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Political Humor in KVN (1986–1999)

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Abstract

The article traces evolution of political humor in popular Russian television game *KVN* in 1986–1999. The online survey, which involved 100 *KVN* fans aged 41–65, helped to figure out what political sketches or gags are the most memorable and might reflect the problems of the period. The author analyzes the show's content taking into consideration the main political and economic events which took place in the USSR during Perestroika and later in the Russian Federation in the 1990s. Having studied *KVN*'s archive video materials (1986–1999), a documentary series *History of Russian humor* (2012), academic works of Russian and Western scholars, and mass media publications on the game, the author noticed the change in humor modus during those years. Tough criticism of the Soviet system combined with hopes for positive changes in the late 1980s. The teams joked on domestic issues, corrupt politicians, disintegration, territorial losses, and admired the Western lifestyle in the 1990s. The game seemed to be above politics, but indirectly supported Boris Yeltsin during 1996 presidential campaign. *KVN* players were “homo sovieticus”: they had common memories, background, and experience. The game worked as “soft power” uniting teams from the former USSR republics in one cultural territory.

Keywords: KVN, humor, television game, humor program, the First channel, Russian comedy show.

1. Introduction

Studying humor helps in understanding the national politics, economics, and culture. To decode Russian laugh content, one should get basic knowledge of the country's history, current internal situation as well as people's attitudes and aspirations. Russian laugh culture reflects the country's mentality with its preference of collective over individualistic, belief that spiritual should be above material, respect of strong leadership, and cautious attitude to novelties. For many years national jokes have exploited the idea that Russia is behind its European neighbors in technologies, economics, and living standards, but far ahead in morale. Globalism penetrated the country in late 1980s and affected all spheres of life.

There were not many comedy TV shows in the USSR. But the existing ones gained popularity in a short time and formed the national cultural code. The humorists criticized malfunctioning of the socialist system, but upon the whole were politically correct. *KVN*, *Klub Veselyh i nahodchivyykh* (*The Club of Cheerful and Smart* or *The Club of Merry and Witty*) differed in format from the existing in the USSR television comedy programs: humor miniatures of Arkady Raikin (1960s–1970s), show “*Kabachok trinadzat' stul'jev*” (*13 Chair Cabaret*, 1960s–1970s). Its key audience were young men, and performers (players) were not professional actors but students.

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KVN debuted on the USSR First state TV channel on November 8, 1961, as a humor contest of university teams which competed in prepared home sketches and improvised jokes.

Initiated by enthusiasts, KVN appeared at the Khrushchev's Thaw, the period when there were more freedom and opportunities of self-expression for the Soviet youth than in the earlier decades, the show gained popularity in the 1960s, was closed for political reasons in 1972 (Evans 2016: 201; Janco, 2013), relaunched in 1986, and since then has been broadcasted on the First state channel of the USSR, then the Russian Federation. It turned out to be a long-lasting program which survived the USSR, Perestroika, the turbulent 1990s, the upsurges and crises in the 2000s, Covid-19, and is on in 2023.

The game has united the Russian speaking youth from the Soviet, later ex-Soviet republics in a battle of humor and wit. Students with the Soviet or Russian background, who immigrated to the USA, the UK, Germany, or Israel, continue playing KVN in new locations. KVN has always reacted to external and internal political, economic, social issues and played an important role in changing the Soviet mentality during Perestroika and the 1990s.

The goal of the paper is to analyze how the game's participants in sketches, gags, and song contests reacted to political, economic as well as cultural transformations that were going on in the period from 1986 to 1999, in what way the processes of disintegration, forming national identity of Newly Independent States manifested themselves in the show, and how long the Soviet mentality united KVN teams.

2. Materials and methods

The research, based on analysis of KVN archives from its official web site and online video platforms as well publications of Russian and Western scholars, and a documentary series *History of Russian humor* (2012), traces the evolution of political humor in the game diachronically from 1986 to 1999. The study, conducted on materials of the highest league games as well as academic and media publications, identifies the main political themes and actors presented in KVN and explores how they were estimated taking into consideration the political and economic situation in the country. The author analyzes how laugh culture was transforming during those years and what problems united national teams.

100 respondents from Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod, aged 41-65 (87 – female, 13 – male), who confessed that they loved and watched KVN games of 1986–1999 seasons, took part in online-survey. They shared their views on the game, helped to pick political sketches and gags that in their opinion reflected the epoch, named the best teams and KVN performers of the period.

3. Discussion

The media sphere is a place “for citizens’ contact with the political process” (Gureeva, Kireeva, 2022). Numerous television programs, being part of “politainment” (Grosheva, 2022), reach numerous age groups with “social, cultural, and political perspectives and beliefs, which are often very different or even conflicting” (Fedorov, Levitskaya 2020: 238). Humor programs might cheerfully inform their viewers about domestic and international events, influence electorate participation, create positive or negative image of political actors (Arkhangelskaya, 2021; Baumgartner, Lockerbie, 2018; Baumgartner et al., 2019; Baumgartner, 2021; Cao, 2008; Gulevich, Kalashnik, 2023; Ödmark, Harvard, 2021). Joking on current affairs in entertainment programs, comedians share their normative views on society and politics with audiences (Lichtenstein et al., 2021).

Since the program's relaunch in 1986, political issues have frequently been in KVN's agenda, evoking interest in internal or external events, creating positive or negative attitude to discussed problems or politicians. KVN's political humor for the period 1986–1999 was overlooked by the scholars who considered the game mainly as a tool for socialization of the youth and promotion of students' amateur extra-class activities (Barashkov, 2018; Kovalyov, 2004; Manukyan 2022; Ostromoukhova, 2011; Rubekina, 2015) or phenomenon of mass culture (Buklans, 2010), ignoring the game's role in gluing the Newly Independent States into a positive world of good memories, laugh, joy, and play.

Nevertheless, in the late 1980s–1990s KVN proved that “Soviet years did not disappear in the post-Soviet period” (Yurchak, 2006: 296); those who lived in the USSR recalled their past which, together with acute issues, became themes for program's jokes. And for many years KVN as an institution reproduced “Soviet-marked values” (Garey, 2020: 7), and was known for its topicality

(Reznikov, Movchan, 2016: 97). Its political jokes spread virally in the society (Istoria Rossiiskogo yumora. Sezon 1, seriya 1, 2012).

The interest to KVN's political humor among Western and Russian scholars has gone up since 2014 when the relations between Russia and the West became tense, and the game got under scrutiny as an instrument that could promote political visions and form public opinion (Ozoliņa et al, 2017). Scholars have studied the game's video materials of 2003–2018 seasons and concluded that teams denigrated unfriendly countries as well as their politicians while Russia and its leaders were presented in a positive light, criticism of domestic issues was soft, and all local problems looked solvable (Barashkov 2018; Pimenova et al, 2018). Russian researchers who are now affiliated with the Western universities have labelled KVN as a "controlled game" (Garey, 2020: 2; Tagangaeva 2018: 16) and its content as "state-approved political satire" (Semenenko 2018, 2021). But they practically ignored 1986–1999 KVN period. A. Garey ties up KVN's rebirth with Perestroika: deconstruction of the old system required new ideas and energy of the youth, and students' contest took up the challenge (Garey, 2020: 54-60). The players and scriptwriters of the game M. Marfin and A. Chivourin, having analyzed jokes, including political ones, of 1986–1999 seasons, revealed technologies of KVN's humor, but did not analyze them in historical, political, and economic context (Marfin, Chivourin, 2008). That period of KVN's activity, including its political discourse, remains unstudied. The article aims to fill in the gap and explore the development of political humor in the game from 1986 to 1999.

