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Theoretical Articles by Film Critic Leonid Kozlov (1933–2006) in the *Cinema Art* Journal

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Abstract

This article reveals the theoretical approaches of the film scientist, film historian and film critic Leonid Kozlov (1933–2006), which are reflected in his articles published in the *Cinema Art* journal. Professional activity of L.K. Kozlov is associated with a deep analysis of the problems of the history of cinema, the methodology of film studies, the study of aesthetics and the theory of cinematography. He devoted his main theoretical works on cinematographic issues mainly to professional issues of film studies and film dramaturgy.

As a result of the content analysis of the main theoretical articles of the film scientist L.K. Kozlov, published in the *Cinema Art* journal from 1956 to 1985, we came to the following conclusions: the author devoted his main theoretical works mainly to professional issues of film studies and film dramaturgy; the theoretical articles of the author are written at a high professional level, replete with cinematic terms, and are not devoid of expressive artistic imagery; the stated theoretical concepts are confirmed by a clear logic of presentation and consistent argumentation based on primary sources; the author's position and the author's attitude to the subject of research are clearly seen in the general content and generalizing conclusions; in structural terms, his articles are usually in a scientific style, have a clear structure and large volume; as a film critic of the leading professional Soviet journal on cinematography, broadcasting the ideology of the cinema of the ruling communist party, the author often entered into polemics with foreign film critics on the theory and history of cinematography, defending the value of Soviet cinematography; the author had a relatively wide range of scientific interests: critical articles on the theory and history of Soviet and foreign cinematography, reviews of Soviet and foreign films, reviews of works by other authors on the subject of cinematography, bibliography, discussions.

Keywords: Kozlov, cinema, film critic, film history, film art, Cinema Art journal.

1. Introduction

The relevance of a retrospective analysis of the evolution of theoretical approaches and concepts of film criticism of the past, presented in the leading Soviet/Russian film criticism journals, is connected, in our opinion, with the further development of the theory of film art as a scientific field with deep scientific roots.

One of such well-known film critics in the field of Soviet and Russian film studies and the theory of film art was Leonid Kozlov (1933–2006), doctor of art history, professor, laureate of the Prizes of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR, laureate of the Prize of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia, as well as the Prize for the best film critic (2003), member of the Union of

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Cinematographers of the Russian Federation. He was one of the leading researchers of the works of Sergei Eisenstein and Luchino Visconti, was involved in the creation of the journal *Film Studies Notes* and the Eisenstein Center for Film Culture Research.

Leonid Kozlov was born on July 23, 1933. In 1951 he graduated from the Moscow State University. After graduating from high school, he worked as a researcher at the Institute of Art History, and later as a leading researcher at the Research Institute of Cinematography. Five years later, he began to publish his own scientific articles on the subject of cinema and television, mainly in the journals *Cinema Art, Film Studies Notes, Soviet Screen* and others. In 1986 he defended his dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Arts, and in 1992 he was approved as a professor. L. Kozlov taught students the history and theory of cinema at VGIK and the Russian State University for the Humanities.

Even before entering Moscow State University, L.K. Kozlov, by his own admission (Kukulina, 2006), was fond of reading the *Cinema Art* journal, and years later he himself became the author of scientific publications and articles in this journal. By the way, not everyone could publish in the *Cinema Art* journal, one of the most influential and reputable Soviet journals, it mainly published articles only by selected film experts, film critics, film theorists, and film directors. It is no coincidence that foreign critics called it an analogue of the famous British film journal *Sight & Sound* (Hill, 1960: 31-40), although it significantly surpassed its British "colleague" not only in the number of circulations, but also (more significantly) in fundamental content of some of the materials published in it.

L. Kozlov devoted his main theoretical works on cinematic issues, mainly to professional issues of film studies and film dramaturgy (the main works were published at different times under the headings "Critical Diary", "Theory and History", "Publication", "Abroad", "Bibliography" on the pages of the *Cinema Art* journal), although most of his publications, for obvious reasons, were written in line with the ideological and political dogmas of one or another historical period of the USSR.

