or

² Боян Манчев, *Наративната система в късните романи на Достоевски*, дисертация, Софийски университет, София, 1998; Боян Манчев, *Невъобразимото. Опити по философия на образа*, София: НБУ, 2003.

³ Boyan Manchev, “The New Arachna. Towards a Poetics of Dynamic Forms”, *Performance Research*, Vol 20, 1/ 2015, p. 15.

simply "monsters", i.e. shows) “the working of the concept in the modality of desire,” where desire “unfolds the necessity of the concept as possibility”.⁴ Philosophical fantastic explodes not concepts, but their ossification, it “chaoticizes” the strict epistemic orders, bringing to the fore the transformative and self-transformative charge of the conceptual. Figurology and philosophical fantastic are therefore developed in this project as complementary sides of the same movement.

The other direction is that of meta- and hypercritique. Hypercritique is an “ontological radicalization of critical thought” that asks how existence is possible, following “the demand of the immanent crisis of experience.”⁵ Critique in the Kantian sense becomes hyper-critique, roughly speaking, when the question of the conditions of possibility turns to the ontological plane of the epistemic order. This necessarily presupposes that criticism should turn inward and transcend itself, face its own crisis – and, from a place of experience which no longer belongs to the order of constitution and the hierarchy between the transcendental and the empirical, – and reveal how the metamorphoses of existence inscribe a transformative element at the very heart of the conceptual order. At this point, hypercritique includes an immanent excessive element that makes it both self-overcoming and decisive (“decide” is one of the senses of the ancient Greek word *krinein* to be found in both "criticism" and "crisis"). “In this sense, critique overcomes itself.” (World and Freedom, p. 118) In its overcoming or self-surpassing (i.e., in its onto-epistemological gesture towards redefining the very conditions for a critique that asks about the conditions of possibility), such a critique necessarily contains a self-reflexive moment that is also both epistemological and ontological. In this self-reflexive moment, critique is a critique of critique, or meta-critique. Metacritique, however, is not simply a neutral turning of critique to itself, but a revealing of the semantic (or, more precisely, the onto-semantic) potential of the concepts it works with beyond imposed usages and conventions. Thus, from a logical point of view, hypercritique is preceded by metacritique, which expands the semantic scope of the source system (p. 29), so that in a subsequent move, hypercritically, the work of concepts can be intensified to make them drive their immanent excess.

The two directions most schematically outlined above are, of course, not unrelated. On the contrary. There is a clear transition from metacritique to hypercritique to fantastic insofar as (1)

⁴ Боян Манчев, *Нов Атанор. Начала на философската фантастика*, София: Метеор, 2019, с. 19.

⁵ Boyan Manchev, *L'Altération du monde. Pour une esthétique radicale*, Paris : Lignes, 2009, pp. 26-27.

bringing out unactualized semantic potentialities (the task of metacritique with its hypothetics) leads to (2) the dynamization of concepts to the excessive point of their crisis (which hypercritique does with its thetics), which in turn allows for (3) conceptual reconfiguration, both retroactively, in view of already existing philosophical concepts and systems, and projectively, towards a non-predetermined onto-epistemic experience (which is the main role of the philosophical fantastic and its hyperthetics, grasped as simultaneously opening a path backwards and forwards). In other words, the philosophical fantastic is the horizon of the hypercritical movement. (Cf. *World and Freedom*, p. 119)

The monograph *World and Freedom*, presented as a habilitation thesis for the competition, should be read in view of this broader conceptual framework of Manchev's impressive philosophical project. This project is, so to speak, the most immediate, immanent context of the book.

This context however is not the only one. *World and Freedom* is a work on Kant's critical philosophy. Its main task can be seen as ontologizing Kant. This wording needs clarification, which I will do in a moment. Before that, I would like to point out some of the other contexts of the book. And the first to be mentioned is the context of the Bulgarian studies on Kant. Referring to what has already been done in Bulgaria in this direction is not just a gesture of scientific good faith, but also an active participation in a lively environment, to the development of which Manchev contributes. Here one can also point to the wider context of philosophy and humanities in Bulgaria in general, insofar as *World and Freedom* (this, by the way, is also true for all his other books) is intensively included in it, discussing, explicitly or implicitly, with a number of Bulgarian thinkers and scholars. The huge number of texts which Manchev writes and publishes abroad, the great activity he develops abroad, have not prevented him from actively helping to expand and deepen the critical debate in Bulgaria.