4. Results

At the very start KVN was broadcasted live and consisted of improvisations, but since 1971, to avoid "dangerous" jokes and control the program's timing, the game has been recorded, and after montage shown on prime time. In the 1960s jokes in KVN were mostly about students' life, scientific issues, and bureaucracy. Teams were from technical, civil engineering, or medical institutes, and showing knowledge of physics, math's, or strength of materials was a normal practice at games (Akselrod et al, 1974). In 1960s–1970s characters with beards did not appear in the game as they might resemble Karl Marx whose legacy became the ideological cornerstone of the Soviet system. There were no political jokes or satire in the program: the television content was under control in the USSR.

The late 1980s, Gorbachev's Perestroika, was, on the one hand, a period of economic disaster and, on the other hand, the time of hope (Strovsky, Schleifer, 2021): the youth was expecting serious changes in all spheres. Those days there were many political jokes in KVN: students were ironic about the Communist party. In 1988 in semifinal between the teams from Novosibirsk State University and Dnepropetrovsk State University, the Siberians' joked: "Party, let us drive!". The gag was based on the well-known in the USSR slogan "The party is our driving force". "The communist" recalled that he had lived in the period when all people at party meetings applauded stoya (standing) and voted unanimously ZA (yes), for that reason the period of Brezhnev rule was named "zastoy" (stagnation). Such jokes signaled that it was allowed to laugh at the Communist party (KVN, 1988).

Some KVN sketches in 1987–1989 were about rationing of food and consumer goods, partnerships (a new form of proprietorship), differences in payment for qualified and non-qualified labor: when industrial entities closed many engineers were made redundant, and a cleaner's salary was higher than that of an engineer. In the 1980s–1990s there was a strong belief among Russian people that the West was superior in such spheres as economics, industrial development, finance, and standard of living. KVN players emphasized that the USSR would never be able to compete with the West. The sketches of "Odessa gentlemen", a team from Odessa State University, illustrate that:

1st dialogue:

– *What does the Russian industry require to be up to the world standards?
To change the standards*".

2d dialogue:

– *Why aren't you dancing, gentleman?*

– *It's my first ball. I am afraid to do something wrong.*

– *Don't be afraid. Everything, that could have gone wrong, have already happened*" (KVN, 1987).

Politicians were not popular with KVN players:

– *Those idiots*

- ‘Shhh...Not a word about politics!’ (KVN, 1990b).

After 1991 coup in Moscow, when Mikhail Gorbachev was no longer in power, the parody on the former CPSU General Secretary and the USSR president appeared in local St. Petersburg KVN game. The impersonator pronounced verbose speech full of expressions typical for Gorbachev: “Perestroika”, “the process is irreversible”, “uglUbit’ (make it deeper)”. The comedian imitated the Southern accent of the Secretary General, his habit to make wrong stresses in words and mispronounce them. Whatever a question the audience asked, “Gorbachev” gave a long and irrelevant answer to it (Nezavisimyi KVN, 1991). The first USSR president was out of power then and became an easy target for satire. Comedians showed him as a decent, but weak leader who led the country to collapse.

In the 1990s, during Boris Yeltsin’s presidency, KVN found much material for satire, criticizing liberal reforms, inequality, unfair privatization, dishonest businesses that robbed people. In 1994, students from Odessa State University sang about problems of new Russia where “common people are miserable in the country that is ruled by MMM” (KVN, 1994a). MMM was a financial pyramid that left many people without their savings (Sinelnikova, 2020). Students blamed the RF government in improper management that let swindlers rob naive investors.

In 1993 Azerbaijan team “Guys from Baku” reminded Russia about the existing and possible territorial losses:

- *“Russia must sell the Kuril Islands*
- *What for?*
- *To buy the Black Sea fleet?*
- *What for?*
- *To sell and buy the Kuril Islands”* (KVN 1993a).

Regional conflicts started before the collapse of the USSR, one of them was between Azerbaijan and Armenia over a disputed territory of Nagorni Karabakh. In 1992 “Guys from Baku” and a team from Erevan medical institute got into the final and had to meet face to face. At that period the war between two republics was at full swing, and KVN organizers decided to smooth the situation and announced both teams joint-winners: the concert substituted the competition (KVN, 1992a).

Those days the Western politicians were softly parodied. Team “New Armenians” in 1996 impersonated Bill Clinton (Garik Martyrosyan) showing the US president as an amiable guy reading rap (KVN, 1996b). President Boris Yeltsin, in the audience, sat laughing and enjoying the show: his visit was a part of the president’s public relations campaign. In 1997 Garik Martyrosyan made a parody on Bill Clinton one more time: the comedian was playing saxophone and singing in English and Armenian while the team was performing Armenian folk dances (Novye Armyane, 1997).

KVN was popular television program in the period of 1986–1990, people were afraid to miss the show (Istoria..., 2012a).

Table 1. Respondents’ answers to the question: “What KVN teams who played in 1986–1999 do you consider to be the best?” (an open question, more than one answer was possible)

What team/s is the best, in your opinion?	%
Dnepropetrovsk State University	56
Novosibirsk State University	52
“Odessa gentlemen”, Odessa State University)	48
Drim Tim	28
St. Peterburg State University	23
MAGMA	6
Lieutenant Shmidt’s kids, Tomsk	5
All teams were good those days	18
It is difficult to say	12

One hundred respondents, aged 41–65, from Nizhny Novgorod and Moscow, who watched the game on a regular basis in the 1990s agreed to share their opinion on the teams and comedians, recall the most memorable political sketches or gags in each season from 1986 to 1999. The list of teams who played in 1986–1999 seasons was attached to the questionnaire.

The top choice is team from Dnepropetrovsk State University (Ukraine) which gained popularity because of its musical sketches on political themes during Perestroika.

All other teams consisted of talented performers who were good at singing, acting, and scriptwriting. Many of them made careers in show business and media industry after *KVN*.

Table 2. Respondents' answers to the question: “Who is your favorite *KVN* player who took part in 1986–1999 games?” (an open question, more than one answer was possible)

“Who is your favorite <i>KVN</i> player of 1986–1999 seasons?”	%
Alexander Pushnoi, Novosibirsk State University	54
Dnepropetrovsk State University (all members of the team)	52
Dmitry Khrustalev, St. Petersburg State University	47
Jan Levinson, “Odessa gentlemen”, Odessa State University	41
Dmitry Sivokho (Drim Tim)	36
Garik Martirosyan, (“New Armenians”)	34
Andrey Chivourin, Kharkiv Aviation Institute	24
Valery Zakutsky, “Squadron of hussars”	16
Tatyana Lazareva (Novosibirsk State University)	16
Alexander Vasiliev, St. Petersburg State University	15
No preferences	14
The was one whose name I cannot recall	2

The respondents remembered Alexander Pushnoi for his remarkable musical parodies but considered that Dnepropetrovsk State University team was better at political sketches though were also good at musical performances. Dmitry Khrustalev, Alexander Vasiliev, and Garik Martirosyan are popular showmen nowadays. Survey participants could recall their sketches and impersonations of the 1990s, Vasiliev made a parody on Boris Yeltsin. Jan Levinson was named a talented comic actor of Perestroika, Andrey Chivourin – recognized as one of *KVN*’s founders, Tatyana Lazareva (Novosibirsk State University) and Dmitry Sivokho (Drim Tim) are remembered as singing and dancing comedians.

Being asked to highlight the political sketches and jokes that reflected political situation of each year, the respondents made a list of those they found outstanding. Participants of the survey had time to think over their answer, watch *KVN* archives to recall the games. Those episodes that got most votes are in the table below.

