

REVIEW

of the research achievements and publications of
Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Sabeva, PhD

The review is part of the competition procedure for Professor in the professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies (History of sociology – phenomenological sociology and socioanalysis), promulgated in the State Gazette no. 92 of 18.11.2022 for the needs of the Faculty of Philosophy and History at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”.

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Darin Tenev
Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”

In the competition for "professor", announced in the State Gazette, no. 92 of 18.11.2022 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" for the needs of the "Sociology and Human Sciences" Department at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Temelkova Sabeva from the same department participated as a candidate.

Assoc. Dr. Svetlana Temelkova Sabeva from PU "Paisiy Hilendarski" is the only candidate who submitted documents for participation in the announced competition for the academic position of "professor".

The set of documents presented by Associate Professor Svetlana Sabeva is in accordance with the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the PU, and includes the following documents:

1. application form to the rector for admission to participate in the competition;
2. curriculum vitae in European format;
3. diploma of higher education with acquired educational and qualification degree "master" - original with appendix;
4. diploma for educational and scientific degree "doctor" - original;
5. diploma (certificate) for the academic position "associate professor" - original;
6. list of scholarly works;
7. scholarly works (copies of publications);
8. certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements;
9. declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
10. annotations of the materials under Art. 76. from PRASPU (in Bulgarian and English);
11. self-assessment of contributions (in Bulgarian and English);

12. list of citations;
13. document (certificate) for work experience;
14. documents for academic work;
15. documents for scientific research activity.

The candidate participates in the competition with 8 scholarly contributions, of which one monograph, five studies and two articles. Of the studies, two were published in international scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific databases; of the others, one was co-authored. The publications provided and the academic (research and teaching) activity presented meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Scientific Staff, the regulation on its implementation and the Regulations of PU "Paisiy Hilendarski".

Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Sabeva teaches sociology at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv and has over twenty-five years of experience. She was the head of the department where she taught, and not only did she teach and develop new courses, but she participated in the conceptualization and creation of the department's bachelor's and master's programs, as well as the doctoral program in sociology at PU. She reads courses on the history of sociology, introduction to socioanalysis, socioanalysis, phenomenology, and many other courses in the bachelor's programs in Sociology, Philosophy and Bulgarian language and civic education, in the master's programs "Socioanalysis and interpersonal relations" and "Philosophy and literature", as well as in the doctoral program in sociology. I have had the chance to collaborate with her for many years in our joint summer internships in socioanalysis and psychoanalysis. Assoc. Prof. Sabeva is a Humboldt scholarship holder and has specialized many times in Germany, in some of the most important phenomenological centers. She was Deputy Director of the Institute for Critical Social Studies and is currently Director of the Institute for Socioanalysis. She has participated and led in numerous projects, both national and international. Her previous two monographs (*Introduction to the Sociology of Publicity. Thinking with Hannah Arendt*, Plovdiv: PU "Paisiy Hilendarski", 2002, and *Fractured Sociality. Rethinking Understanding Sociology*, Sofia: Iztok-Zapad, 2010), are among the most important works on phenomenological sociology and socioanalysis in Bulgaria; her translations of Husserl, Heidegger and other thinkers, are among the key factors for shaping the phenomenological community in our country and contributed greatly for the building of a consistent and good phenomenological vocabulary in Bulgarian.

The entire biographical trajectory of Assoc. Prof. Sabeva in the academic field, with all publications and translations, with all her teaching and scientific activity, is extremely focused and pre-

sents a long path of development that has led to the scholarly work provided for this contest, work promising also to unfold productively from here on.