At the same time, he had a relatively wide range of scientific interests: critical articles on the theory and history of Soviet and foreign cinematography, film reviews of Soviet and foreign films, reviews of works by other authors on the subject of cinematography, bibliography, discussions.

Having initially received a philological education, already being a student at Moscow State University, L. Kozlov became interested in film art through the analysis of film scripts. He was especially impressed by B. Balazs's book *The Art of Cinema* (Balazs, 1945), which inspired the future research scientist.

Here is how his friend and colleague M. Yampolsky wrote about him: "His presence has always been marked by extraordinary intensity. He was the very embodiment of concentration, intellectual, spiritual energy. Above all, he was passionately in love with culture. His reactions were never sluggish or indifferent. A film, a book or music that interested him mobilized his whole being, trembling with passion. It is no exaggeration to say that he lived by art. In the modern practical world, there are very few such people left, and the departure of each of them is a sign of the gradual and final disappearance of that great utopia of culture that was carried by part of the Russian intelligentsia" (Yampolsky, 2006).

2. Materials and methods

Research materials: theoretical articles by film critic L.K. Kozlov (1933–2006) in the *Cinema Art* journal.

Research methods: a comprehensive content analysis of the theoretical concepts of the film critic L. Kozlov in the *Cinema Art* journal, including methods of theoretical research (classification, comparison, analogy, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization) and methods of empirical research (collection of information).

3. Discussion and results

A considerable number of Soviet and Russian (Fedorov, 2021; Fedorov, 2022; Fedorov, 2023; Khudyakova, 2000; Lotman, 1973; Razlogov, 2013; Sokolov, 2008; Yampolsky, 1993; Zhabsky, Tarasov, 2015 and others) and western (Andrew, 1976, Andrew, 1984; Branigan, Buckland, 2015; Casetti, 1999; Eco, 1975, 1976; Etherington-Wright, Doughty, 2011; Gibsonetal., 2000; Hill, Gibson, 1998; Livingston, 2009; McIver, 2016; Plantinga, 1993; Stam, 2000; Villarejo, 2007 and others) works have been devoted to the study of the evolution of cinematography and film studies.

At the same time, some works (Fedorov, 2017; 2019; Gorbatkova, 2016; Hill, 1960; Levitskaya, 2022; Levitskaya et al., 2016; Muryukina, 2016; Salny, 2015, 2016) were about the famous Soviet and Russian film critics and historians. Here we can recall, for example, the collective monograph "Media Criticism in Russia: Creative Portraits" (Levitskaya et al., 2016). The genesis and development of Soviet and Russian cinema and film criticism are also represented in the scientific works (Fedorov, 2014–2022). The publications of A. Fedorov and A. Levitskaya (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2022; Levitskaya, 2022) are devoted to the study of the theoretical concepts of film studies in the *Cinema Art* journal.

L. Kozlov began publishing regularly in the *Cinema Art* journal in the 1950s. His first publication was the article "On the Syntheticity of Cinematography" in the *Cinema Art* journal (Kozlov, 1956: 82-90) turned to the analysis of the specifics of film art, which synthesized painting, theater, literature, music, etc. At the same time, by painting he meant the pictorial solution of the film, by the theater – the art of the actor, by literature – the script, by music – the symphonic score of the film (Kozlov, 1956: 82).

Revealing the essence of the synthetic specifics of cinematography, L. Kozlov emphasized that it can be fully understood, taking into account such an important aspect of cinema as cinematic space, since the viewer in the process of watching a film perceives not only the frame projected at a given moment on the screen, but simultaneously the frames preceding it, and the movie itself is ultimately perceived by him not as a simple chain of frames, but as something integral, gradually unfolding before his eyes. At the same time, one can speak of a film work both as a poetic whole (about a film script) and as a pictorial whole (about a film): "The synthesis of poetry and painting means, in particular, that cinema is the art of double individualization, that is, that the character (in general, the image) in cinematography is individualized not only in the literary sense of the word (by those features that unfold in time, in actions and dialogues), but also plastically – by those features that we see in the space of the frame at every moment of the plot" (Kozlov, 1956: 88). In addition, the specificity of cinema art is determined by its material: photography, which obliges the filmmakers to the exact authenticity of each specific detail and the whole, depicted in the film.