Table 3. *KVN*’s political sketches and gags (1986–1999) that reflected the situation in Russia (those that were often mentioned by the respondents)

Season	Game / teams	Team	Political sketch, joke, or song	Message
1986–1987 Apr.	Second semifinal. Voronezh Institute of Civil Engineering and “Odessa Gentlemen”, Odessa State University	“Odessa Gentlemen”, Odessa State University	Sketch “Elections of Ivan Ivanovich” (Vybory..., 1987)	Elections are not fair; candidates are unknown to the electorate. (“The name Ivan Ivanovich” generalizes the problem).
1988 June	1 st semifinal. Novosibirsk State University and Dnepropetrovsk State University	Novosibirsk State University	“Party, let us drive!” (KVN, 1988)	We are no longer afraid of the Communist Party

1989 Dec	Final game. Donetsk Polytechnic Institute, Kharkov Higher Military Command Engineering College and “The Ural Janitors”, Sverdlovsk Polytechnic Institute	“The Ural Janitors”, Sverdlovsk Polytechnic Institute	Konkurs “Competition Salesmanship” (KVN, 1989)	No food, no products in stores, but we’ve got <i>glasnost</i> and can say what we want, but that does not make us happy.
1990 Apr.	2d quarter final. Kiev polytechnic Institute and Dnepropetrovsk State University	Dnepropetrovsk State University	A musical sketch “Belovezhskaya Pushcha” based on a song of A. Pakhmutova and A. Dobronravov (KVN, 1990a)	The 6 th amendment of Constitution that gives the Communist party of the USSR a right to rule should be banned. The country’s political system requires radical reforms.
1991 Sep.	First seminal between “Squadron of hussars”, Lviv military political college and “The Ural Janitors”, Sverdlovsk Polytechnic Institute	“The Ural Janitors”, Sverdlovsk Polytechnic Institute	Parody on the USSR anthem. Song in which bearded revolutionaries (V. Lenin, F. Castro) are compared to clean-shaved members of the State Extraordinary Committee who failed in organizing the coup (putch) in Aug. 1991. (KVN, 1991)	What was sacred in the USSR can be a subject of humor in new Russia.
1992	Festival in Sochi (12 teams). Novosibirsk State University and Dnepropetrovsk State University, Luhansk Pedagogical institute, “Odessa Gentlemen”, Odessa State University, Kharkiv Aviation Institute, Voronezh Civil Engineering Institute, Tashkent State Technical	Dnepropetrovsk State University	“A song about happiness”, (based on a popular song “You know, everything’s gonna happen” (composer M. Minkov) (KVN, 1992)	We ‘ve got serious problems in politics, economics, social sphere, there are conflicting relations between the RF and Ukranian elites. We will overcome them. And there will be understanding peace between new and old political elites.

	University, “Guys from Baku”, Erevan Medical Institute, St. Peterburg State University, Donetzk Polytechnic etc.	“Odessa Gentlemen”, Odessa State University	Jokes about borders among former USSR republics. The announcement of Moscow time is interrupted by announcement of Kiev time in Ukrainian, and its last signal “means the end of Moscow time (rule)”. (KVN, 1992)	We were one territory, we had common problems, but now we are separate countries
1993 Oct.	Second semi-final. Leningrad Financial economic Institute and “Dream team”, Donetsk/ Ekaterinburg (formed by Donetsk Polytechnic Institute and “The Ural Janitors”	Leningrad Financial economic Institute	Musical sketch (based on a song “Beri shinel”, composer V. Levashov, lyrics B. Okudzhava) describes a story of newly-weds who come to the Red square to find out that the Mausoleum is rented by financial pyramid MMM, its guards have gone to sell their rifles, the blue elms have been cut for sale, Minin and Pozharsky are leaving the monument pedestal for good. (KVN, 1993b)	We are not aware of what new values are, but the changes are not for the better.
1994	Second 1 st semifinal. MAGMA (Moscow), Kharkiv Aviation Institute	Both teams	Jokes about financial pyramid MMM (KVN, 1994b)	Financial pyramids rob people.
		MAGMA (Moscow)	A song about hopes (based on a popular Soviet song “Nadezhda”, composer A. Pakhmutova, lyrics A. Dobronravov). The team expects to see the country in old borders and with old friends. And one wish came true: Alexander Solzhenitsyn came back to Russia (KVN, 1994b)	Nostalgia for great Russia and hopes for the better life.

1995 Dec.	Final. Kharkiv Aviation Institute and "Squadron of hussars" (changed affiliation for the RF Armed Forces, Moscow.	Kharkiv Aviation Institute	Razminka (Q&A contest) - <i>What does a deputy (member of the RF parliament) mandate mean?</i> - <i>A well-feeding document ("ochen' khlebnaya kartochka")</i> (KVN, 1995)	No trust to politicians who become deputies of the State Duma.
1996	2d. Semifinal. Belarus State University and Zaporozhe - Krivoi Rog- Transit	Belarus State University	Sketch "Time travel to Vladimir Zhirinovsky's childhood" (KVN, 1996a)	It would have been better if Zhirinovsky had nothing to do with politics
1997 Dec.	Final. "New Armenians" vs Zaporozhe-Krivoi Rog-Transit	"New Armenians"	A sketch in which Armenians who "changed" their nationalities into Ukrainian, Russian, and Jewish discuss conflicting issues between Russia and Ukraine while a Jew records their claims: the Black sea fleet, Ukrainians debts for gas, Sevastopol (KVN, 1997)	Yesterday we were together and had no conflicts, but the situation has changed.
1998 Dec.	Final. "Lieutenant Shmidt's kids", Tomsk and "Four Tatars", Kazan	"Lieutenant Shmidt's kids", Tomsk	- <i>What will happen if communists come to power? Will they build communism?</i> - <i>No, they will put democrats in line</i> - <i>And who will build communism?</i> - <i>The Swedes, Danish, and Finns as usual</i> (KVN, 1998)	Communism has not been built in the USSR. But there are traces of communism in developed Scandinavian countries with their equal opportunities and social care. So sad.
			- <i>And why does not the president understand that is high time to retire... to help the country...?</i> - <i>He understands that it won't help.</i> (KVN, 1998)	It would be better if Boris Yeltsin left the post. But the country is in deep trouble, and his retirement might not help.

1999 Dec.	Final. "New Armenians", St. Petersburg State University, and Belarus State University	St. Peterburg State University	Parody on Boris Yeltsin (Vladimir Vasiliev) in which the president is shown as a man with dementia. Compliments to Vladimir Putin who attended the game the first time (KVN, 1999)	Yeltsin should go. Who is Mr. Putin?
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During Perestroika *KVN* players joked about problems which were important for people who lived in the USSR: political and economic failures and pitfalls, humiliating state of science, industry, culture on post-Soviet territory, or new forms of proprietorship. They expressed hope that everything would change for the better. Territorial disputes, which started in several republics, were not in the agenda but everyone remembered about them and tried to avoid competition between teams from conflicting republics.

In 1990, the laugh vector turned to sharp criticism of the Soviet system: the dominating role of the communist party proclaimed in the USSR Constitution, the impotence of Soviet economics. The idea of disintegration was in the air. Three Ukrainian teams of Donetsk Polytechnic Institute, Dnepropetrovsk State University, and "Odessa Gentlemen", Odessa State University were leading in the season and met in the final game to raise the most painful issues.

After the collapse of the USSR *KVN* was adapting to the new rules and policies, trying to be up to standards of newly formed TV entertainment industry. The game became a commercial project with sponsors and advertisers. In 1994 the Club launched a supplementary competition in Sochi, in 1996 – a musical contest in Jurmala (Latvia), and in 1998 – Moscow Mayor Cup game. Musical festival "Singing Kivin", held in Jurmala, Latvia from 1996 to 2014, started as a summer outreach event and gathered the most popular teams of the season from different countries, mostly from former USSR republics: Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kirgizstan, and Belarus. *KVN*'s musical contests in Jurmala (Latvia) worked as Russian "soft power" involving the youth from the former USSR republics into joyous meetups with "carnival sense of the world" ([Bakhtin 1999: 107](#)). In that period the Soviet past, Russian language, and culture united game participants. Popular Soviet and Russian songs, movies, as well as new commercials were often used as a basis for sketches. The teams mentioned contradictions between Russia and Newly Independent States.