At the same time, however, the book's very gesture on Kant is polemical, a gesture of criticism towards a spreading and trendy rejection of the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that became fashionable with the rise of flat ontology and object-oriented ontology. Against authors such as Graham Harman, Manchev undertakes to show not just why we should not forget Kant, but what is the contemporary stake of Kant's critical philosophy beyond the textbook clichés to which

it has been reduced. In this context, no longer national, but global, Manchev's daring gesture has almost no analogues. Catherine Malabu's 2014 book *Before Tomorrow* is here a conceptual ally of *World and Freedom*, the first parts of which were written at the same time or earlier.

I will mention just two more of the contexts in which the book is inscribed and to which it refers. One is that of twentieth-century French thought, and in particular Deleuze and his legacy. The modal ontology project is a post-Deleuzian ontological project developed in the spirit of the powerful wave of thinkers representing the philosophical moment of the 1960s.⁶ Manchev himself is one of the first to point out and critically analyze the return to ontology in modern philosophy.⁷ The second is that of operational linguistics and ideogenetic theory, built in the second half of the 1960s by Krasimir Manchev and Hristo Todorov and further developed by them and their associates. Both for *World and Freedom* and for the whole project of modal ontology, operational linguistics and the ideogenetic theory it deploys play a key role in enabling a reexamination of the relations between language, linguistics and ontology and revealing language as a "domain of condition of the possibility of philosophical 'universals'" (*World and Freedom*, p. 269). The ideogenetic theory makes possible the hypercritical gesture that unites the epistemological and the ontological levels for Kant: "the effective correlation of the relation to the fact with the relation to the ability to know leads to the possibility of understanding the ability to know itself as an (existential) fact [...] – as a potentiality of the order of phenomena" (p. 281). Thus, the ontologization of Kant accompanies the demonstration of the ontological potential of this linguistic theory.

The overlapping and intertwining of these and other contexts testifies both to the multifacetedness of Boyan Manchev's book, and to the important role it plays today in different ways and for different academic audiences.

As mentioned, the main task of the work can be seen as ontologizing Kant. However, this wording requires stipulations and clarification. First of all, the notion that the three Kantian Critiques, and in particular the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the main subject of the monograph, break with ontology to turn to epistemology is problematic and has been problematized earlier – say by

⁶ See Patrice Magnilier (dir.), *Le moment philosophique des années 1960 en France*, Paris : PUF, 2011.

⁷ See Боян Манчев, „Посткритически онтологии. Проблемът за битието у Жил Делюз и Алан Бадиу“, *Демократически преглед*, кн. 51, 2003.

Heidegger and Cashier in the late 1920s. In a sense, a continuation of the same problematization can be found in *World and Freedom*. The insistence is that the ontological plan is already present in the First Critique, and the question is that its potentialities be actualized and unfolded, unfolded to the point of crisis for Kant's project itself, a point of hypercritical excess immanent to his system. However, it is no less important to emphasize that Kant's ontologization goes through a rethinking of ontology and the history of ontology. In the phrase "ontologizing Kant" it should not be taken for granted what "ontology" means. In Manchev's project there is a radical refusal to substantivize existence and to reduce it to what is commonly called "Being". This is also one of the important highlights of the book. The reconstruction of the history of ontology shows the series of different substantialization of existence. (This aspect of the monograph is very close to Heidegger's deconstruction of the history of ontology. At the same time, the notion of existence that Manchev develops is markedly different from Heidegger's, insofar as it is an immanent positive ontology of transformability.) Having dealt with the history of substantialization of existence before Kant, in a key move of his analysis of the First Critique, Manchev demonstrates how Kant himself performs a similar substantialization and thus hides from himself the ontological layer of his own critical project. I will come back to this point. Before that, however, I should point out that the rethinking of ontology in a modal key in *World and Freedom* treads on Kant's modal concepts. In the interpretation proposed in the book, "modalities do not express (simply) the relation to the faculty of cognition, but its very operation" (p. 251). Modality is the place where the effectiveness of knowledge is revealed, and therefore its ontological plane. "This is why, in the end, we must maintain that modality, which has to do with cognition, that is, with concepts rather than with things, has a pro-ontological dimension in the strong sense of the word: it names becoming-effective in the very order of the real . [...] Modalities thus seem to reveal the productive power or basis of knowledge itself." (p. 252) From all this it is clear that what was conventionally called the ontologization of Kant is at the same time no less a "Kantization" of the ontology, which in this case would mean the modalization of ontology, the disclosure of the ontology as a modal ontology. In order to do this, however, it is necessary to extricate Kant from his stereotypical image imposed by a long tradition beginning with the Königsberg thinker himself. All this suggests that *World and Freedom* is not simply a book about Kant, but through and with Kant, and even in spite of him: "This is the way in which Kant's philosophy (of freedom) will be thought – the way in which this book will act on it, with it, through it and even – in spite of it" (p. 13). To these prepositions others