According to the author, the secret of the popularity of cinematography is largely related to the fact that it developed on the aesthetic basis of other ("old") arts, and also used their theoretical and practical experience. Hence, the tasks of creating a theory of cinema art, studying its aesthetic features necessarily dictate an appeal to the theory of those arts that feed the cinema; more broadly, to the general aesthetic heritage. The second source is the testimonies of practitioners of modern cinema. They have accumulated rich observations. These observations preserve the living breath of art, but they are of far more than empirical significance (Kozlov, 1956: 90).

In addition, L. Kozlov wrote reviews of books by foreign authors on cinema, analyzed their theoretical concepts and approaches. For example, in his article "Two Arnheims" (Kozlov, 1961: 122-125), the author presented a film criticism analysis of the works of the German psychologist Rudolf Arnheim on the theory of cinematography (Arnheim, 1960). On the one hand, the author accurately noted the dual nature of R. Arnheim's theoretical approach to the study of cinematography: "Arnheim is a spectator, in love with the cinema of the twenties, devoted to it, subtly feeling the peculiar poetry of a wordless image, absorbing the novelty of plasticity, discovered by cinema, – here "first author" of this book. From it comes a romantic view of cinema that is clearly tangible for the reader. But Rudolf Arnheim and the scientist-psychologist, a follower of that school, which studied the apparatus of human perception, attributing to it the ability to "order" the signals of the real world according to certain laws of "simplicity", "correctness", "balance", etc." (Kozlov, 1961: 123).

At the same time, according to L. Kozlov, R. Arnheim, being a psychologist, limited his theoretical analysis to the study of the exclusively sensual material of the film image, in other words, he limited his possibilities in revealing the specifics of cinematography, although he made many valuable observations that brought the book wide popularity. The critic substantiated that the combination of Arnheim the theorist and Arnheim the spectator turned out to be very fruitful in the final analysis in the study of the laws of the moving photographic image. He called the first chapters of the book devoted to this problem the best in it: "Here, a number of differences that exist between the human eye and the "cinema eye" of the camera are clearly formulated" (Kozlov, 1961: 123).

On the other hand, without belittling the importance of R. Arnheim's research for the theory of cinema for the study of expressive techniques in cinema ("grammar of cinema"), this book, according to the critic, did not reflect the author's deep interest in the artistic problems of cinema. L. Kozlov was convinced that cinema theory is impoverished if it is not based on understanding the historical process and is not connected with creative practice, if it is limited to a single frame or expressive device, losing sight of the unity of the film as an integral work of art: "Cinema theory is fruitless if she limits her subject to techniques of expression and does not study film as a movement of figurative thought. Such a theory runs the risk of becoming a theory of craft, not art" (Kozlov, 1961: 124).

In his early articles published in the *Cinema Art* journal, L. Kozlov often referred to the history and theory of cinema, for example, in the article "Subsonic" (Kozlov, 1961: 115-116), he reasonably revealed the fundamental differences between "silent" and "sound" cinema, analyzed in detail the evolution of sound and the sounding word as an ideological and artistic means of cinema. Initially, the film show had the sound form, not the film, i.e. the filmmakers at that time were deprived of the opportunity to operate with sound as an artistic means and as an element of the image. On the other hand, "silent" cinema "could transmit sound only indirectly, in visual mediation: through the titles of the dialogue, through the character's speech gesture, through the display of sound sources, etc. (Kozlov, 1961: 116).

Discussing the contemporary state of sound cinema, L. Kozlov hoped that the time would soon come when it would be possible to actually achieve a harmonious culture of the sound image, a flexible and active subordination of words, music and visual images (Kozlov, 1961: 117). In addition, in his opinion, it is unfair to call the great films created before the advent of sound in cinema the term "silent" cinema, since the term "dumbness" is inappropriate in its figurative meaning in relation to films full of meaning and deep content. Therefore, following Sergei Eisenstein, he proposed to agree on the use of the term "subsonic" cinema in film studies: "Silent is opposed to "sound". The meaning of "subsonic" is not only in difference with "sonic", but also in connection with it, in unity with it. The word "subsonic" also means development, gravitation, aspiration toward sound" (Kozlov, 1961: 117).