KVN players did not challenge the political elites. Russian teams implicitly took part in political campaigns supported Boris Yeltsin in 1996 ([Istoria..., 2012b](#)). But the game, like antenna, received signals from different social strata and reflected their hopes and aspirations in humoristic mode. In 1999 St. Peterburg State University team dared to show the first RF President as a weak politician unable of decision-making on a state level. All eyes turned to prime-minister Vladimir Putin sitting in the theater hall and laughing at *KVN*'s sketches.

In the 1990s *KVN* teams criticized what was going on in Russia and ex-Soviet republics. Jokes about the Western world and its leaders, on the contrary, were complimentary. The game was popular among viewers of different age groups and played an important role in entertaining and informing people of the current events.

5. Conclusion

KVN remains the longest lasting humor program in Russia. It started as a students' game and transformed into a commercial show. Since late 1980s political humor has become a part of its discourse, but *KVN* players have never seriously criticized the country's elites. The game evolved along with the country. In the USSR *KVN* united young men from different socialist republics, and after the collapse of the Soviet system – the youth from Newly Independent States into the world of humor and wit.

In the late 1980s the communist party was under scrutiny in *KVN*, and that was a sign of global changes which were going on in the Soviet system. Political uncertainty, economic collapse, and social injustice became topics of *KVN*'s humor. In their musical sketches players of Dnepropetrovsk State University expressed despair, disappointment, and frustration witnessing

transformations during Perestroika in all Soviet republics. They, as well as other teams, promoted the idea that the existing system should be destroyed but did not offer any program for future.

After the collapse of the USSR, KVN, trying to survive in the new circumstances, started attracting advertisers and sponsors. The teams laughed at “new Russians”, financial frauds, and corrupt politicians while the donors were beyond criticism.

In the 1990s KVN seemed not to be politically aligned, but it turned out that the teams supported Boris Yeltsin during 1996 presidential campaign and made the heads of the RF Communist and Liberal Democratic parties the objects of bitter satire. In 1999 the players mocked at the RF president as if knowing that he was going to resign soon.

The teams complimented the US presidents, praised the Western lifestyle, joked at the Russian industry as well as its financial and business institutions.

Teams from New Independent States emphasized that they were no longer under “Moscow rule”. At the same time some teams felt nostalgic about the Soviet past and doubted that disintegration was for the better. In the 1990s KVN participants remained “homo Sovieticus” and the game worked as “soft power” uniting all teams in territory of good laugh and fun.

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The Competence Paradigm of the State Examination in Professional Media Education: Problems and Experience

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Abstract

The article analyses and summarises the experience of conducting the state final assessment of undergraduate students in journalism with regard to the competence-based examination model. The relevance of the study is related to the need to achieve systemic unity between the competence-based concept of university training of journalists and its final stage that is the assessment of the quality of the received education. Since professional competence has an integral activity nature, the knowledge paradigm of the final assessment used for many years does not meet modern requirements. The article describes the reasons and primary goals that determined the transition to a new concept of the state examination at the Southern Federal University in 2021. The article offers the rationale for choosing a case method as the main means of assessing the degree of professional competencies among graduates, including examples of developed case tasks. To assess the effectiveness of the applied innovative methods in 2021-2023 the authors surveyed 4th-year undergraduate students in journalism and members of the state examination boards. An empirical study enabled to determine the level of satisfaction of all participants in the educational process with the new model of the final exam to identify the degree of its effectiveness, as well as potential opportunities and ways to improve. The article presents the dynamics of the survey results and their interpretation. The authors conclude that a practice-based approach should be used not only in the process of training journalists but also in organising the final examination. Implementing interdisciplinary case-based tasks allows graduates to demonstrate the degree of competency formation provided by the educational program, which contributes to their confident entry into the modern media.

Keywords: journalism training, competence-based approach, final exam, case study, questioning, quality assessment, professional reflection, interactivity.

1. Introduction

The beginning of the XXI century has marked a century of digitalisation, the rapid development of information, communication, and mobile technologies involved in the production and consumption of media products (Bui, Moran, 2020). The radical change in the media environment has challenged media education in general and journalism education in particular to respond to the "urgent need" of digital transformation (Galik, 2019; Galik, 2020; Kirchhoff, 2022). This required media education specialists to revise the content and form of professional training in journalism at all stages starting from entrance examinations to final assessment. The final assessment of students pursuing a degree in journalism at all Russian universities was conducted for many years according to a single, now classic scheme that included two phases: a state

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examination and a defence of a thesis. In the current Federal Standard of the Russian Federation, the state examination has acquired an optional status. Thereby the Russian universities that train personnel for the media started to have two options to hold the graduation procedure, i.e., defence of a thesis alone or a state examination along with a defence of a thesis.

In the spring of 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the question of the necessity and possibility of holding a final examination became critical. Due to the tense epidemiological situation, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation authorised universities not to conduct state examinations if the approved standard allowed it. In addition to this, if the decision to have an exam was made, it was recommended to organise it only online. At the Institute of Philology, Journalism and Cross-cultural Communication of Southern Federal University, state examinations in almost all areas of training were cancelled. The reasons for this decision were insufficient technical equipment capability and participants' (both students' and state examination board members') low-quality Internet connection during the assessment procedure. Other universities faced the same difficulties (Grabelnikov et al, 2020). In addition, distance learning was not yet widespread in the educational process and did not earn the complete trust of teachers and other involved parties. Their matter of concern was the lack of a guaranteed opportunity to identify academic dishonesty, which could ultimately lead to the devaluation of the test results.

In 2021, the academic staff of journalism departments at SFEDU concluded that it was necessary to return to having final exams for students specialising in journalism, but radically change its concept. It was urgent to solve a systemic problem that was the lack of direct correlation between a traditional academic exam, comprising, on the one hand, an extensive list of questions on the theory and history of journalism and modern media communications, and, on the other hand, the declared competency-based learning paradigm and practical application of undergraduate educational programs. It means that a practice-based approach was not used at the final stage, although experts recognised that 'it is not only necessary for training media specialists, but' it is the only possible one' (Oleshko, 2018: 311).

As a result of discussions, a collective decision was made to develop a new model of the state examination. The model was expected to allow the evaluation of professional culture and the examination of both the level of knowledge acquired by students and their ability to apply this knowledge when solving problems. Finally, the new model was expected to help assess the degree to which graduates developed the basic skills and abilities required for successful work in the modern media.

Considerable accumulated experience in implementing the concept of a competency-based final examination for students obtaining a bachelor's degree in journalism at SFEDU demanded comprehension and evaluation from the perspective of current scientific and methodological trends.

2. Materials and methods

To achieve the aim the authors used surveys as the main research method. The surveys were undertaken at SFEDU in 2021, 2022 and 2023. The participants were the graduates and members of the state examination board participating in the final assessment of students specialising in journalism. The survey was conducted using the Google Forms service in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, handout questionnaires were used. The surveys took place in June, a few days after the final exam, and lasted for two weeks. The graduates who planned to complete their studies in the autumn (usually from 1 to 5 people) did not participate in the survey.

The number of questions in a survey was reduced to a minimum. There were only 5 questions in 2021 and 2022, and there were 7 questions in 2023. During the first two years, the texts of the questionnaire were completely identical and had a sufficiently traditional structure:

- a short message to potential respondents, which explains the purposes and principles of the survey;
- 3 questions regarding the procedure and content of the state exam;
- 1 question dedicated to preparing for the exam;
- 1 question that allowed to identify respondents (students/members of the state board);
- a proposal to express their suggestions for further improvement of the form and content of the final examination in the field of journalism at the undergraduate level.

This year, the basic block was supplemented with two questions: the first one was clarifying and related to the difficulties that arose during the preparation or conduct of the exam; the second

one was aimed at a general conclusion about the degree of compliance of the competency-based state examination model with the specifics of the educational programme.

Since the participants in the assessment procedure were divided into two groups, i.e. examiners and examinees, if a significant difference was identified in the answers of students and members of the state examination board, the analysis of the survey results was conducted discretely. Integrated indicators were also considered.