must be added as well: the book is in a sense against Kant, and also under Kant, inasmuch as it analyzes, so to speak, the underground waters of the Kantian system, the subliminal limits of Kant. But the book is also after and above Kant—above Kant, because it proposes a move that should supercritically complete Kant’s radical critical beginning.

The "ontologization" of Kant and the "Kantovization" of ontology meet on the edge of hypercritical modal ontology.

The starting point of modal ontology is the statement that what is, is more than what is.⁸ This seemingly contradictory statement actually points to the transformability of what is, thought immanently. If there is nothing transcendent, if nothing exists outside of beings, then its transformability, that it can change, is the modal point of how existent transcends itself, is in more than itself. This “more” then should not be thought quantitatively, but as a kind of “place” of modalities.

Specifically with regard to Kant, however, Boyan Manchev’s work chooses a very specific focal point, which is what reveals the stakes of talking about the German thinker today, and that is the question of freedom. The modal interpretation of the First Critique is based on thinking of freedom as necessity. Such a position is at odds with the dominant direction in which Kant has been read and interpreted. Besides, the unorthodoxy of this situation is obvious: after all, necessity and freedom are usually thought of as opposed. However, for Manchev, freedom under Kant requires such a rethinking of the modal category of necessity, which allows the epistemological and the ontological to be connected. As a matter of fact, the very turn to the category of necessity is a strong polemical gesture against a prevailing tendency to emphasize contingency, most obviously associated with Quentin Meillassoux. Boyan Manchev, who in earlier works has already proposed his interpretation of contingency as an activity of potentiality⁹, does not at all reject the category of contingency, and this makes his interpretation much more complex. How to think necessity that does not abandon the notion of contingency in the way it was developed

⁸ See Боян Манчев, „Що е онтология“, В: Димитър Вацов, Боян Манчев, *Що е онтология? Насрецини определения*, София: Метеор, 2023, с. 68. Earlier formulations of this claim that there is nothing present beyond what is present except its ability to change. Cf. Боян Манчев, *Тялото-Метаморфоза*, София: Алтера, 2007, с. 223; Boyan Manchev, *L'Altération du monde*, op. cit., p. 251.

⁹ See Boyan Manchev, *L'Altération du monde*, op. cit., p.84-86.

in philosophy and science in the 1960s and early 1970s? Turning to Kant as turning to the question of necessity—and the necessity of freedom at that—is a real challenge and, I think, one of the most powerful gestures of this book.

I will highlight several moments in the rethinking of necessity and the discussion of the question of freedom that are developed in the monograph.

Boyan Manchev distinguishes two types of necessity. The first necessity is that which is connected with nature, a natural necessity. This is the necessity of natural laws. It is with this necessity that the modal category of necessity itself is usually associated. However, Manchev highlights a second necessity, which I would call temporarily practical necessity. It appears to be related not to the First but to the *Critique of Practical Reason*. This necessity has already been referred to freedom, to free will, and to the concept of duty. Although it is developed in the Second Critique, the place of this second necessity, as shown by *World and Freedom*, is very clearly outlined already in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The two types of necessity are initially discussed through the problem of causality, which in turn also allows for two orders causality reconstructed by Boyan Manchev: natural causality and spontaneous causality. At first sight, there is no direct connection between the two types of causality. Spontaneous causation seems completely unrelated to natural causation. If the natural one allows us to derive natural laws based on observations of phenomena, the spontaneous one does not obey nature, it is empirically unconditioned. However, as Kant himself points out, one has no other access to necessity than through natural causality: “There is no existence that can be known as necessary under the condition of other given phenomena than the existence of actions from given causes according to the laws of causality. So it is not the existence of things (substances), but the existence of their state, of which alone we can know the necessity, and that on the basis of other states which are given in perception, according to the empirical laws of causality.”¹⁰ That is, that through the first causality one arrives at the very concept of natural necessity. The two kinds of necessity and the way we arrive at them through two kinds of causality remain unconnected in a classical reading of Kant. Boyan Manchev’s analysis is