Being a leading researcher and connoisseur of Eisenstein's filmmaking, Leonid Kozlov deeply studied and analyzed his work in his publications on the pages of the *Cinema Art* journal (Kozlov, 1962: 100-122; Kozlov, 1965: 3-10; Kozlov, 1968: 69-87; Kozlov, 1975: 152-164).

For example, in the article "Endless Labor" (Kozlov, 1962: 100-122), the author analyzed one of the main theoretical works of S.M. Eisenstein's "Careful Nature" (1945): "The brightest figurative thought: that's what first of all should attract the attention of the cinematographer on these pages, depicting the endless intellectual work of their author" (Kozlov, 1962: 104). In his article which was dedicated to the fortieth anniversary of the film *Battleship Potemkin* (Kozlov, 1965: 3-10), the author conducted a kind of opinion poll among such recognized masters of cinema art as Sergei Bondarchuk, Sergei Gerasimov, Joris Ivens, Nanni Loy, Konrad Wolf, Vittorio De Sica. In the article, they describe their first impression of the film and their current attitude towards it, evaluate the place of this film in the history of world cinema and explain how the aesthetics of film and the principles of their work relate (Kozlov, 1965: 3-10).

By the way, L. Kozlov in his theoretical articles paid great attention to the aesthetics of art, in particular, in his review of the book by A. Zis "Aesthetics: Ideology and Methodology" (Zis, 1984), he supports the point of view that a film theorist must at the same time be a real art critic, able to come into contact with the film and the artist himself – the creator of the film (Kozlov, 1985: 125-129).

A kind of hymn to the cinematic creativity of S.M. Eisenstein was the publication of Leonid Kozlov "On the history of one idea" (Kozlov, 1968: 69-87), dedicated to the life and work of the famous film director S. Eisenstein. In his article, he invited the reader to take a look at the work of S. Eisenstein as an integral world, to study the internal logic of this world, its basic principles, determined by the revolutionary era of its time. The author of the article presented a deep film analysis of such famous films of the master of Soviet cinema as *Strike* (1924), *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *October* (1927-1928), *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), *Ivan the Terrible* (1941-1945) and others.

As one of the devoted fans of cinematography S. Eisenstein, L. Kozlov argued that the highest dignity of Eisenstein as an artist-ideologist, an artist-theorist is revealed precisely in the sequence with which he put ideas in order in his artistic world. In the firmness and confidence with which he each time recreated and resolved the contradiction between the idea and the object, between the ideal and reality. In the invariability with which he strove to bring his idea – the idea of unity –

to its true content and meaning (Kozlov, 1968: 76). At the same time, the author repeatedly repeated that S. Eisenstein is ideological and dialectical. L. Kozlov revealed the plot and composition specifics of his films, as well as the philosophy of his cinematography.

Being a film critic of the leading professional Soviet cinema journal, broadcasting the ideology of cinema of the ruling communist party, L. Kozlov often entered into polemics with foreign film critics under the heading "Abroad", defending the value of Soviet cinema. For example, studying the world significance of S. Eisenstein, L. Kozlov presented a deep analysis of western interpretations and theories of his heritage, which in most cases, in his opinion, tried to compromise or distort the meaning and value of the cinematic heritage of the Soviet artist.

In his article "Another Subverser" (Kozlov, 1975: 152-164), the author entered into a sharp debate with foreign critics (mainly American) and refuted their ideological and political attacks.

Getting acquainted with articles about Eisenstein and statements about him published in the West, Soviet film criticism, according to the film critic, received a huge number of reasons for controversy: "First of all, one should pay attention to the fact that in the last ten years the typical concept of Eisenstein, which was widespread in the West in the late 1940's and early 1950's, has become noticeably less influential. It could be called "subversive" because the meaning and purpose of the proposed scheme was to diverge – divide and contrast – Eisenstein's creative quest and the logic of the development of Soviet art and Soviet society" (Kozlov, 1975: 155).