In my review, I will focus on the provided monograph, insofar as it gathers most of the threads of Svetlana Sabeva's scientific interests, but above all because this book is a theoretical manifesto and its stake is the *Nachstiftung* of socioanalysis after Pierre Bourdieu, a stake to which the candidate's scholarly, institutional and teaching efforts have been devoted in the last ten years. The horizon of this task is already indicated in Sabeva's previous book, *Fractured Sociality*, where, through criticism and expansion of understanding sociology, she outlines the field of a sociology of affectivity in direct connection with existential analytics and phenomenology. There, she introduced and developed such key concepts as "habitualized affectivity" (see esp. *Broken Sociality*, op. cit., pp. 154-160), or privation as implementing "the structural connection between temporality, affectivity and the world " (ibid., p. 166). If the earlier book, however, builds the theory through a rereading and innovative interpretation mainly of Martin Heidegger's texts and seminars from the 1920s, *Survivals* turns above all to the writings and manuscripts of the late Husserl and their interpretations in the most productive contemporary phenomenological research. On the basis of her own analyzes and results in the field of genetic and generative phenomenology, Sabeva reveals what the tasks and possibilities are before a socioanalysis of generative time.

With the concept of "survival" Sabeva refers to the "simultaneous experience of the non-simultaneity of lives" (*Survivals. Phenomenology and socioanalysis of generative time*, Sofia: Iztok-Zapad, 2023, p. 10) and in this sense, survival is seen as involving more than one time, a whole "multiplicity of life-times" that is "lived by myself as a stream of experience", a multiplicity of times "permeating my own life-time" (p. 11). Surviving is revealed as an intersubjective time that has two specific aspects. On the one hand, it implies a gap, but the gap seen in the prefix "inter-" of "intersubjectivity" is also an in-between-ness that traverses myself in my intrasubjectivity. The in-between is created by my contact with the other as foreign to me, but also by my contact with myself as foreign. On the other hand, precisely because we are dealing with foreignness, survival presupposes the passivity of the subject in relation to phenomena that befall them. These phenomena, called 'pathos phenomena', appear 'not so much by an apperceptive apprehension of something, whether definite or indefinite, unprecedented or stunning, as by an affective force, i.e. through insistence on what affects us" (p. 13). And 'pathos' is conceptualized through its connection with the befalling and the "disruption of the habitualized complicity between subject and world" (p. 20). Sabeva expresses with the preposition "at" the position of the subject, open to the coming of the foreign and speaks of "time at death", "time at suffering" (p. 61).

With this double problematic of the in-between and the foreignness that befall us, two faces of the same problem, we are facing one of the stumbling blocks of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology after the time of *Ideen*, namely, how to think the generation of things, which are not constituted in advance by transcendental subjectivity, but on the contrary – change the very structures of the subject. To solve this difficult question, Sabeva turns to the concept of generative time, which is a correlate of survival (she calls it its "doublet" – p.10, 133) and defines it as follows: "generative time can be defined as the intersection of intra- and inter-subjective forms of co-existence" (p.147-148). Generative time presupposes two things: the life of the Ego and the life with each other (p. 138), and in both cases the in-between and foreignness are present. In generative time there are three axes that are interwoven, and these are the "three ontological axes of human existence – birth-and-death, aging and gender difference"; on each of these axes there is "a fusion between meaning-constitutive and biophysical (natural) formations" (p. 133). Each of these axes, in other words, connects the transcendental with an experience that is not yet subject to it. I see this generative dimension as the dimension of the encounter of the transcendental-constitutive with something radically empirical, radical in the sense that it is not yet constituted as empirical, a radical empiricism in which the life we are affects the transcendental structures themselves. That is why Sabeva refers to Nathalie Depraz's idea of a "transcendental empiricism" (p. 113) (thematized also, although from a slightly different perspective, by Gilles Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* and elsewhere). Here the flow of experience is not yet homogenized by habituality and is constantly susceptible to fractalization; "Self-affection and hetero-affection are intertwined", and "self-ness and foreignness mutually constitute each other" (*Sur-vivals*, op. cit., p. 168). All this presupposes distinguishing beyond the apperceptive self of *Vermögens-Ich*, defined by Husserl as the "subject of the 'I can'" (see Edmund Husserl, *Die Lebenswelt*. Hua XXXIX, Dor-drecht: Springer, 2008, p. 422) a generative self, "affected more or less painfully by their inability" (*Sur-vivals*, op. cit., p. 157). This reveals generativity as the 'architectural basis of the subject's sphere of vulnerability' (p. 135) and hence enables the connection with socioanalysis to which I will return below. For now, let me simply say that insofar as generative time reveals the architectonic foundations of vulnerability and the possibilities for the fractalization of experience, for socioanalysis concerned with the disruptions of habitualized complicity between subject and world, generative phenomenology proves to be a necessary partner, providing theoretical tools for analysis.

