

STATEMENT

**By Raicho Vangelov Pojarliev, PhD, Professor
regarding the materials submitted for participation in the competition
for occupation of academic position 'Associate Professor'
in Professional field 2.3. Philosophy (Logic – non-classical philosophical logic)
announced in State Gazette No 31/12.04.2019**

Firstly, Valentin Stefanov Asparuhov, PhD, Assist. Prof., was the only one candidate who applied for the announced competition and it was opened exactly for him. At the beginning, I declare that I am not in a conflict of interest with the participant. His documents are completely fulfilled and conform to all requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

When the competition for academic development is announced two main principles are followed. First of this, is publishing academic work (*Synthesis, apperceptions, unities*, 2019, Heterodoxy Foundation; a book researching Russell's philosophical logic, which is based on doctoral dissertation and main contributonal publications after PhD degree) as well as, work compliance with scientific standards. The second principle is related to candidate's educational competence and their training and working experience in the field of University education. As far as the second is concerned Valentin Asparuhov possess a huge biographical experience. From his teaching years at school (1999-2005) to his lecturing as a hired and later assistant with contract in Plovdiv University (2003-2019).

Asparuhov has always been a model of stable and constant accomplishments of educational expertise. Being a chief of Philosophy Department in Plovdiv University, I know his work as intensive, painstaking and target-orientated, which goes beyond his ordinary interests related to classical and non-classical logic. One of his excellent qualities is individual approach to every student, his good communication with students, concerning the problems they face, as well as his mutual work with the most committed and talented students. It is known that he and our young colleague Martina Mineva are the founders of "The Student Philosophical seminar" whose activities not only have managed to tighten the relationship between students and lecturers over the years, but also have generated new outlook on the philosophy itself amongst our young followers. Another solid prove of their mutual work is the electronic journal of the Department – "Kairos" – whose editor-in-chief is Asparuhov. Had it not been for

his technical awareness and commitment, the journal would not be existent. In addition, I would say that he is fully dedicated to institutional and department stability and contributes to find solutions to all kind of problems including some tedious tasks our staff face.

The academic development could be seen in connection with the scientific research which is outlined in Asparuhov's monography text related to Russell, as well as suggested academic book *Synthesis, apperceptions, unities* and latest articles. I will take a close look at *Synthesis, apperceptions, unities* and give my opinion on it.

Russell's intention supported by logicism to outline philosophy as strict science seems a failure resulted in further changes in analytical tradition. Asparuhov considers that one of the reasons for this is undervalued connection between Kant and Russell (regardless of the fact the latter admitted some influence on his work by the former). An obvious example of the influence is the hidden transcendentalism that could be found in earlier texts of the British philosopher although, he constantly convinces us that he has already finished with this transcendental work. Indeed, Russell is trying to have a closer look at the general concept of thinking settling out general conditions without questioning his reasons limited to transcendental subject who forms general thinking conditions. Asparuhov's contribution to the topic is in reconstruction of these transcendental conditions, applied and used in Russell's logic despite his rejection. That can be seen in some paragraphs of *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903), which rules out the logical immanence pleaded by Russell himself. This helps the colleague not only to see and understand the elusive reasons of Russell's logic, but those analytical philosophy as a whole. According to Asparuhov tracing back an analytical discourse to its genesis will be worthwhile in the context of thinking of the philosophy itself. The basis of this benefit consists of overcoming the disillusionment with the existence of logical constants as primary logical forms, achieved by logical analyses. This critical attitude to idealization on absolute logical principles is connected with Wittgenstein.

Asparuhov emphasizes that despite Russell's claims "all sound philosophy should begin with an analysis of propositions" which might be truth and blandly obvious, we should go beyond their limitations (to transcend them) in the process of applying analyses. This is what exactly Asparuhov accentuates on during the analysis. Let me quote him: "practicing analysis spontaneous and often unnoticed element appears, whose genesis leads to specific factual consequences where a given proposition could be grasped, admitted, confirmed, rejected"

etc. (p. 39). Therefore, one idealized logical form of proposition has never fully overlapped its real form. Even the most outstanding analyses cannot reach the perfect unity, similar to that Kant mentions: “the concept of the relation of objects is not created by the objects themselves”.

This unavoidably involves transcendental elements in “pure logic thinking” and it is claimed that it happens on the level of so-called Russell’s experiments, related to analyses. On this analytical practice, according to Asparuhov, analysis is complimented by transcendental expansion, which consists of the reconstruction of possible approaches that separate entities can be included in one certain complex. This means that at the beginning of the 20th century, Russell is not supported by the hypostasis idea for the pure logical form, but he regarded the available forms as possibilities. In this way, in the structure of analysis a transcendental element and layers are visible. The same (in my opinion) has demonstrated during the process of proposition analysis. Through his experiments Russell became aware of the fact that the analysis of propositional ingredients did not generate automatically an accomplished complex. In 1904 Russell had to admit that “the ingredient” is something undefined without relating it to a unity.

In Russell’s manuscript “On functions”, Asparuhov states additionally, that the so-called decompositional analysis is not enough so the meaningful potential of the approaches and aims applied in analysis is of greater cognitive importance. In fact, Asparuhov, through meticulous research on the texts of one of the purest logicians claims the same as I have done for years even though I am a proponent of subjective thinking fully distant from logic – pure logic (analysis of proposition and standard thinking concepts) is unproductive. In “pure” logical way I can prove everything which means that I have proved nothing. Asparuhov himself highlighted that propositions become propositions only when they are involved in particular practical circumstances similar Wittgenstein’s point of view in “a language is its way of usage”. Both Russell and Wittgenstein limit the knowledge to the role of the subject i.e., to the human thinking and using. The acceptance of the necessity of “impure logic” should go beyond the thinking and speaking Self and be directed and added by objectiveness itself – cultural, natural and human. Asparuhov does not take a side. Russell’s example is not sufficient, he only suggests the need for transcendental basis of the logical. Strawson is also insufficient with time, place and speaker’s identity inclusion. Thus, if we want to understand the logical working

process of any language, we have to relate it not only to the conditions of subjective usage but to the environment which is the field of semiotics is also language. The object, action and history are incorporated in the language, not only words and their concepts arrangement or self-transformations made by thinking and speaking people.

However, what I am saying should not be considered as critique of Asparuhov's texts. On the contrary, this text is in the basis of what eventually opens logic for productive knowledge – phenomenology and hermeneutic. Finding the reasons for, hidden transcendentalism in logic through detailed research of Russell's early texts is a significant achievement which deserves admiration especially my own in this field.

Asparuhov's monograph is professionally written; the bibliography contains mostly Russell's texts and critical materials in English is adequate and relevant. Adding the candidate's certain pedagogical competence and moral integrity, I convincingly propose the respected scientific jury to award the academic degree "Associate Professor" to Valentin Stefanov Asparuhov.

13.09.2019

Reviewer:

(Prof. Raicho Pojarliev, PhD)