On the other hand, the author also noted the positive aspects of western propaganda and the study of the heritage of S. Eisenstein: "It is impossible not to recall the many years of activity of the famous American historian Jay Leyda, whose authentic translations of Eisenstein's theoretical works (based on author's instructions), combined in the collections "Sense of Cinema" and "Cinema Form", have long become a reliable primary source for the English-speaking reader" (Kozlov, 1975: 156).

The author of the article emphasized that the creation of literary texts was conceived by Sergei Eisenstein is inseparable from the process of creating a new cultural context – informational and ideological, aesthetic and general social: "Responsibility to this huge and diverse context – and, let's say more responsibility for it – did not leave Eisenstein even in the most secret movements of his creative thought" (Kozlov, 1975: 152).

The central theme of theoretical scientific research of film critic L. Kozlov has always had methodological problems of film studies, such as the analysis of theoretical heritage, directing, screenplay, genres, the specifics of cinema and television.

In his publications, he repeatedly pointed out the need for a holistic study of cinema. Clearly realizing that his contemporaries and colleagues "in the shop" were divided into two camps: supporters of "traditionalism" and supporters of "innovation" in cinematography. Without joining either one or the other, L. Kozlov, in turn, proposed two possible options for setting the methodological tasks of contemporary film science: 1) to find a system of techniques that has proven itself at the current level of scientific development or at the level of the latest trends; 2) understand and define what is happening to cinema today, before our eyes, and how the past and future of cinema look from this point of view (Kozlov, 1976: 75). At the same time, in the first version it was about the formal side of solving methodological problems and contradictions, and in the second – the content. Moreover, he was convinced that there was no impassable gulf between the methods of science and the methods of art. Speaking about the "polyphonic approach" to the study of cinema, he insisted that the system in the study should be an expression of integrity, but by no means its imitation.

On the other hand, not at all begging for the importance of developing the methodology of science, L. Kozlov emphasized the special importance of the inclusion of the researcher's personality: "And if we talk about the conditions necessary for a real structural synthesis, then the personality of the researcher will be one of the most defining values" (Kozlov, 1976: 77). As an art historian, he formulated a number of important theoretical issues that require further study and development: "The question of the functions of art taken over by other forms of culture. The question of the central peripheral types of aesthetic activity. The question of the relativity and permeability of the boundaries between art and non-art. The question of the relationship between the categories of aesthetic and artistic" (Kozlov, 1976: 79).

Special attention to L. Kozlov paid attention to the study of the specifics of cinema and the problems of the genre in film art (Kozlov, 1978: 120-135).

Analyzing the general theory of genres, he comes to the conclusion that filmmakers always think about the viewer, about how to find or come up with the most effective ways to appeal to a mass audience: the effectiveness of the genre is how one could determine the common denominator of these searches and reflections (Kozlov, 1978: 120). Based on this, the author of the publication drew the attention of readers to the need to develop a proper film history theory of genres based on the general theoretical experience of understanding the theory of genres, developed and presented in detail in the theory of literature. At the same time, he insisted on finding ways to historically substantiate and theoretically generalize the genre system of cinematography.

Discussing the historical and structural factors of genre formation in cinema, the author singled out the following factors: 1) the attitude of cinema towards its addressee – the mass audience; 2) the attitude of cinema to the "older", traditional arts; the attitude of cinema to the laws of its specific material (the "photographic nature" of cinema) (Kozlov, 1978: 123).

Hence L. Kozlov deduced three trends in the formation of genres in cinematography: 1) cathartic, due to the spectacular aesthetics and sensual impact of the film on the viewer; 2) synthetic (reunifying), studying the position of cinema in the context of high, traditional artistic culture of the past and present; 3) mimetic, aimed at the development of life material, at the direct reproduction of reality, taking into account the possibilities of the photographic nature of the film image, and also associated with the creative development of borderline, non-canonical genres (Kozlov, 1978: 123-127).

In addition, when defining the genre of a film work, the film critic drew attention to the following problem: watching the movement of the current cinema, we come across films that clearly do not fit into the framework assumed by one or another familiar term or even a combination of terms. The standard definitions of the genre do not work, and the film requires an individual definition, so to speak (Kozlov, 1978: 130).

