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## REPORT

By Member of the Dissertation Committee on the  
Dissertation of  
KALININ Ivan Vladimirovich on the theme:  
“Travel Media Text in Modern Russian Journalism (On  
the Example of Glossy Magazines),”  
Submitted in conformity with the requirements for the  
candidate degree in philological sciences  
Specialisation 10.01.10 – Journalism

Having read the doctoral dissertation of Ivan Kalinin in the English-language version, pages 275-516, I am ready to offer a series of observations and draw conclusions concerning the academic quality of the work. The thesis concerns the evolution of travel media text in Russia from a historical and a theoretical perspective. As stated by Kalinin, the topic is at the intersection of several different academic disciplines, which includes among others journalism, public diplomacy and place branding, cultural and identity studies. This thesis is very informative, easy to follow and the text written in an easy to digest format. A very rich set of literature and data from Russian and English-language sources are used to test the six propositions that are listed on page 291 of the thesis, which is reflected in a rather extensive reference list at the end of the thesis. The stated purpose of the research (page 283) is “to create a functional travel media text model studied in both diachronic and synchronic aspects.”

*bx 09/2 - 298 om 13.08.2019*



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This thesis in general is a remarkable feat of academic endeavour that is well considered and executed by Kalinin I. V. of this relatively under theorized discipline. The structure of the thesis is logical and maintains a good flow for the reader. Furthermore, the actual topic, method and approach are all very well described and justified in the very beginning of the thesis. The six propositions to be defended are all well founded and considered and contribute towards realising the stated research purpose of the thesis. In addition, the thesis makes use of a very remarkable data set, both theoretical and empirical in analysing the questions and supporting any statements. Kalinin needs to be commended on the extremely valuable interviews that he managed to arrange with key people in the industry that he is studying and analysing. The thesis displays a balanced and well-considered approach to realising the aims and goals that are stated.

In addition to the doctoral thesis, Kalinin has accumulated a rather impressive number of published scientific articles. For this significant accomplishment, he is to be highly commended. The thesis goes very deeply in to the issues and goals raised in the course of the introduction, from a theoretical and an empirical point of view. The expert interviews, which are listed in the annex, provide significant added value to the theoretical and empirical understanding of the subject. Finally, the conclusion gives a good summary of the lessons and knowledge that is contained throughout the work. Although, it could be strengthened further by linking the observations back to the current state of the art academic research on the topic in



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order to test and develop more overtly, the current theoretical basis.

In addition to the rightful praise, some criticism needs to be articulated, although within the spirit of constructive criticism. There are some issues or problems with the thesis, but they are relatively minor in nature. The English language is somewhat problematic in places, which seems to be owed to the quality of the translation. A number of observable awkward translations appear throughout the text, for example on page 295 – “In domestic science ...” It would be better to formulate this as “in the national academic environment ...”

Another relatively minor point for the Candidate to consider concerns the structure of the chapters of the thesis. It may have added further clarity to the flow of the work if the rather different topics/aspects that appeared in chapter one were actually separated. This is in reference to combining the theoretical background of the work with the account of the historical development and evolution of travel media text in Russia. It may have been a more fruitful approach to separate these topics in to two separate chapters, rather than to blend them together. I would like and have expected that Kalinin I. V. within the framework of conclusion to be more overt and direct in exploring the deficiencies of the current theoretical framework and how his thesis has developed the theoretical understanding of the topic. It would be interesting and relevant to explore the bigger and wider issue, which is somewhat obscured currently.



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Not intended as criticism, but rather as additional points to consider, I encourage Kalinin I. V. to consider the following. Of which there are two points in particular that could be further considered, if not in this thesis, maybe at a later point in time. 1) Perhaps to explore the effects of the evolving nature of the national character and (inter)national politics on patterns of media consumption, media priorities and media content. It is an issue that is raised indirectly, but not really engaged in significantly. 2) With reference to the text in chapter 2.32 and on the topic of GEO magazine and the politicisation of its text within the stated time period, sometimes it is better to state the obvious. In this case, the topic skirts the issue of public diplomacy in an obstructive marketing context that intends to harm the brand and reputation of the countries named (China, Cuba, Iran, Russia and Venezuela). The quality and style of the text indicates a very specific form of mass communication that is not mentioned. From the text, there is an obvious political agenda and the use of an emotional (rather than rational) form of communication, there is also a specific target audience that is approached using mass communication means, which is very indicative of propaganda.

In summary, the thesis covers a relatively understudied and undertheorized subject within the wider field of journalism. The strengths of the work far outweigh the weaknesses of it. This work contributes to a deeper theoretical and empirical understanding of the nature of contemporary travel media text, and its theoretical and practical evolution.



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The dissertation meets the basic requirements established by Order No. 6821/1 of 1 September 2016, "On the Procedure for Awarding Academic Degrees at Saint Petersburg State University," the candidate Kalinin Ivan Vladimirovich deserves the award of the scientific degree of Candidate of Philology in the speciality 10.01.10. – Journalism. Clause 11 of the aforementioned Order by the author of the thesis is not broken.

05.07.2019

Member of the Dissertation Council

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden, Associate Professor Greg Simons