¹⁰ Иммануел Кант, *Критика на чистия разум*, прев. Цеко Торбов, София: Изд. на БАН, 1992, с. с. 33; цит. в *Свят и свобода*, с. 302, 405.

an unfolding of the complex attempt of connecting these two types of causality and, accordingly, the two types of necessity.

In order to trace how this connection is made, I will use as a key a statement that appears in the book's conclusion: "It is necessary that necessity presupposes freedom as a transcendental condition" (p. 582). In the statement, the necessity appears twice, "it is necessary that necessity ...". This is not a stylistic error, but a conceptual move of Manchev's interpretation. Necessity appears twice because it turns on itself. It performs a self-reflexive movement. In this movement by which it refers to itself, natural necessity opens itself up to something that is of a different order. Paradoxically, only in this movement is natural necessity itself constituted as such. This implies a particular, non-classical understanding of nature. Nature opens itself up to something that is not natural causality and so allows its own overcoming. Manchev writes: 'No, there is nothing natural in nature. Nature is a field of necessity, because a necessary cause needs a fact to overcome in order to open up an ontological possibility of freedom.' (p. 209) However, it is precisely this counter-natural moment in nature that constitutes natural necessity as something to be overcome. If the world of necessity is not given, then "it must be posited, insofar as only the existence of a world of necessity allows its overcoming – overcoming in the direction of a necessary world, that is, the world of freedom. Without the presence – or imposition – of an order of necessity, there is no possibility of the initial condition occurring, that is, of establishing a new order through absolute spontaneity, that is, of overcoming." (p. 152) Necessity is necessary in order for there to be an overcoming, that is, in order that freedom is possible. "The necessity of necessity is the necessity of freedom." (p.315) This, however, means that necessity splits into two – a natural necessity and the necessity for that necessity which opens the way to freedom. The rupture of the two causalities "is also a rupture of the modal aspects of necessity: necessity as inevitability and necessity as overcoming" (p. 161). Thus, the two causalities and the two necessities turn out to be connected. But their relationship is complex. Freedom as a necessity of necessity is conditional, it depends on the existence of natural necessity in the sense of "it is impossible not to", i.e. in the sense of "there is no other way", of inevitability, because precisely they must be overcome by the nature of reason and spontaneous causality. At the same time, freedom shows that it does not depend on the condition it imposes, it is unconditional. Along with this, it is a condition, an unconditional condition, of necessity: "freedom is an unconditional condition and therefore the cause of causality"

(p. 158). “The unconditional represents an immanent transcendence that both belongs and does *not* belong to the order, insofar as it is its interruption, but also a switch to another order.” (p. 362)

To describe this particular modal circle, Manchev speaks of “synthetic antinomy” (p. 154), but the key thing about synthetic antinomy is that it works, so to speak, retroactively. The self-reflexivity of necessity, which splits it into inevitability and overcoming, posits the condition (natural necessity) in its very overcoming. It follows that natural necessity, necessity in the classical sense of “Impossibility not to”, is only “a possible order, while the order of freedom will be necessary” (p.146). Or also: “The world of necessity is contingent; the world of freedom is necessary.” (p. 161) Natural necessity, expressed as if by the iron laws of nature, is possible and accidental, things can be otherwise. Necessity in this sense happens, as Deyan Deyanov likes to emphasize, not out of necessity. Which makes freedom necessary – but on a different ontological level; it is not necessary in the same sense, there is a “switch to another order” (p. 362). Before moving on to this new sense of the category of necessity, I would like to point out that the retroactive causality in the synthetic antinomy is seen by Manchev – in line with the post-Prygogine philosophy of science – as metacausality. In Boyan Manchev’s modal ontology project, metacausality is the “retroactive imposition” of order as a “necessary condition of the violation of order.”¹¹ Metacausality includes both the reflexivity of the cause and the “immanent modal declination of the process” that allows one to “recompose the situation that determined the causal vector.”¹²

