

Supervisor's review of bachelor thesis

Branislav Salkay: *Fénelon, Mandeville and Cheyne: Luxury Debate in Moral Philosophy of the Early Enlightenment*, Faculty of Humanities, Prague 2024.

The subject of thesis is clearly presented, "Its main focus is to discuss and compare the views and arguments of the participants from the early enlightenment while answering the luxury questions from their perspective, just as they thought. This work deals with three great thinkers and their thoughts, two of whom represent the two opposite poles of the luxury debate, Fénelon, and Mandeville. The duo was responsible for the most prominent works published during the enlightenment debate... The third discussed thinker is Dr. Cheyne, whose contribution to the debate was in the form of various medical essays depicting the effects of luxurious life on the human body and mind." Treatment of the subject leads to a proper division of thesis, which: "divides the thought of the three thinkers into respective chapters, in which every thinker is comprehensively investigated and discussed while their arguments are scrutinised in all aspects connected to the topic of luxury." Consequently, "The fourth chapter serves to compare the different thoughts for their similarities and differences while concluding each comparison in its respective part of the chapter instead of providing a discussion on the findings at the usual end of the chapter".

The author is providing due care regarding methods to be used for analysis particular texts representing approaches to investigated topic: "The method of investigation I have chosen for the purposes of this thesis differs slightly with each discussed thinker as I wanted to retain as most of the original meaning and continuity of the text as possible. This will be evident ... with Fénelon as the method of investigation of his most prominent work *Adventures of Telemachus* is appropriated to the structure of the text, which follows a duo of protagonists on their fictional journey throughout the world in the form of the Greek tradition. The entirety of the text is investigated in a manner, in which I focus on the narrative and continuity of the text while allowing the method to follow the duo throughout the entire work." In the case of the second thinker, Dr George Cheyne, we should reflect fact, that he moves to the effects of luxurious life on the human body in terms of nervous distempers, "The method of investigation was again appropriated to the investigated text and being that Cheyne's essays are medical works and not fictional stories, the discussion is based on a more factual basis." Another appropriation is required in case of Mandeville's famous *The Fable of the Bees*: "The method is again appropriated to the text and being that Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* is indeed a fable consisting of verses and their associated remarks, in which the author further clarifies and expands his thought, the text has no continuity that can be followed. Therefore, a general issue is presented, investigated and discussed using the verses of the Fable along with the appropriate remarks."

Not only the subject of thesis is a unique (not only) in the context of the Czech academia. We are still missing more complex insight into Fénelon's ideas, Cheyne is treated for the first time. I should highlight truly critical thinking approach including well justified prudence, awareness about the limits of results. Accurate and properly presented insights into arguments, especially hard academic work done in case of Fénelon, presents results in an increase of "stock of knowledge" useful for future investigation in the field of moral and political philosophy.

I am pleased to **recommend** thesis to be considered for defence with the grade **excellent (A)**.

Prague, 2 September 2024

PhDr. Tomáš Kunca, Ph.D.