The sample size annually amounted to more than 80 % of the general population and ensured representativeness for both groups of participants. Thus, the obtained empirical material enabled us to conduct a correct comparison of results and track the dynamics of all participants' attitudes towards the innovative model of final assessment over three years.

3. Discussion

The new information and communication environment has again regenerated discussions on new qualification requirements for the work of a journalist and the need for changes in training programmes for journalists around the world (Shesterkina, Ismailov, 2019; Solkin, 2020; Vartanova, 2021; Zamkov et al., 2020).

The modern paradigm of higher education was formulated in the logic of a competency-based approach. According to scientists, this approach strengthens the practice-based orientation of education, and its professional orientation, which allows us to consider a future specialist from the perspective that is relevant to the modern understanding of the profession and makes learning results significant 'beyond education' (Matukhin, Nizkodubov, 2013: 88). In addition, as Faith Valencia-Forrester notes, 'Practice-based learning is widely accepted as a crucial aspect of educating and training future journalists around the world. Shrinking newsrooms and changing media landscapes shift responsibility onto journalism programmers for delivering practical experiences' (Valencia-Forrester, 2020: 697).

In the light of the multi-layered structure of the competence that is knowledge-related, activity-related, and contains personal and motivational components and professional experience, it becomes possible to reorient the knowledge system towards a specific result and ensure students' active cognitive activity for independent and qualified solving professional problems (Freebody et al., 2008; Zeer, 2004).

Defining competence as an assessment category at the final stage of education, which consists of various independent components, such as cognitive, functional, personal, behavioural, and value-ethical ones, researchers state that these components correlate with professional knowledge, skills, values, and personal abilities required for effective journalistic work (Kirchhoff, 2022).

At the same time, the competency-based model of education is identified not as a set of instrumental skills and abilities that allow future graduates to be in demand in the competitive conditions of the media environment, but rather as a set of necessary competencies for the development of creative thinking, the analytical potential of the individual and the professional culture of a journalist (Drok, 2019; Nigmatulina, 2019). Thus, that comprises all those aspects which are supposed to stay stable and unchanged in journalism regardless of technological changes, since it is the foundations of journalism that give technology a conscious meaning and specific purpose (Zelizer, 2019).

The research efforts (Blömeke et al., 2013; Korkonosenko et al., 2018; Zylka, Müller, 2011) were aimed at understanding the theoretical foundations and methodological principles of the competency-based education paradigm given the unique characteristics of different regions and reorienting educational programs to train students following the real needs of the industry and professional standards, adherence to which 'guarantees protection against professional erosion' (Tulupov, 2014: 218). However, in the XXI century, when traditional types of jobs in journalism are disappearing without a trace, the employment of graduate journalists is under threat (Gillmor, 2016), information and news are no longer the monopolies of professional journalists, and the effectiveness of the media is declining, it is necessary to respond quickly to deep structural changes in the media environment (Mensing, 2010), consider the needs of the global labour market, not specific media companies, and correlate the concepts of education with existing realities.

Nowadays, according to the current educational standard of the Russian Federation, educational organisations have received a certain degree of independence to create and develop their educational standards, develop professional competencies and indicators of achieving them, which enabled the institutions involved to consider the resource potential of the organisation and

the demands of the media industry (Novikova et al., 2021). At the same time, the procedure for assessing the results of competence development is not regulated by the state standard. The freedom was granted to universities in choosing forms, methods, and means of assessment in the absence of unambiguous measuring instruments to evaluate the manifestation of competence. This leads to the fact that the results of the final assessment 'are characterized by high subjectivity (i.e., low reliability), low suitability for assessing the level of competence formation (low validity) and complete incomparability' (Malygin, Chelyshkova, 2023: 7).

Interactive methods allow the identification of a formed competence in cases when a student successfully demonstrates 'the personal experience acquired during the learning process' and proves oneself in action (Chandra, Baikina, 2018: 14). Interactive technologies as elements of practice-based training are widely used in the training of future media specialists, as, according to A. Fedorov, they imply the productive forms of acquiring knowledge – problematic, heuristic, game-based teaching methods, 'which develop students' individuality, independent thinking and stimulate their abilities through direct involvement in creative activity' (Fedorov, 2015). They motivate students to seek self-development, activate their professional self-reflection, allow to form individual educational trajectories of creative growth, and increase the efficiency of the educational process as a whole, which is noted by many researchers (Corroy et al., 2017; Frolova et al., 2018).

At the same time, the possibilities of using these technologies to organize state assessments of graduates receiving a degree in journalism are practically not discussed in the professional community.

Russian and foreign researchers include case assignments as interactive assessment tools, i.e. the methods that facilitate the development of students' critical self-reflection and allow assessment of the degree of development of the competence being determined (Bordovskaya et al., 2018). Due to its significant diagnostic capabilities, the case method gradually began to spread to the assessment procedure of graduates, in pedagogical universities in particular (Chandra, 2016; Gureeva, 2018). In our opinion, it is time for changes in the system of final diagnostics of the educational results of future journalists when the testing of acquired knowledge is transferred to new contexts through individual and universal case tasks that are similar to modern media practice.

4. Results

At the stage of organising the study, we made a hypothesis that a fundamentally new model of state assessment procedure arouses significant interest among both students and teachers. This assumption was fully confirmed. In 2021, 39 students, which amounted to 90.7 % of the total number of students studying in the 4th year of a bachelor's degree course in journalism, and 5 members of the state examination board (100 %) participated in the survey. We would like to emphasise that such a high level of respondent activity was obtained in full compliance with the principle of voluntary participation in the survey. The factor of novelty also contributed to the increase in interest in the survey. Even though SFEDU students studying journalism regularly participated in the assessment of various components of the educational process, it was the first time they had the opportunity to express their attitude to the content and form of the final state examination.

In 2022, 84.8 % of students and 80 % of members of a state examination board completed the online questionnaire. A slight decrease in the intensity of the responses was interpreted by the researchers as a consequence of fatigue, experienced after the online communication format in which all participants were forced to participate, and, accordingly, the weakening of interpersonal and corporate ties within the team.

The latest survey, conducted in June 2023, was the most effective in terms of the graduates' level of activity: 46 students (95.7 %) and 10 members of the state examination board (100 %) expressed their viewpoints. In our opinion, this is explained primarily by the fact that a handout type of questionnaire was used. Teachers' requests to participate in the study evoke a much greater response among students when the survey is conducted in real life rather than in virtual communication conditions. At the final stage of training, tomorrow's graduates have a stronger sense of themselves as part of the university, and an increased readiness to act in the interests of the entire alma mater team, both teachers and current and prospective students.

The idea of making the assessment system similar to the conditions of future professional activity to examine the quality of the received education was implemented with the help of interdisciplinary case assignments. Mastering training courses generally implies the use of

collective case assignments, which, among other things, form the competencies related to teamwork, meanwhile, the final exam provides for individual solving of the situational problems.

In 2021 and 2022, under the conditions of distance assessment, the students performed one case task, which was the same for everyone. The examinee was offered the following situation: *to imagine that the members of the examination board are potential employers, such as the representatives of the media editorial offices, media corporations, news agencies, etc. They invited the graduate to an interview to discuss his or her possible employment. The purpose of the examinee is to characterise their professional experience, demonstrate creativity as well as a high level of motivation for journalistic activity, and convince employers of their interest in cooperation.*

This situation is similar to the real circumstances in which the graduate would find himself or herself soon, entering the labour market. It is also relevant because most of the state examination board's members are the heads of large Rostov mass media companies, which determine the personnel policy of editorial offices.

To achieve the goal, the student was asked to complete the following case task within a limited time: *to show the main professional competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired during specific types of professional activity (a correspondent, a reporter, a TV presenter, a radio presenter, a photojournalist, a universal journalist, etc.) and possible thematic and/or genre specialisations.* The examinee was to accompany their speech with the materials from their portfolio that are to be prepared and provided to the board in advance.