How does the entanglement of meaning-constitutive and biophysical formations happen? Sabeva answers this difficult question by pointing out that for the apperception of habitualized intentionality there is something pre-given that is not intentional, but only hyletic. The passivity of the hyletic moment here, cut off from the real and intentional noetic activity that shapes it, allows

something radically alien to invade and be absorbed into the subject. The invasion comes as a "hyletic intrusion" (p. 140), and so the hyletic pre-giving will bring in elements that will only subsequently, retroactively, be thought through in one way or another. This gives rise to particular pre-structures that Sabeva calls meontic, following Husserl's understanding of the ancient Greek μέ-όν – that which has invaded the ego as unnameable without being nothing. Meontic are the structures of pre-being, pre-time, pre-ego. In her precise phenomenological analysis, Sabeva reveals how the architectonics of the generative dimension is based on these three modalities – “apperceptive surrender, betraying hyletic passivity and meontic structures” (p. 142).” Using Husserl and Merleau-Ponty's notion of “style” (Merleau-Ponty defines it in *The Prose of the World* as "our primordial relation to the world"), Sabeva speaks of "a generative style of experience that functions as the simultaneous structure of every living present, opening it to the future and enabling the happening in an analogous way to 'each subsequent other first time.'" (p. 144) For her, the generative style is one of the two styles of constitutive world life; the other is the habitual, that style which is based on habitualized affectivity and the Ego as a substrate of habitualities (p. 151).

This conceptualization of the generative dimension naturally implies turning attention to the question of the body and sensibility. Sabeva devotes some of the best pages in the book to analyzes of hearing, listening, touching, seeing, always starting from the specifics of individual cases – the caress of Angela Merkel, the meeting of J. M. Coetzee with the music of Bach, etc., – to highlight how it is precisely through the senses that access to the other and the foreign is opened, which transcends the Ego and breaks it, throwing it into an experience without meaning yet, experience which will change it, inscribing in its present a form of pre-time, a phantom time. In this respect, her conception is very close to Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, in which “that which can only be felt” compels the imagination in phantasm to imagine that which is empirically unimaginable, so that “the incomparable in the pure form of time” builds the “unremembered”, and the Ego, “cracked by this form of time”, encounters that which is always other in nature (*Difference and Repetition*). Does this not mean that generative phenomenology allows for a phenomenological rereading of Deleuze?

As for the body, Sabeva emphasizes the dual constitution of the body as a physical and experienced body and traces the two axes of *leiben* starting from this duality, of embodiment and of corporalization (pp. 104-109). Embodiment gives the body as an organ of the Ego, as a body with which the Ego disposes. In corporalization, on the other hand, the body is found as disobedient to the “I can”, as something that the Ego cannot control, a “foreign body in me” (p. 106). The two strands of embodiment and corporalization indicate that in terms of generativity the body can be thought of as a "primary differential field" (p. 107) where the possibilities and impossibilities of the

Ego are played out. Due to the nature of this field, which is both primary and differential, something that Sabeva calls "the norm of embodiment or embodied normality" can be constituted there (pp. 107, 127). In the last chapter of the book, in an exemplary analysis of the attitude to contagion during the covid pandemic, Sabeva shows how a specific norm of embodiment is created, which states that "a person can protect himself from the threat of being infected, only if he constantly presents himself as infected" (p. 224). The differential field turns the body into a sheet on which not only experience writes, but social, ethical and other prescriptions can be written. Although Sabeva's book does not take this direction, the notion of a "norm of embodiment" allows for a productive dialogue of generative phenomenology and socioanalysis with the sociology of the body as developed from the "techniques of the body" discussed by Marcel Moss to Foucault and beyond.