In other words, sometimes a transition from genre typology to genre identity of the artist and his film work is required. Moreover, L. Kozlov argued that the individuality of the filmmaker is most clearly manifested, however strange it may sound, precisely in violation of the generally recognized and generally accepted laws of the genre. Hence the author wondered whether it was possible to achieve the unity of "author's" and "genre". A unique and ingenious example of such unity is the work of Chaplin. In general, L. Kozlov approaches the study of film genres from the point of view of communication theory ("the rules of the game with the audience"): as art develops, it stays outside the genre and just as inevitably – inside it (Kozlov, 1978: 135).

Considering some aspects of the interaction between cinema and television, L. Kozlov, came to the conclusion that many facts of coexistence and merging, synthesis and diffusion of cinematographic and television principles are already known (Kozlov, 1983: 107).

Content analysis of the main theoretical articles by L. Kozlov shows that they are written at a high professional level, replete with cinematic terms and have artistic expressiveness, and sometimes poetic imagery. The theoretical concepts presented by him are confirmed by a clear logic of presentation and consistent argumentation based on primary sources. At the same time, the author's position, assessment and attitude of the author to the subject of research are clearly seen in the general content and generalizing conclusions in each article. Structurally, articles are usually in a scientific style, have a clear structure and a fairly large volume.

It should be noted that with communist ideologists and censors, L. Kozlov's relations were often quite tense. In his interview, which he gave to Anna Kukulina in 2006 in the *Cinema Art* journal, L. Kozlov admitted: "As for the film studies school that I had to go through, it turned out to be a rather tough school, which I, perhaps, do not regret. In the sector, I was the youngest of the youngest, but they did not give me any age discounts, and for three or four years my works, those that I wrote according to the plan, were torn apart each time during the discussion and were not accepted. And the criticism was very serious, from a position of principle. Someone spoke out more sharply, someone more gently, but Rostislav N. Yurenev was the harshest critic. In my work, he usually saw something alien. He imputed to me, firstly, idealism, secondly, formalism; thirdly, revisionism. From his point of view, he was right – in fact, in my theorizing, I did not seem to rely on accepted and tested foundations. He did not refer to Lenin's theory of reflection, to the concept of the partisanship of literature, to the doctrine of two cultures. I wanted to do art: cinema and art in general" (Quoted in: Kukulina, 2006). Thus, the ideological dogmatism of the time was never

central to his articles, as the film scholar was interested in lively professional discussion and the scientific search for truth.

When in the 1990s the issue of the fate of national cinema in Russia was raised on the pages of the *Cinema Art* journal under the heading Discussions, Leonid Kozlov emphasized that in a crisis and the revival of national cinematographic culture, a slogan was needed not of a national idea, but of an idea, the main way, cultural. It is necessary to think about culture in the broadest sense of the word – "as about cultivating the soil of cinematography, preserving all the productive ties that have developed over decades and formed a really functioning infrastructure, caring for professional potential in order to prevent it from spreading in small streams and leaving no one knows where, maintaining the spiritual atmosphere in the cinema" (Kozlov, 1994: 121-122). All this, according to the film critic, at that time turned out to be in a completely neglected state...

4. Conclusion

As a result of the content analysis of the main theoretical articles of the film scientist Leonid Kozlov, published in the *Cinema Art* journal from 1956 to 1985, we came to the following conclusions:

- the author devoted his main theoretical works mainly to professional issues of film studies and film dramaturgy; the theoretical articles of the author are written at a high professional level, replete with cinematic terms, and are not devoid of expressive artistic imagery;
- the stated theoretical concepts are confirmed by a clear logic of presentation and consistent argumentation based on primary sources;
- the author's position and the author's attitude to the subject of research are clearly seen in the general content and generalizing conclusions; in structural terms, his articles are usually in a scientific style, have a clear structure and large volume;
- as a film critic of the leading professional Soviet journal on cinematography, broadcasting the ideology of the cinema of the ruling communist party, the author often entered into polemics with foreign film critics on the theory and history of cinematography, defending the value of Soviet cinematography; the author had a relatively wide range of scientific interests: critical articles on the theory and history of Soviet and foreign cinematography, reviews of Soviet and foreign films, reviews of works by other authors on the subject of cinematography, bibliography, discussions.

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