The structure of the portfolio includes the journalistic materials prepared by the student during their studies at the university, an analytical report, reflecting the process of gaining professional experience and creative growth, as well as professional references from the editorial offices and additional materials (diplomas, certificates, etc.). The process of its creation and presentation at the exam stimulates professional self-reflection, without which further growth and reaching 'a new, external position concerning future projected activities and the previous, already completed activities' (Golovin, Kormakova, 2016: 269), are not possible. In addition, this process gives the incentive to search for the optimal vector for building one's career and promotes maximal self-realisation in the future. Self-reflection practices are recognised as the best in the field of higher education since they help to overcome the discrepancy between theory and practice in the process of training journalists (Greenberg, 2007).

After the speech and the portfolio presentation, the examinee was asked questions regarding their professional experience in general and/or the preparation of specific materials. The questions enable one to identify the presence of systemic ideas about the state and demands of the modern media market, an understanding of the specifics of journalistic activity, the level of proficiency in professional terminology, as well as the ability to rely on the theoretical knowledge gained in comprehending their own practical experience. The list of questions is not fixed, only approximate options are given in the program: *what is the reason for the choice of this media? What do you know about the specifics of its type? How were the audience's information requests taken into account in the news agenda? What guided you when choosing a topic? Why was this genre chosen? What difficulties did you face when working with the sources? Have there been any legal/ethical problems during the preparation and release of the material? How would you describe your professional experience in terms of successes and failures (unrealised plans)? Which role is preferable for you in journalistic activity: an observer, an analyst, a critic, or any other?*

Experts emphasise that at the present development stage of the media industry, 'the creative, spiritual and moral components of the intellectual potential [of the journalistic community] are of particular importance' (Demina, 2010:183). The proposed questions help to reveal not only the existence of specific competencies but also the professional culture of the graduate, the system of their goal-setting, and the humanities grounding. Thus, an idea of their professional identity is formed, which includes both functional and existential correspondence of personality and profession (Shneider, 2001).

As the results of the survey showed, the proposed option of conducting the final exam in the form of case assignments received much more support than the initiators of the experiment expected.

In the 'other' option line, in all cases, the participants stated that a mixed form with the inclusion of questions on the history and theory of journalism and a practical case assignment was optimal. It should be noted that in the first years of the study, the members of the state

examination board gravitated to the traditional, decades-tested form of the exam, or offered a mixed version more often than the students did. However, the difference in the responses of the representatives of the two groups did not reach a significant level.

Table 1. Which form of the state exam for the graduates of the applied bachelor's degree in the field of journalism do you consider more optimal?

<i>Response options</i>	2021	2022	2023
An academic interdisciplinary examination	4,6 %	15,4 %	0 %
Practice-based case tasks	84,1 %	76,9 %	94,6 %
Other	4,6 %	0 %	1,8 %
I find it difficult to answer	6,7 %	7,7 %	3,6 %

A noticeable increase in the popularity of the competence-based model of assessment among all participants of the examination procedure this year is explained by the inclusion in the program of the second case task aimed at identifying the degree of retention of graduates' professional skills and abilities and basic algorithms for working on journalistic text. Four blocks of tasks had been formed, which were designated as 'A journalist's methods of work', 'Agenda of various media types', 'Media law and professional ethics', and 'Genres, language and style'. Each task was practice-based, similar to editorial realities. For example, in the section 'A journalist's methods of work' the tasks were formulated as follows:

"Tomorrow you will need to prepare a report on the opening of a new monument to M.A. Sholokhov. What information will you be looking for today? Whose opinion do you plan to present in the material, and which experts to attract?"

"You've received the information from social networks that an unauthorised rally against the felling of trees in the Kumzhenskaya grove took place today. You need to write a news item within an hour. Specify the algorithm of your actions and sources for fact-checking".

"Write a technical task for a designer to create illustrations for the news on the website "The Vodokanal promised to return clean water to the homes of Rostov residents in the next two weeks" (infographics, memes, photography, etc.) so that the youth audience responds positively to the information".

Performing the tasks from the 'Genres, language and style' block involved working with the corresponding source texts:

"Prepare material for the VKontakte social network using the proposed press release from the website sfedu.ru taking into account the specifics of preparing a text for social networks".

"Here is the text published on the website of the SFEDU's Trade Union. Edit it, considering that the main audience of this page is students".

In the case tasks from the media law and professional ethics field, the specific problematic situations were described and the task was to find a way out by explaining the logic of actions. To cover the current agenda of different media types, students had to write at least 5 newsworthy items that meet the needs of the target audience.

This kind of creative work aroused considerable interest and emotional response among students and examiners. 80.4 % of all respondents noted that they liked the content of case assignment №2. Only 3.6 % of the survey participants chose the 'did not like' option. 16 % of the participants did not determine their positions on the assessment procedure. As expected, the members of the state examination board were more critical of the innovation. They liked the second case assignment in 60 % of cases, in 10 % they did not, and 30 % of teachers and employers refrained from evaluating it. Representatives of this group of participants most often made proposals to improve the form of the second case, i.e. doubts were expressed about the equivalence of tasks in terms of their complexity, and the need for their detailing and further improvement of evaluation criteria was noted.

All participants in the final assessment were more unanimous when answering the question about possible difficulties that arose in the process of preparing and conducting the state exam, which allows us to consider the results for two groups in total.

Table 2. Answers to the question about possible difficulties

<i>Response options</i>	2021	2022	2023
there were no difficulties	50 %	73,1 %	71,4 %
there were some difficulties, but not very significant ones	47,7 %	26,9 %	28,6 %
there were some significant difficulties	2.3 %	0 %	0 %

The presence of certain difficulties for a significant number of students in the first year of the final examination in a competency-based form is explained by the conditions of self-isolation during the pandemic. In the comments, they wrote that they did not have time or were unable to create a complete portfolio because the editorial offices worked remotely. At the same time, we see that even this year more than a quarter of future journalists showed poor organisation, having started preparing materials for their portfolio at the last moment. This was reflected in the notes *'I didn't have time to scan all the publications, I couldn't sign the professional reference, I've lost the recordings of the video reports'*, etc.

Almost complete solidarity (no significant difference was identified) was shown by the representatives of the two groups in their attitude to the discussions between students and members of the state examination board that took place when presenting the results of completed case assignments. The opportunity to discuss the proposed options for solving creative problems was positively assessed in 2021 by 86.4 % of all respondents, in 2022 – by 84.6 %, and in 2023 – by 83.2 % respectively. These consistently high figures, in our opinion, indicate the need for a dialogue and the readiness of all the participants, involved in the educational process, for the dialogue at the stage of the final examination.

The form of a traditional academic exam is hierarchical, it places teachers and students on the opposite sides (interviewers and respondents), and does not imply initiative, i.e. communication occurs according to a given passive scenario. In this form, the reproduction of the acquired knowledge dominates; in fact, only the covered theoretical content is assessed, which makes the problem of cheating eternal. When performing creative case tasks, there cannot be a single, the only correct solution, therefore its evaluation requires the cooperation of assessment participants – students, teachers, employers, i.e. 'the changes in the very nature of interaction between all subjects involved in the educational process' (Bespalova, Kuznetzova, 2018: 12).

The democratic type of communication between the journalism representatives belonging to different generations and possessing different levels of experience and the new subject-subject relationships characteristic of communication between colleagues are attractive to young journalists. Answering the question 'What did you like about the procedure of the conducted state exam?', the option 'exam atmosphere' was chosen by 75.0 % in 2021, in 2022 – 71.2 %, in 2023 – 71.4 % of respondents respectively. Some respondents did not like the atmosphere developed during the final assessment procedure, that is 2.2 % in 2021, 6.5 % in 2022, and 5.1 % in 2023. These figures correlate well with those obtained from asking the previous question about the discussions that arise when examining the completed case assignments.

