

Opinion on the dissertation of Maya Gorcheva
"The Price of Reality and the Possible Worlds of Literature:
Conrad, Kafka, Camus"
by Assoc. Prof. Moris Fadel, New Bulgarian University

The dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Maya Gorcheva "The Price of Reality and the Possible Worlds of Literature: Conrad, Kafka, Camus" deals with a problem that has been repeatedly addressed in literary studies, but it is not studied systematically. The possible world in literature contrasts with the wholly fictional world. The possible world is fictional, but it is relevant to our conceptions of reality; it is subject to certain criteria of plausibility, otherwise it would not be possible.

The introduction builds a complex picture of the concept of "possible world". But already in the introduction one of the qualities of Maya Gorcheva's dissertation stands out. It may seem as not very important as far as a theoretical text is concerned, but is necessary when it comes to the communicability of a work. This is the value of study as scientific prose. M. Gorcheva knows how to tell a story engagingly, even when presenting abstract problems. She does not spare the historical details, the curious details; her research is not only an analysis but also a narrative.

The relationship between the analysis and the narrative is inherent not only in M. Gorcheva's text, but it is also the main theme of her dissertation. It forms the interdisciplinarity of the study. The relationship between philosophy and literature is realized in the dissertation as the relationship between the notion of a possible world and fiction. For M. Gorcheva literature and philosophy are not two autonomous fields that interact. They have a necessity for each other. The possible world needs a literary fiction because there it can be concretized in the form of a literary work. On the other hand, the work demands that its specificity of a possible world be noticed; it awaits its philosophical conceptualization.

The dissertation focuses on three authors - Joseph Conrad, Franz Kafka and Albert Camus - in whose texts it traces the construction of the possible world in literature. Conrad, Kafka and Camus are interpreted not as they usually are: as writers who provoke us with their literary mastery and philosophical and social ideas. They are thought of from the perspective of the possible worlds they build. M. Gorcheva is interested in the ontological status of their works, in the question of how the whole, in which they immerse us, is constructed.

Maya Gorcheva's dissertation is an interdisciplinary research that sets tasks that have not been systematically studied so far and proposes original solutions to them.

I confidently recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to propose the award of the degree of Doctor of Science to Maya Gorcheva.

24. 06. 2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that appear to be 'MF' followed by a flourish.

(M. Fadel)