In generative terms, *leiben* is revealed as the "essential time of the body" because there the two axes are intertwined and the purely biological wear and tear of the body is tied to hyletic intrusions fractalizing the flow of time. Incarnation is thus probably the most appropriate starting point to show this seemingly phenomenologically inexplicable intertwining of the biological and the transcendental.

Sabeva continues these observations by tracing how the *leibend* Ego additionally splits into a koine-aesthetic and habitual Ego. She borrows the concept of koine-aisthesis, or common sense, from Giovanni Stangelini, for whom the two functions of koine-aisthesis are to ensure unity of perception and for the subject to experience himself as the subject of their perceptions. Thus, the koine-aesthetic Ego is formed as an identical pole of experiences and in this sense is different from the Ego as a substrate of habitualities. For this latter distinction, Sabeva refers to Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, but what is at stake in the case of her own work is the possibility that the "constitutive mismatch" of the Ego with itself "fractalizes and becomes a partial and total dissociation in the region of the subjective" (p. 122). While the habitual self and its habitualized affectivities underlie continuity in self-inheritance, generative time is responsible for discontinuity in self-inheritance (p. 151).

The phenomenology of generative time easily fits into the project of a post-Bourdieusian socioanalysis of suffering because it provides the theoretical foundation and analytical tools for conducting socioanalytic observations and interventions. From the first chapter, offering a socioanalysis of Merkel's caress, through the socioanalytic interpretation of the experience recounted by the white psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin, who felt herself as an Other (after a conversation with an Israeli friend, when it struck her that there are only whites on the beach in Miami and there are no other blacks "like her") to the collarbone that Sabeva's mother spoke of and the work on the experience of the covid pandemic, all phenomenological developments are immediately made relevant in

a socioanalytic perspective. This is accompanied by direct socioanalytic theorizations, which not only help socioanalysis, but also mark its boundaries with phenomenology. I will give just one example, with what Sabeva calls the "socioanalytical *epoche*", distinguishing it from the phenomenological *epoche*. The socioanalytical *epoche* is already introduced in the first chapter (see p. 43), but its full development is in the sixth. There his four steps are traced: (1) bracketing the everyday constructions of the What-identity of the analysand; (2) an epoche on the social constructions of failure and success in order to arrive at the "how" of the hidden Ego-doublings; (3) on the part of the analyst, forgetting themselves as an everyday person (to constitute themselves as a productive void), and on the part of the analysand, a loosening of the narrative construction of himself; (4) solving the question of the beginning and the end of the analysis (pp. 176-178).

However, Sabeva is not only concerned with delineating the boundaries between phenomenology and socioanalysis; even more carefully, she also points out key differences between socioanalysis and psychoanalysis. As a translator of Freud and Binswanger, she sets herself the task – a task that Bourdieu never sets himself nor fulfills – not only to point out the difference in the theoretical and (pre-)clinical practices of socioanalysis and psychoanalysis, but also to determine the different meaning with which psychoanalytical concepts are used in socioanalysis.

I will give but two examples. The first is with the key concept "symptom". Sabeva redefines it in a socio-analytical key as "egological fact of a passive synthesis" (p. 163, 189). In a generative sense, this means that the symptom is related to those intrusions that fractalize experience. Therefore, the symptom will not be able to be a substitute satisfaction; it will still point, but its indexicality will refer to the phantom time of investment and not to something repressed. Secondly, it involves a different unconscious. Sabeva defines it as the "constitutive unconscious of the life world" which "works in parallel with the dynamic unconscious (of psychoanalysis) and also gives rise to asynchronous associative links, repression, forgetting, transference, displacement, etc., again giving rise to irremediable ambiguity, but it differs precisely in that it refers to the horizontal forms of the world." (p. 154-155) "The unconscious radically understood is a designation of the very genesis of the horizontal forms of the world, which have as their foundation the generative horizon, providing the archaic insight into the engagement between nature and spirit." (p. 155) In other words, the constitutive unconscious of socioanalysis functions in a manner similar to Freud's dynamic unconscious, but is thought through Husserl's notion of a lifeworld and the phenomenological understanding of horizon; and respectively, in generative terms refers to the emergence of the forms of constitution of the world, an emergence influenced by the world itself. But then what is the relationship between the constitutive and the dynamic unconscious? Is the dynamic unconscious just part of the constitutive? Or are the two different manifestations of the same thing? Or, on the contrary, do they