Summarising the general results of the experiment to transform fundamentally the model of the state exam in journalism at SFEDU, we have recognised it as successful and intend to continue it in the future. Our estimation is based on the data obtained from the surveys, the results of discussions at the departments, as well as the score-rating indicators of the conducted state examination. They indicate that the degree of professional competencies development among the graduates in the vast majority of cases is at a high level.

Undoubtedly, the model we have developed and tested for assessing professional competencies during the final examination of undergraduate students requires further improvement. In particular, we would like to expand the bank of case tasks, to provide more detail in the assessment tools, perhaps to introduce new blocks of tasks focused on a journalist's professional culture issues, etc.

5. Conclusion

The experience of conducting the final exam for bachelor students earning a degree in journalism at SFEDU with the help of a competency-based model has shown its high efficiency and prospects. The results of surveys conducted with various parties involved in the state assessment

process, such as students, teachers, and employers, indicate a high level of consensus in evaluating this concept as optimal and meeting the modern demands of the media market.

The case method, which is already widely used by teachers in the training of journalists, has shown significant potential at the stage of assessing the quality of the education received and the level of professional competence of graduates.

The combination of different types of self-reflection, such as retrospective, situational, and prospective when comprehending the gained practical experience allows tomorrow's graduates not only to summarise the results of the bachelor's degree stage of their university life, to find meaning in the already completed and future work, but also choose the most effective ways to achieve goals in their journalistic future through professional self-determination.

By performing case tasks similar to editorial practice, students realize that they can do much, they are ready for much, and this helps to overcome uncertainty, and the feeling of insecurity that arises among novice journalists at the stage of entering the 'mature' media environment.

Unlike the traditional academic form of the final examination, students see benefits in the competency-based model. Subject-subject relationships between participants in the assessment process strengthen young people's sense of belonging to the professional community, and the values and norms that are accepted in it.

A two-stage final assessment, including the defence of a thesis and an exam aimed at determining the degree of professional skills and abilities retention, enables to reveal the level of the graduates' training comprehensively in both fundamental and applied components.

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Portrayals of Families and Family Upbringing in Russian Films: Prospects for Film and Media Education

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Abstract

The research looks into a comprehensive analysis of the family portrayals in Russian feature films in terms of media education. This opens up a whole range of scientific research objectives that would allow such an analysis to be carried out: to define the family portrayals and their role in Russian feature films; to study philosophical and anthropological approaches to family and family upbringing in Soviet and Russian feature films; to determine the main genres of media texts in which the topic is reflected; to state media education objectives at each specific historical stage; to trace the transformational alterations in the family image created in Russian feature films; to consider social, cultural and political contexts of the theme including the media texts authors' concepts of interpreting the topic in Soviet and Russian feature films; to define the typical family patterns presented in audiovisual texts; to specify media education goals at each historical stage; to predict further representation of the topic under study in Russian films of different genres. Moreover, it is essential that the research into the topic of family and familial relationships in Russian films should mainly focus on analysing the opportunities of studying such audiovisual texts that are an effective means of influencing various audiences, especially children and young people, in the context of media education.

Keywords: family, family upbringing, media, media text, media culture, media education, feature films.

1. Introduction

The social institution of family is an important factor in the well-being of modern man representing the foundation for building a society of the future. Working with a modern family and promoting family values are important aspects of contemporary education. This task becomes especially relevant in modern society, where genuine family values are often levelled out, and the significance of family unity fades into the background.

The desire for material well-being, building a career, promoting images of instant success and individualism in mass media have become a dangerous tendency that leads to the devaluation of family traditions and the inability of young people to build family relationships.

In many ways, the psychological well-being of a family is also influenced by the position of adults – parents and teachers. A fair attitude of teachers and parents towards children, presenting necessary and adequate requirements to them, and, at the same time, respect, tact, and delicacy in the attitude of family members towards each other, all these factors play a crucial role in the development of personality. If, for example, values based on goodwill, mutual care, and responsibility for each other have been established in a family, then everyone feels quite confident.

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Supportive emotional well-being and a state of security stimulate the fullest self-expression of family members and create a favourable atmosphere for the development of the younger generation. Mutual assistance, care, family comfort, responsibility and trust – all these values are enduring in family relationships. Conversely, tense relationships often lead not only to conflict situations, but also contribute to isolation and mutual distrust. And family upbringing should become one of the key tasks of modern education.

The portrayals of family and family upbringing have always been one of the central themes in film industry and film production in Russia and abroad. This topic has been frequently referred to in media culture of different historical periods due to various social policies and transformations. Mass media culture that increasingly influences all spheres of our contemporary world, thus determining the value orientations and life guidelines, attaches a special significance to the theme of family and family upbringing.

Since the attitude towards family and family values is changing drastically in modern society the analysis of these transformations becomes urgent, especially taking into consideration that the best family traditions should be preserved as being one of the most crucial challenges of contemporary world.

Moreover, films or audiovisual media texts are an effective means of influencing various audiences, especially children and young people because of their age and a high degree of media contacts. Therefore, the analysis of family and family upbringing transformations in Soviet and Russian cinematography is really in demand today.

We are firmly convinced that a comprehensive interdisciplinary research analysis of family issues should be carried out in close connection with social, cultural, and political aspects characterizing certain historical periods. In addition, the dominant genres of Russian feature films, in which the theme under study is reflected, should be determined. Also, the main objectives of media education at each specific historical stage ought to be considered and portrayals of families and family upbringing are to be assessed in terms of presenting the most typical patterns.

2. Materials and methods

Russian and foreign scientific publications focused on family and family upbringing as reflected in feature films are the materials of the study. Besides, the additional research methods are used: analysis and synthesis of articles and monographs on the research theme, generalization and classification.

We also applied the methodologies developed by C. Bazalgette ([Bazalgette, 1992](#)), A. Silverblatt ([Silverblatt, 2001](#)), and U. Eco ([Eco, 1998](#)) including the theoretical approaches offered by O.V. Aronson ([Aronson, 2007](#)).

3. Discussion

The issues of family and family upbringing have invariably remained vital for many years. Some Russian authors ([Burušina, 2014](#); [Lesgaft, 1988](#); [Nemova, Mardakhaev, 2014](#)) analysed certain aspects of family upbringing. However, these studies were not related to media culture and media education.

During the Soviet era, the family topic in media texts was united by a common political ideology aimed at solving the tasks of constructing ideal socialist future life. Different issues of this problem were discussed in several works of that period ([Baranov, 1979](#); [Gromov, 1982](#); [Usov, 1980](#); [Rybak, 1980](#); [1978](#)).

Certain family issues portrayed in Soviet and Russian audiovisual texts of different genres were analysed in some Russian and foreign publications ([Callister et al., 2007](#); [Cantor, Riddle, 2014](#); [Chelysheva, 2014](#); [Fedorov et al., 2018](#); [Fedorov et al., 2019](#); [Fedorov et al., 2020](#); [Gritsai, 2013](#); [Masterman, 1985](#); [Orange, Flynn, 2005](#); [Tuchkova, 2012](#); [Tyulyunova, 2020](#)) in the post-Soviet historical period.

In particular, the topic of family violence in feature films and their impact on younger audiences is dealt with in researches carried out by some Russian and foreign media experts ([Chelysheva, 2013](#); [Fedorov, 2018](#), [Fedorov, 2020](#); [Hornbeck, 2016](#)). Also, the interconnection between popular media culture and promoting aesthetic education was examined by O.A. Baranov and S.N. Penzin ([Baranov, Penzin, 2006](#)).

V.V. Tuchkova devoted her research to the reflection of family values in Russian mass media ([Tuchkova, 2012](#)).

The phenomena of family and family upbringing in Russian audiovisual texts using the example of animation were analysed by L.A. Gritsai ([Gritsai, 2013](#)). The analysis of crisis phenomena in the family and their reflection in Russian media texts was provided by O.V. Smirnova and T.I. Frolov ([Smirnova, Frolova, 2011](#)).

