

**Summary of the doctoral dissertation: *Reason and morality. An attempt to enrich the moral philosophy of Thomas Nagel with elements of virtue ethics*, written at the seminar on ethics under the direction of Rev. prof. dr hab. Władysław Zuziak**

The objective of the dissertation was extending the conception of Thomas Nagel and enriching it with elements of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. Nagel is a significant contemporary thinker who undertakes a wide spectrum of issues belonging to different areas of philosophy. He is widely recognized as a defender of deontic reasons and moral realism. He is also well-known as an opponent of physicalism and an author of the conception of the coexistence of the internal and external standpoint. Nagel's proposals partially resolve some of the most fundamental disputes in moral philosophy. However, there appear some questions which he fails to deal with, such as: what should be done so that people would be willing to act according to reasons? How can we ensure that in moral decisions a wide spectrum of reasons is actually taken into account? What significance should the acceptance of the proposed typology of reasons have for moral practices in a broader context? Therefore, the dissertation is an attempt to supplement this conception with a more practical dimension, related with the process of shaping character and practical wisdom.

The main research method was the critical analysis of the sources with elements of synthesis and comparative studies. The subject of the analysis were mainly the texts of Nagel and his commentators, as well as the publications of philosophers who inspired him to further research or discussion. Due to interdisciplinary themes, the literature used in the dissertation included publications referring to other disciplines, mainly cognitive science and psychology.

The dissertation consists of introduction, four chapters, conclusion and bibliography. The first chapter (*Introduction to the philosophy of Thomas Nagel*) outlines the basic inspirations of Nagel as well as the epistemological and metaphysical assumptions of his philosophy. It also presents the conception of coexistence of two perspectives and its impact on Nagel's moral philosophy. The last part of the chapter focuses on the typology of reasons for action and the issue of ethical pluralism.

The second chapter (*Moral realism and the objectivity of ethics*) contains the analysis of metaethical issues, in particular the problem of moral realism. It also presents Nagel's polemics with the "error theory" and analyses the conception of fictionalism. In general, Nagel's metaethic position is estimated as plausible, but I also indicate to some valuable elements in the theories of Nagel's opponents. The next part of the chapter raises the question of the ontology of values and their relations with the sphere of reasons. It also presents and analyzes the debate on the compatibility of moral realism and evolutionary sciences. In relation to these issues, I pay special attention to the advantages and development prospects of non-reductive naturalism.

The third chapter (*Towards contemporary virtue ethics*) deals with the problems of practical philosophy, i.e. the issues of motivation, practical reasoning and making moral decisions. Nagel's stance is confronted with Hume's model of motivation and its contemporary version represented by Bernard Williams. I present the strengths of Nagel's arguments and the limitations of his position. This chapter also includes an introduction to the issue of virtue ethics and examines the compatibility of Nagel's conception with main assumptions of the neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics.

The fourth chapter (*Reason, emotions and virtue ethics in the perspective of the typology of reasons*) is an attempt to enrich Nagel's conception with elements of contemporary virtue ethics, taking into account the latest knowledge about the biological-psychological structure of human beings. The proposal has two dimensions. First of all, it suggests supplementing Nagel's typology of reasons with practical dimension and tries to add a stabilizing element in the motivational system. This approach takes into account the Aristotelian understanding of virtue as a permanent disposition and the idea of a golden mean that is used to balance the *prima facie* reasons. Secondly, I argue in favour of using the typology of reasons as limitation to some educational methods. The last chapter, therefore, deals with the practical use of the typology of reasons and focuses on the application of Nagel's conception to real problems and moral practices.

The research shows that enriching Thomas Nagel's moral philosophy with elements of contemporary virtue ethics is possible and beneficial both for Nagel's conception and for virtue ethics – therefore the main goal of the dissertation has been achieved. However, during the study there appeared some vital issues which require separate, additional analyzes. These include, among other things: the applicability of the concept of model to ethical discourse, the usefulness of the concept of prototype in determining the importance of a *prima facie* reason, the role of empirical sciences in the discussion between motivational internalism and externalism, the relations between reasons and emotions, the impact of empirical research on

understanding human nature and the possibility of expanding Nagel's typology of reasons by distinguishing their subtypes or enriching the characteristics of particular types of reasons.

Alena Koptovska