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REPORT

By Member of the Dissertation Committee on the
Dissertation of
Polina Ruslanovna KORYKHALOVA on the
theme:

**“Professional Journalism in Cinema and Literature
in the USSR and the USA (Second Half of the 20th
Century)”**

**Submitted in conformity with the requirements for
the candidate degree in philological sciences
Specialisation 5.9.9 – Media Communication and
Journalism**

Having read the doctoral dissertation of Polina Korykhalova in the English-language version, pages 250-475, I am ready to offer a series of observations and draw conclusions concerning the academic quality of the work. The thesis concerns the evolution and development of media and journalism criticism through fictional cinematic and literature works from a perspective of the second half of the 20th century in the United States versus the Soviet Union. The topic is at the intersection of several different academic disciplines, which includes among others international relations, mass media and journalism, morality and ethics, culture 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 US and Russian sources are used to illuminate the historical and contemporary use of fictional literature and cinema works featuring journalists undergoing moral and ethical dilemmas, which is supported in a rather extensive reference list at the end of the thesis.



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This thesis in general is a significant achievement of academic endeavour that is well considered and executed by Polina Korykhalova of this relatively understudied topic, which places the work to offer a contribution to the existing state of the art knowledge. The structure of the thesis is logical and maintains a good flow for the reader with an introduction and conclusion, two chapters, reference list and appendixes. Furthermore, the actual topic, which are all very well described and justified in the very beginning of the thesis. However, theory, method and approach are insufficiently articulated and justified for the reader, seemingly in an unclear. Further motivation and justification of the selected theories and concepts is required, along with a better understanding of how they were to applied in this instance. Although, the selected methods, theories and approaches are absolutely appropriate towards realising the stated research purpose of the thesis. The research objectives stated on pages 265-266 are realistic and well considered from the point of view of developing academic knowledge on the chosen topic. Thus the justification for the theme of the thesis is clear, consistent and well justified overall.

The thesis is written in a very strong and convincing manner in terms of the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the materials presented. There is an evident and well integrated use of conceptual and theoretical interpretation of the empirical data, which is a key strength of this academic work. A great deal of material has been thoroughly worked in to the structure of the thesis, it is done so in a systematic and yet uncomplicated format. The work maintains a high level of conceptual clarity throughout. In an interesting passage on ethical journalism on page 277, a useful addition to strengthen the argument would be the attempt some years ago by the European Federation of Journalists to lobby the European Union to have journalism declared a public good.



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There are some other minor points of weakness in the thesis that can be highlighted to allow the author to learn in the future career to help them improve what is an original work of high quality academic research and academic writing. So these points should be taken in the spirit of an intended constructive criticism of an academic work of good standard. These remarks and comments do not appear in any specific order. There seem to be some problems at times with the translation of some specific words in the thesis, mainly the mislabelling of parts of the thesis, for example the use of “paragraph” (page 323) rather than the more likely meaning of section (similar on page 365 when “paragraph, rather than sub-section is used). There are also the appearance of occasional typos, for example on page 324 “Harriet Beecher Stowe in her novels My Wife and I (1981)”, should be 1881. On page 347, footnote 252, I would certainly encourage alternative sources than Wikipedia, which given its reputation is not a solid academic source. On pages 401 and 402, there is the complete repetition of a whole paragraph beginning with “The protagonist of Shock Corridor, ...”

Perhaps as a final departing point of mild criticism is concerning the academic contribution of this thesis. It is rightly mentioned that this is an understudied aspect in academia. However, there is no apparent mention in the conclusion as to how this particular study contributes to and advances the current state of the art literature in the wider field beyond this case study. What are the main theoretical and conceptual conclusions and contributions to challenge, consolidate or build the current state of the art knowledge on the role and effect of media criticism in fictional cinematic and literary works featuring journalists? This is increasingly evidenced by the aftermath of different wars in the 21st century, for example, a number of Russian and Georgian films on this genre appeared after the 2008 War.



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In summary, the thesis covers a relatively understudied academic coverage of a topic within the media critical aspect of cinema and literature content and how it evolves over time and circumstances in the context of national global processes and trends. The strengths of the work far outweigh the weaknesses of it. One of the consistent themes concerning choices refers to the moral dilemmas faced by journalists that require ethical choices. This work contributes to a deeper conceptual and empirical understanding of the nature and practice of 20th media critical aspect of cinema and literature content within the context of presenting and projecting positive and negative role model constructs of journalists and journalism. Given the current media and journalism industry criticisms of the transformations that are underway, the thesis is extremely timely in helping to understand the contribution of trust and reputation issues in the journalism industry.

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 Polina Korykhalova deserves the award of the scientific degree of Candidate of Philological Sciences in the speciality 5.9.9. – Media Communication and Journalism. Clause 11 of the aforementioned Order by the author of the thesis is not broken.



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14.06.2022

Member of the Dissertation Council

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