

Department of Cinematography

Final Thesis Evaluation

Author: MURAT MKUZHEV

Title: VISUAL STYLE OF SOVIET WAR FILMS (1940s-1960s)

Evaluation by the Thesis Mentor ☐

Evaluation by the Opponent ☒

Author of Evaluation (name, surname, department): prof. MgA. Marek Jícha

Evaluation of the content and resulting form of a theoretical Thesis:

Appropriate choice of Thesis objective and approach.....A

Relative completeness of the literature search in relation to the topicA

Ability to adopt a critical approach and use specialised literature sourcesA

Logical structure of the Thesis, continuity and proportionality of chaptersA

Linguistic level and styleA

Compliance with the bibliography standards (no thesis may be recommended for defence if there are multiple quote sections indicating no source in the text).....A

Sufficient extent of images, justification for and appropriateness of such images, graphic representation.....A

Originality of the Thesis, contribution to the field of interestA

Overall Evaluation of the Thesis (A-F) A = outstanding performance exceeding the criteria above

(*explanation: A = outstanding performance exceeding the criteria above, B = above-average performance with minimum errors, C = average performance with an acceptable level of error, D = acceptable performance with a higher level of error, E = performance merely satisfying the criteria, F = unacceptable performance*)

Recommendations:

The individual verbal evaluation of the theoretical Thesis includes a paragraph summarising the contents and conclusions of the Thesis; presents a more detailed evaluation of the aforementioned criteria, particularly the justification for the D, E, F grades; points out the positive features of the Thesis, particularly if the grade is A, B; formulates the questions for the student to answer during the defence; in conclusion, the evaluation gives a clear statement on whether the author has demonstrated the ability to work creatively and independently in his/her chosen area of research or not, whether the Thesis meets the standard requirements for final theses or not, whether the Supervisor/Opponent recommends the Thesis for defence or not, and the proposed grade. Typically, the verbal evaluation takes 1 standard page; if there are no objections to the Thesis, it may be shorter. With theses where there is nothing to criticise, an additional question should be asked as to where the student should direct his/her subsequent research.

Individual verbal evaluation of the theoretical Thesis:

Examinators's Evaluation, by prof. MgA. Marek Jicha, Prague, 15th September 2019

Murat Emkuzhev

Visual style of Soviet war films (1940s-1960s)

Murat Emkuzhev's Master degree thesis deals with the visual style of Soviet war films shot between 1940 and 1960, the era when visual style of war films was shaped to its internationally recognized form. The thesis are divided into three chapters 40s, 50s and 60s and each period has two films, as chosen by Murat, which are analyzed. 1st decade of 40s is presented by film **"Mashenka"** made by director Juli Raizman, DP by Yevgeni Andrikanis and Galina Pyshkova and second is analyzing film **"Third strike"** made by director Igor Savchenko, DP by Mikhail Kirillov. 2nd period is presented by two films **"Cranes are flying"** by director Mikhail Kalatozov, DP Sergey Urusevskiy and **"A ballad about a soldier"** directed by Grigoriy Chukhrai, DP by Era Savelyeva, Vladimir Nikolayev. 3rd period by film **"Ivan's childhood"** by director Andrey Tarkovskiy DP by Vadim Yusov and film **"Zhenya, Zheneschka and Katyucha"** directed by Vladimir Motyl, DP Konstantin Ryzhov.

Each analysis is highly methodically structured to include main description of the story and themes of the film, background of cinematographer, stylistic choices about lighting, camera movement and blocking, practical effects and battle scenes, then the final conclusion. This made Murat's thesis very conceptual and easy to read.

Analysis are very well done, based on the study of films and their images, which is reflected in the very rich enrichment of this work with pictorial documents, screenshots of films that directly illustrate what Murat writes about. E.g. when he describes the lighting concept of interior portraits, we see direct examples. This will be highly appreciated for readers who are unfamiliar with the topic.

Murat evaluates the Soviet war film in the period as a genre with a comprehensive and distinctive content and artistic form, which was created due to the isolation caused by the mythological WWII censor state apparatus that Murat describes, including its practices and consequences. Moreover, the ideological pressure on the creators from compelling socialist realism was influenced by Stalin's personal participation and approval process in the early years. In the 1950s, after Stalin's death, the process of so-called "melting" (Thaw) takes place, and Soviet filmmakers are free to experiment with their own ideas and opinions. The 1960s had been a shift away from the generational sentimentality of the 1950s, and although censorship has begun to intensify again, the creators of war movies have discovered the subtle visual stylizations and metaphors that created a way of free expression.

Murat's analysis of present production of WWII films is also interesting, telling us that in the present time Russian filmmakers no longer need WWII as source for themes to explore their personal themes. The impact of WWII on the Soviet Union was so great that it influenced several generations of filmmakers to build new visual style on this platform and justifies the reason for existence of the phenomenon of the Russian war film.

The thesis is quite good. I propose to accept the work and suggest to evaluate Murat Emkuzhev work with the classification A.

prof. MgA Marek Jicha

Date:

Signature: