

Reviewer's Report on the PhD Dissertation

Candidate: Andrii Ivanchuk

Title: Consciousness in Transition: Phenomenological and Psychoanalytic Inquiry

Doctoral School Discipline: Philosophy

1. Assessment of the Relevance and Topicality

The dissertation by Andrii Ivanchuk addresses the "hard problem" of consciousness, a critical issue in contemporary philosophy of mind. The author rightly identifies the limitations of current physicalist models in accounting for subjective, phenomenal experience. The topic is highly topical, providing a deep, critical analysis of functionalism and its failure to capture qualia. This dissertation takes an innovative approach to exploring consciousness combining the perspectives of phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

2. Structure and Content Overview

The thesis opens with an Introduction, in which the doctoral student begins by outlining the broad philosophical background dating back to ancient times regarding the reflective structure of the human psyche, which later came to be called consciousness. According to him, within this tradition, we can distinguish three ways of thinking about consciousness. The first is the connection between the human self-understanding that constitutes it and ethics, which dominated from ancient philosophy to the Middle Ages. The second is the emphasis on its cognitive function, which was associated with the development of modern science to the present day. And the third trend, which treats consciousness as pure perception, questioning its transcendental function. The following five chapters represent the main part of the study and examine consciousness in five main categories (being, logic, language, embodiment, self-reflection) from both phenomenological and psychoanalytic perspectives. What the psychoanalytic approach shares with the phenomenological approach is that both begin with and examine the mental experiences of everyday life, but they do so in different ways. However, they complement each other in their differences. Psychoanalysis emphasizes the individual dimension of subjectivity, as all disorders of the patient's psyche originate in events from their biography. Phenomenology, on the other hand, reflects on all constitutive elements of human consciousness as such, which can be recognized in every subject. It is therefore universal and contemplative in nature. Another fundamental difference between them is that while psychoanalysis is focused on changing the subject's consciousness, phenomenology is about describing the basic elements of their conscious structure, regardless of their individual characteristics.

The doctoral student cites attempts to combine the psychoanalytic and phenomenological perspectives, as undertaken by Sartre and Binswanger. A separate place in his arguments is occupied by Lacan's psychoanalysis, which, according to him, understood the attempt to interpret psychic instances using the structural method and thus broadened the research perspective of the current.

The structure is logical, and the argument flows coherently throughout the work.

3. Scientific Novelty and Theoretical Significance

The work demonstrates significant novelty by introducing a hybrid approach, bridging phenomenological and psychoanalytic perspectives. The author argues that cognitive science must incorporate a refined dual-aspect theory to move forward, which contributes a valuable perspective to the ongoing debate.

4. Quality of the Argumentation and Methodology

The study is well-structured, combining conceptual analysis with a rigorous review of literature. The author supports his arguments by quoting representatives of various philosophical schools, famous psychoanalysts and outstanding writers of the existential school.

5. Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths: A.Ivanchuk's chosen doctoral dissertation topic, which is a comparison of the approach to the human psyche found in the phenomenological tradition, primarily Husserl, with the approach dominant in the psychoanalytic tradition, while taking into account the latest traditions of neurophenomenology and neuropsychoanalysis, is a theoretically ambitious undertaking. The author also attempted to incorporate the broad context of contemporary philosophy (Hegel, Marx, Sartre, and others).

Weaknesses: The author is not always consistent in presenting his arguments, which, however, does not have a significant impact on the overall positive impression of his work.

6. Conclusions and Recommendation

The dissertation represents a solid, original contribution to the field of philosophy of mind. The shortcomings identified are minor and do not undermine the overall quality of the research. The dissertation meets the requirements for a doctoral degree.

Recommendation: The dissertation is recommended for defense.

Reviewer:



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