have nothing in common apart from some similarities in the effects they produce? This question remains unanswered. I would add one more thing. Such an understanding of the constitutive unconscious, in all its radicality, takes us back from Freud to the early Schelling, who also through the concept of the unconscious connects the separated subjectivity and nature. This point seems particularly interesting in view of the recent attention to Schelling, especially with regard to his holistic understanding of nature. Does the concept of the constitutive unconscious not require a similar rethinking of Schelling?

Sur-vivals is an important book, however, not only with the already listed aspects, not only with the development of generative phenomenology, its socioanalytic application, the development of socioanalytic theory and the delineation of the lines of convergence and divergence of socioanalysis, phenomenology and psychoanalysis. In its reframing of post-Bourdieuian socioanalysis, the book is also important for the critical theory it develops. In other words, it develops socioanalysis as a form of critical theory. This is clearly visible in the pages dedicated to refugees, to forms of social discrimination, racism, to unrepentant lives and melancholy. But this critical-theoretical point is brought out most clearly in the last two chapters and the epilogue, where it becomes a leading motif. Analyzes of the changing status of the body in an age of biocapitalism build upon and develop the earlier chapters on corporeality, but also, by connecting Marx and Husserl in an unexpected way, offer tools for a critical ontology of the present. The chapter on contagion, to which I have already referred, traces how the creation of a new norm of embodiment and the emergence of a phenomenon that Sabeva calls "infectious sociality" transforms the Ego, which turns from a center into an intermediary, a carrier of contagion: "my Ego is not a center, but a medium" (p.224). Apart from the book, Sabeva's 2014 text "The World of Bodies and the Age of Biopower. The Immunity Paradigm" develops the analytics of socioanalysis in a similar direction.

The pages revealing socioanalysis as a form of critical theory, however, make me wonder if there is a certain reductivism in the definition of the three axes of generative time—birth-and-death, aging, and gender difference. In the analyzes of the technical and non-technical, of labor, etc. is not there an aspect of generative time that is irreducible to any of the three axes? Aren't there forms of racism and discrimination that, while relevant to survival, are not relevant to birth-and-death? Is there no otherness, foreignness that is not translatable through these axes? Conversely, if we relate all these problems to the three axes, are we not overextending the scope of the axes?

Socioanalysis, as we see it developed in the scholarly materials submitted for the competition, allows for a much more active and productive interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary dialogue. It can be said that the stake of Sabeva's socioanalysis goes beyond the field of socioanalysis, but it is precisely because of this that it shows the significance of the socioanalytic project today.

The quick presentation of some of the more basic moments of the monograph hardly does justice to the careful and precise analyzes that are deployed there and in the studies and articles. However, I would like to say that Sabeva's scientific work sets a very high bar that can serve as a model and standard for everyone in the field of humanities and social sciences.

Finally, I would like to turn briefly to the teaching experience of Prof. Sabeva. Since I have many years of personal observations, I would emphasize that it is a constantly searching approach, not only in the research, but also in the educational sphere. Her ability to engage students, make them think and think with them is impressive. The latest research is introduced in various forms in lectures, seminars and practices. This is reflected in the constantly renewed curricula of the disciplines she reads. To all this one must add her ability to make connections with the other disciplines students are studying, helping them both to apply what they learn elsewhere during her classes and to use the material in her classes in other subjects and in their lives outside the university.

I highly appreciate the scientific and teaching activities of the candidate. In the light of all that has been said, I assume that these highest achievements for our science and education are only a step in the path of her searching spirit. The materials provided and the results achieved formally correspond to the minimum requirements for such a competition, but in terms of content they exceed them. I strongly support her candidacy with the highest rating and recommend that the Scientific Jury prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History for the election of Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Temelkova Sabeva to the academic position of "Professor" at PU "Paisiy Hilendarski".

16. 04. 2023 г.

Reviewer:

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