
REVIEWS AND NOTES

**REVIEW OF THE MONOGRAPH
'ETIKA – GARANCIA DOBREJ VEDECKEJ PRAXE'
(ETHICS – A GUARANTEE OF GOOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE) BY
PAVEL FOBEL**

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'Etika – garancia dobrej vedeckej praxe' (Ethics – a Guarantee of Good Scientific Practice) by Prof. Pavel Fobel, PhD.: Banská Bystrica: Belianum – Matej Bel University Publishing House, 2017. Faculty of Arts, 132 pp. ISBN 978-80-557-1217-8

The issue of contemporary ethics of science as a branch of applied ethics represents a specific connection of the theory of ethics with moral practice. In his monograph Pavel Fobel puts great emphasis on the issue of ethics of science in the scientific and academic community in Slovakia. At the same time, he does not avoid the challenges faced by the whole scientific community today, when it is necessary to increase vigilance in eliminating the moral hazards that exist in the dynamically developing sciences. These hazards are present in the on-going process of the emergence of new technologies (genetic engineering – cloning, stem cell research, the use and abuse of embryonic stem cells, modern biotechnology and industrial technology – nanotechnology, micro technology, macro technology, industrial technologies), as well as in the existence of different power and interest groups, commercial intentions, deeper state interests and military ambitions of some states. The subjective behaviour of scientists themselves has to be taken into account nonetheless. This articulates the requirement to accept international ethical standards and to create ethics committees, despite this process being extraordinarily difficult and complicated. The theoretical and practical potential of the ethics of science underlines the necessity of applying an interdisciplinary approach that requires, among other things, to take into account a large number of aspects of scientific practice. Pavel Fobel points out that many morally controversial tendencies, such as the underestimation of the importance of social science, the absence of critical reflection on social trends, the lack of expert discussion and assessment of problematic areas, limited interest in scientific results, cooperation, financial support for activities and events, the underestimation of the importance of moral patterns in science, the popularization of science, and the absence of scientific traditions, are becoming the trademark of the contemporary national scientific milieu.

The author has an unequivocal view of the moral credit of science, which is often reduced by ill-defined institutional mechanisms (*e.g.*, assessment of scientific performance according to quantitative criteria, formal editorial and review procedures, inappropriate use of funds), even the publishing of problems in predatory journals, international journals with a low H-index, the underestimation of scientific dialogue and level of national discourse, low support for organizing scientific events, creation of proceedings for proceedings' sake, low quality review, plagiarism, ways of assessing research projects and financial evaluation of expertise.

Albert Einstein said: 'Most people say that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong: it is character.' By using this quote Pavel Fobel has put a clever emphasis on the main aim of the work – to draw attention to the ethical dimension of science and research work in the national, European, and also the global context. This publication is therefore a useful stepping stone for a wide range of scientific readers – not only for PhD students and young scientists, but for all members of the scientific community (scientific institutions, scientists and researchers in general) who are not protected from the dangers brought about by the current rapid societal changes, as well as the pressure the diverse forces that have a place in our present are putting on science. The global nature of science together with the solution to the new ethical and moral dilemmas of science have their proper place in this work. They all present a solid ground for an interdisciplinary discussion and the need for establishing new ethical frameworks for good scientific practice. Pavel Fobel raises a series of questions: Can we trust science? How can we guarantee its ethical credibility? Are conscious awareness and good old morals enough? What general or specific norms can we rely upon? What should we appeal to when we come across scientific errors? What are the moral limits of a certain institutionalized science? How should we deal with moral failures?

The author of the monograph reaches out to both young and experienced scientists and emphasizes the following:

- a) the importance of the ethical dimension of science and research,
- b) ethics as an important part of improving the quality of scientific work,
- c) the efforts made towards elimination of ethical risks in scientific work,
- d) the importance of moral consciousness, correct and ethically acceptable scientific work, higher professional recognition,
- e) the knowledge necessary for differentiating between honest science and morally defective science,
- f) the standards of good scientific practice both in our country and abroad.

Pavel Fobel's monograph 'Etika – garancia dobrej vedeckej praxe' ('Ethics – a Guarantee of Good Scientific Practice') consists of four chapters. The first chapter is titled 'Ethics of Science in the Past and Present,' the second chapter 'Ethics Application – a Prerequisite for Good Scientific Practice.' The third chapter is 'Moral Risks and Dilemmas of Contemporary Science.' The fourth chapter, titled 'Ethics in the Scientific and Academic Environment of Slovakia,' forms the most voluminous part of the monograph. The chapter is an appropriate counterpart to the three preceding chapters. The

bibliographic list consists of fifty-four sources, Internet resources adding a further thirty items. The monograph ends with the list of used abbreviations.

The work of Professor Pavel Fobel is to be classified as a monograph that significantly enhances the ethics of science with its diversity and variety of opinions offering a broader scope that goes beyond the narrow framework (*e.g.*, aspects of bioethics, theological perspectives) and provides a basis for practical solutions to the diverse ethical problems of our world today. We should give significant recognition to the author's endeavour to present the elaboration of the ethics of science as a specific link between the theory of ethics and moral practice to the public.

I do recommend the monograph of Pavel Fobel 'Etika – garancia dobrej vedeckej praxe' (Ethics – a Guarantee of Good Scientific Practice) for publishing and subsequent inclusion in the current database of important scientific bibliographic sources, not only for the study of applied ethics. The work is designed for those just setting out as scientists, as well as experienced scientists and the entire scientific community.