It has probably become clear that in this interpretation spontaneous causality is not conceived of merely as inherent in the consciousness of the human subject, as something subjective, but as related to existence. Existence is self-reflexive, and in its turn to itself it works metacausally, cleaving the necessity of inevitability and overcoming. But, as I have pointed out, metacausality involves a shift to another order, where necessity already means something other than the classical “impossibility not to”. What is this other sense of necessity? Boyan Manchev's answer is that it is about the general modal meaning “as a relation to things as they should be” (p. 155). Replacing “necessity” with “should” is not innocent. If the first word refers to alethic modalities, the second points to the deontic modality of debt and obligation. The connection of the alethic with the deontic,

¹¹ Боян Манчев, *Нов Атанор*, цит. съч., с. 203.

¹² Пак там, с. 190.

in other words the redefinition of the necessity of freedom in the key of “should” and “must”, is inspired by the ideogenetic theory and allows such a concept of necessity, where things can be different. Necessary in the sense of “should” and “must” implies that the state of affairs at the moment is different and that things may not turn out as they “should”. That is, at the very heart of necessity is introduced the possibility of divergence from what is happening.

Secondly, such a redefinition of necessity inscribes in it an inclination, a direction, an aspiration. “Should” implies an orientation toward what should be, be it a thing, an action, or something else. This is already suggested by the ideogenetic theory, where in so far as in the ideogenetic series “want” precedes “should”, it is integrated into it. Desire is at work in necessity. Translating “should” from the deontic to the ontological realm means that existence itself is directed, tended and inclined. The necessary world of freedom requires a dynamized necessity with direction, tilt, and thrust. It is a direct modalization of being. However, I would question how well-founded this translation is. In other words, to what extent does redefining necessity in the key of “should” deprive us of a strong notion of necessity? Understood in this sense, will the necessity of freedom not turn out to be precisely unnecessary? If we adhere to Boyan Manchev’s strong and risky proposal, however, we will see that with this translation, something that I would call the “de-ontologization” of ontology takes place. The insertion of the deontic operator “should” into existence indicates precisely the point of excess, where what is, is more than what is. In this way, what does not exist—except as a modality—is indicated in the existent. Modal ontology reveals the modal character of existence as something that immanently transcends existence and in this sense is not of its order, even though existence is nothing but this modal alterability of the local orders of existence. I would call this the aporia of modal ontology.

I will note in passing that in Manchev’s hypercritical reading, what connects possibility and necessity with its metacausal split is reality understood as desire. “Kantian reality is desire. At the same time, desire is Kantian necessity.” (p. 291) Desire connects the three categories in the group of modality. However, I will not dwell on this point here.

I will go back to the question of existence. Why is it so difficult to perceive the ontological dimension of freedom in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, so difficult that for centuries almost no one commented on it? *World and Freedom* offers an interesting and complex answer, of which I would like to point out only one aspect here. It has to do with what Kant himself called “subreption”.

Subreption is defined by Kant (who in this respect follows Wolff, as Manchev points out) as the illegitimate transfer of empirical experience into the transcendental field. Transcendental subreption is “the deceptive presentation of a regulative transcendental principle of reason as constitutive” (p. 326). However, Boyan Manchev discovers a subreption made by Kant himself in the First Critique regarding the third and fourth antinomies, when he replaces existence with essence and hypostasizes an unconditional essence. “To put it bluntly: the unconditionality of freedom, the transcendental idea of which was affirmed by the resolution of the Third Antinomy, here becomes the unconditionality of the necessary essence, in a word, of God.” (p. 330) For Manchev, Kant’s subreption is no longer transcendental, but meta-transcendental subreption, which produces a regulative idea with constitutive action: “Metatranscendental subreption therefore has the character not simply of replacing a regulative with a constitutive dimension, but more than that, of producing a regulative idea with constitutive action: it is essentially an idea, which reason itself puts at its foundation.” (p. 344) Metatranscendental subreption thus reveals one of the dimensions of freedom, which limits itself, giving itself a condition that is no longer in the realm of natural laws, but in the realm of reason. In other words, here ontologically existence makes the transcendental turn towards itself, or more precisely the transcendental in its existence self-reflexively refers to itself in order to lay down its own conditions. If this is so, does not metatranscendental subreption show that the transcendental is constituted as transcendental ontologically? The transcendental is constituted as such by something that is not transcendental. What is it that constitutes the transcendental? It cannot be called simply empirical, because the empirical is in turn constituted by the transcendental. I would call it radically empirical. What Manchev describes here is close to Jacques Derrida’s notion of striction, a movement of restriction that conceives the transcendental by placing something non-transcendental in the position of the transcendental of the transcendental, while leaving it excluded from the transcendental it has constituted.¹³ For Manchev, this movement is the movement of existence itself, in which freedom continues to transform its own transcendental conditions. The non-classical conclusion this necessitates is that the dynamics of existence, driven self-reflexively by tendency, inclination or aspiration, give rise to various forms of the transcendental field. There is more than one

