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REVIEWER'S REPORT ON THE DISSERTATION / ОПОНЕНТНАЯ ОЦЕНКА ДИССЕРТАЦИИ

Title: **An Aesthetical Analytics of Cinematic Sensibility /
Эстетическая аналитика кинематографической чувственности**

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Sc. degree: A dissertation thesis submitted for the degree of candidate of philosophical
sciences / Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата
философских наук

Sc. specialty: 5.7.3. Aesthetics / 5.7.3. Эстетика

Member of the Dissertation Committee (Reviewer):
Prof. PaedDr. Slávka Kopčáková, Ph.D. (Professor of Aesthetics)

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Darina A. Polikarpova's dissertation is an extraordinary project. It fills the gap in the current state of knowledge in two related scholarly disciplines: "film philosophy" and film aesthetics. The author of the present doctoral dissertation did not become discouraged by the lack of scholarly outputs in this field, or by the lack of analytical (interpretive) sources in the domestic Russian and English-speaking environment; especially by the lack of synthesizing works. Therefore, she had to familiarize herself with partially solved problems and synthesize this fragmentary state of knowledge into the form defined by her topic. She took a responsible stance, she showed a good knowledge of focal texts and contexts related to the defined issues. She was able to competently analyze them and evaluate their relevance to the topic of the dissertation project.

The present dissertation entitled *An Aesthetical Analytics of Cinematic Sensibility* (Russian original, and English mutation pp. 191-350, approx. 170 pp.) is structured into an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion and a list of bibliographic references. It deals with a relatively new and highly topical issue, which has not yet been comprehensively processed, and which places relatively high demands on a doctoral student. At this point, I have to state that Darina Polikarpova handled this challenge very well and creditably.

The author of the thesis set out several goals that she mostly managed to achieve. The main goal of this work was to delineate new approaches to the philosophy of film and to handle selected problems: „[R]esearch aims to develop a new concept of cinema as a sensory experience and to analyse it using aesthetic tools.” (s. 198), which the author successfully managed to divide into partial goals and a sequence of tasks.

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I consider the following to be the key and innovative premises of the dissertation:

1. The author refuses to consider film a language, an arts form dependent on the authority of production and consumption, or to understand it as a collection of films.
2. The author shifts the traditional philosophical understanding of the object-subject relationship from the time of R. Descartes towards the prioritization of an object that does not have to be necessarily human.
3. Polykarpova introduces the topic of film autonomy as "sensory autonomy", which is well justified through works of D. Vertov and J. Epstein and has a rich heuristic potential: "Already here the autonomy of cinema is understood as perceptual autonomy. In other words, cinema does not exist when someone is watching it, but when it is watching something" (p. 201). On the other hand, I have to add, the author raises problems and attempts to contribute solutions, but at certain moments she is more of an observer than a discussant. She once conducts a "dialogue with the authors" and other times merely mediates discussion "between them", while distancing herself. I appreciate that out of the discussed concepts she adopts the term "cine-eye", which corresponds to the philosophical term of Kant's provenance "judgment of the eye".
4. The author accepts philosophical research methods as the most adequate for the analysis and interpretation of film, i.e. she prioritizes "apparatus of aesthetics as a philosophy of sensibility".
5. Polikarpova insists on the difference between film and cinema, which I consider correct and logical.
6. The author claims that she focuses on "sensory experience" as a continuation of a research line focused on aesthetic experience.

While in the first two chapters, *1 Methodological aspect* (pp. 202-229) and *2 Historical and theoretical Aspect* (pp. 230-268), the author clarifies and outlines her basic positions (while not avoiding a dispute with their inspirers), the last two chapters I consider the most beneficial. In them, the author manages to cross the boundaries of what is known. In particular, in Chapter 3 *Ontological Aspect* (pp. 269-297), it is clear that she is well acquainted with how contemporary philosophy rethinks the project of analytical philosophy of the Anglo-American tradition of the second half of the 20th century; i.e. by renewing the interest in ontological questions. To a certain point, I miss the clarification of what was behind the ontological turn in the late 1990s or after 2000, which would convince the reader of its being functional and productive for the film. The author goes directly to the heart of the matter; she starts right by raising questions of inclination to the so-called "Object oriented ontology (OOO)", as this necessarily follows from its previous text and cannot be avoided. According to the author, contemporary film theory is gradually shifting its interest from the paradigm of subject-object relations ("subject" as the one who thinks, emotionally experiences and acts), which she refers to as anthropocentrism to OOO as a fight against it. "So it is preferable for us to approve cine-centrism - as a project focused on theming the specific experience that cinema experiences correlating with the world instead of fighting anthropocentrism" (p. 270). The analysis of the problem was based on the analysis of two similar projects by V. Sobchack's (*The Address of the Eye*) and D. Frampton's (*Filmosophy*).

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Chapter 4 *The Aesthetic Aspect* (298-335) contains an initial statement about the unsatisfactory situation in the state of the affairs in a given area. The chapter presents the author's efforts to verify the methods she has outlined as effective ones (aesthetic analysis) and to broaden the knowledge through what she can benefit from based on the analysis and interpretation of specific film experiments. She adopts theories contributed by philosophers, theorists, and filmmakers (Bazin, Deleuze, Eisenstein, Bonitzer, Chion, Honzl, Kuleshov, Bergson, Moussinac, Pudovkin, etc.). Deleuze's discourse dominates. Polikarpova selects examples of experimental cinematography from world-famous creators (Belson, Farocki, Dreyer, Hatum, Burroughs, Balch, Vertov, Takashi Ito, Mastumoto, Frampton, Marker, Hura, Gehr, etc.). It is a pity that in many cases it is not directly the author's analysis, but the analysis conducted by other film theorists. Her focus is on film experience (noting particular aesthetics categories such as sensory organs and perceivable elements, space and time, movement and rhythm; and their subcategories) and the structure of cinematic sensibility. The final considerations were directed at emphasizing the need to distinguish "our sensory experience" from "cinema as sensory experience", which are the result of the search for otherness: "searching for otherness [...] which is the main intention of the outlined this cine-philosophical project" (p. 335).

As this is a work written in a foreign language, I do not comment on the formal aspect, language and stylistics. I take the same position in assessing the English translation of the work I have been working with. Even so, I consider the dissertation to be managed on the required level.

Reviewer' questions or discussion prompts:

1. Please, try to clarify the aesthetics category of "cine-eye" in relation to the results of your dissertation.
2. Which of the presented analyses of experimental films are original, i.e. conducted by you not by other authors?

Conclusion

The dissertation meets the basic requirements established by Order, No. 11181/1 of 19 November 2021, „On the Procedure for Awarding Academic Degrees at Saint Petersburg State University“, the candidate Darina Alexandrovna Polikarpova **deserves the award of the scientific degree of Candidate of Philosophical Sciences** (Кандидат философских наук) in the scientific specialty: **5.7.3. Aesthetics** (5.7.3. Эстетика).

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