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, Paris: Galilée, 1974, p. 272a.

transcendental structure, and each time it occurs as a result of the vortex of existence turning back on itself.

Double conditioning, synthetic antinomy, metacausality, metatranscendental subreption are figures of the self-reflexivity of existence as necessary freedom. All of them show that the necessity of freedom works in two directions – retroactively and progressively. In terms of modalities specifically, this means that necessity reverses the vector of ideogenesis. Ideogenetic theory shows how the genesis of concepts goes from “to be” (existence) through the modalities “can” (possibility), “want” (desire) and “should” (necessity) to “have” (possession), and from there leads through the modalities for perception and thinking to action. According to Boyan Manchev, with freedom we have a reversal of the modal vector, so the direction is reversed from action back to existence. The move from action back to existence is a way in which the necessity of existence itself allows action to redefine it, opens up the possibility to be changed, to be transformed, to become new, which means that this move, which is self-reflexive, is precisely the way in which the necessity of existence will lead to actions that change existence (and so change its own conditions). What I want to emphasize is that the reversal of the modal vector results in an expansion or growth of possibility. The classical understanding would suggest that necessity is a limitation of the possible. It is not by chance that it is expressed as “impossibility not to”. Manchev’s strong thesis, however, shows that if freedom is thought of as (metacausally) necessary, this does not limit but rather increases possibility. “Modal growth inverts the modal vector, reorienting it from action to existence. The double vision of this overturning precisely determines the complex vector of the existential transition. According to this reading of the ideogenetic theory, we could therefore project the idea of a complex modal transition as an ontological condition (a condition of ontological dynamics) onto the implicit modal relay underlying the Kantian construction, namely the simultaneous double transition from possibility to necessity and from necessity to possibility, the complex transition of two-way enabling of transcendental and empirical.” (p. 438) I read the two-way enabling of transcendental and empirical as an argument in support of the idea mentioned above of radical empiricism and of experience that changes the transcendental field itself. No less interesting, however, is what happens with possibility. If there is a reversal of the ideogenetic modal vector, then the possible should not be thought of as predetermined, as something that only has to be realized. On the contrary, the possible will be surprising, undetermined, created by the action that retroactively turns to existence. (I fully accept the idea of non-predetermined possibility.

However, does not such an ontologically non-predetermined, non-pregiven possibility, as a correlate of non-predetermined action, already posit both metacausality and freedom—without the need for necessity?)

World and Freedom is an important work not only in the development of Boyan Manchev's thought, but also for the entire Bulgarian philosophical debate, and beyond it – for the times in which we live, where the experience of freedom is questioned and seems more and more like an effect of a marketing trick. In this sense, beyond the impressive, innovative, and inspiring reading of Kant that it offers, the book is a promise of a liberating thought experience—a promise that it has fulfilled, and continues to fulfill with each subsequent reading.

From what has been said, no matter how little of the scientific and teaching merits of Boyan Manchev it presents, it should have become obvious that he both formally and substantially fulfils all the requirements for the position of "professor". The attached reference for the contributions correctly reflects the research (scientific and applied) achievements of the candidate.

Based on what was said above, I strongly recommend the members of the scientific jury to grant Assoc. Prof. Boyan Manchev, DCs. the academic position of "professor"!

Assoc. Prof. Darin Tenev

Sept 24, 2024
Sofia