Portrayals of families and family upbringing in Russian feature films were thoroughly examined from a sociological perspective by O.L. Lebed and A.B. Sinelnikov ([Lebed, Sinelnikov 2013](#)).

The family image and cultural identity as reflected in the cinematography of Central Asia were described by G.O. Abikeeva ([Abikeeva, 2010](#)). The issues of family upbringing in the context of film and media education were also studied by I.V. Chelysheva ([Chelysheva, 2013](#); [Chelysheva, 2014](#); [Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022](#)).

The basic principles of critical analysis of media texts and fostering critical autonomy were defined by British media expert L. Masterman ([Masterman, 1985](#)). B. Duncan, N. Andersen, J. Pungente, and O'Malley ([Andersen et al., 1999](#); [Duncan, 1989](#); [Pungente, O'Malley, 1999](#)) studied the evolution of foreign media education till the present day. B. Duncan examined the aesthetic and developmental potential of screen production ([Duncan, 1989](#)). A. Caron studied practical media education for children and youth ([Caron, Caronia, 2007](#)). N.C. Staricek provided a profound textual analysis of modern families and gender in sitcoms ([Staricek, 2011](#)).

A variety of research topics examined by foreign scholars touched upon varied aspects of family images presented in mass media. For instance, W. Douglas and B.M. Olson analysed the portrayals of family relationships in comedies created during 1950–1990 ([Douglas, Olson, 1995](#)). As part of the analysis, they compared spousal and parent-child relationships represented in the movies.

S. Bruzzi gave a detailed perspective on the Hollywood portrayals of fathers and discussed Hollywood films from many genres presenting dads ([Bruzzi, 2005](#)). In her book she adopted a multi-faceted theoretical approach to studying fatherhood and masculinity in post-war American movies using psychoanalysis and social studies.

F. Antunes analysed the child's place in contemporary family culture on the basis of Hollywood family films of the 1990s concentrating on the issues of parenting culture, adolescence and creating a new childhood ideal in American family movies ([Antunes, 2017](#)).

Research by R.H. Fulmer was devoted to examining a family-life-cycle view of emerging adulthood ([Fulmer, 2017](#)) in the film "Rebel without a Cause" (1995).

L.R. Tanner, S.A. Haddock, T.S. Zimmerman and L.K. Lund defined the images of and family couples in Disney animated films ([Tanner et al., 2003](#)). They analysed twenty-six Disney feature-length animated films to identify "four overarching themes: a) family relationships are a strong priority, b) families are diverse, but the diversity is often simplified, c) fathers are elevated, while mothers are marginalized, and d) couple relationships are created by "love at first sight", are easily maintained, and are often characterized by gender-based power differentials" ([Tanner et al., 2003: 355](#)).

Similar research by J.D. Zurcher, S.M. Webb and T. Robinson examined the portrayals of families in Disney cartoons. They studied the qualities of family demographics, structure, and function in 85 Disney animated films from 1937–2018 to find out that "over 75 % of all Disney animated films depicted warm and supportive familial interactions, with 78.8 % of the films illustrating a positive relationship between the protagonist and his/her family" ([Zurcher et al., 2018](#)).

The portrayals of the American family in contemporary Hollywood cinematography were studied by C. Jenkins. The author focused on "assessing recent cinematic representations of the family in terms of cultural politics and representations of gender, sexuality, race and class" ([Jenkins, 2015](#)). The family portrayals in the American horror film were analysed by A. Sells ([Sells, 2016](#)).

E. Levy closely studied the family and family-related values reflected in modern mainstream US cinematography and the American family dream in films from the late 1960s to the present time: "The study analyses variations and consistencies in the narrative ideological and cinematic conventions of family films, and their interplay with the social and political contexts in which they are made and viewed" ([Levy, 1991: 187](#)).

A. Lloyd provided the analysis of the diasporic family in present-day European cinematography ([Lloyd, 2014](#)). The family representations in the postwar British amateur films covering 1948–1961 were researched by M. Kerry. The author considered the social and historical contexts in which the home-made films were created and analysed "how the amateur cine hobby ideologically constructed family, community and national identity in postwar Britain" ([Kerry, 2016: 1](#)). The portrayals of the postwar British family in amateur films were also examined by R. Shand ([Shand, 2015](#)).

B. Kümmerling-Meibauer proposed new perspectives in children's film studies emphasising the crucial role of these films in fostering children's media literacy "due to the fact that children come to recognize and understand the typical features of films by means of a gradual process which takes a substantial amount of time" (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013: 39).

4. Results

The findings of the study enabled us to identify a striking contradiction between a relatively detailed scientific research of family upbringing in publications written by scholars of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods (Lesgaft, 1988; Levshina, 1989; Mardakhaev, 2014; Nemova, Buruhina, 2014; Rabinovich, 1991) and lack of analysis of the topic in media studies. The only exceptions are the studies carried out by some Russian researchers (Chelysheva, 2013; Chelysheva, 2014; Penzin, 1986; Khilko, 2011).

R. Petani, and M.K. Brcic analysed the interrelationship of family environment, communication and media education (Petani, Brcic, 2014).

Until now, neither Russian nor foreign science has presented a full-scale analysis of the portrayals of family and family upbringing in Russian feature films in the context of media education. At the same time, this analysis, as we see it, is an important and pressing issue in the contemporary researches.

Thus, it seems promising to us to identify under what conditions such a holistic description can be given, the major features revealed, the place and significance of the theme of family in Soviet and Russian films determined. This will require a comprehensive analysis of the family portrayals in Russian feature films in terms of media education. The analysis should include the study of the role of the family image, its representation at different stages of historical development in the context of pedagogical, psychological, and cultural approaches.

This opens up a whole range of scientific research objectives that would allow such an analysis to be carried out: to identify cultural, pedagogical, and psychological aspects of the topic; to determine the main genres of media texts in which the topic is reflected; to analyse the social, cultural, and political contexts of the theme, including the author's interpretations of this topic in Soviet, Russian and Western feature films; to state the media education objectives at each specific historical stage; to describe the typical patterns of family and family upbringing portrayed in media texts.

Specific areas of research on the topic of family and family upbringing in Russian films may concern the following key aspects: a hermeneutical analysis of Soviet and Russian comedies on the topic of family and family upbringing; the analysis of philosophical and anthropological approaches to family and family upbringing in Soviet and Russian feature films; media education opportunities of feature films about family and family upbringing.

Unfortunately, today's schools do not always pay enough attention to family upbringing. Often, issues of family and family relationships are not of a systematic nature and are discussed sporadically at some rare educational events and class meetings though the sphere of family relationships, their correct construction is an extremely important task that the child's parents are called upon to solve. Thus, films about family and family relationships can provide effective assistance in this regard.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can state that the portrayals of family and family upbringing in Soviet and Russian feature films still remain open in Russian and foreign scientific researches. We also failed to find the results of a comprehensive analysis of the identified theme, defining the main patterns of this process and trends characteristic of media texts representing the topic under study, to say nothing of some promising models of media education based on audiovisual media texts focused on family and family education. Beyond the scope of existing research, there are still numerous questions of a comprehensive study of this theme, including pedagogical, cultural, and psychological aspects, as well as the presentation of a holistic characteristic of family and family education represented in Soviet, and later in Russian, feature films in the context of potential prospects for media education and media studies.

In our opinion, a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis of the studied theme should be implemented. In addition, it seems promising to us to identify the main genres of Russian feature films which represent family and family education, as well as to specify the goals and objectives of media education at each specific historical stage.

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Using Generative Neural Networks as a Media in Education: Formal Analysis in the Context of the Russian Legal System

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Abstract

The article discusses using of generative neural networks in education, especially in legal education, as an example, employing formal analysis in the context of the Russian legal system. Neural networks are considered as a kind of media and hence the issue of using neural networks by students is by nature a question of media education, its application, and its limits. The core question is whether it is possible to give students the opportunity to use generative neural networks when performing tasks like writing a diploma. Neural networks are considered as a kind of “new media” that must be assessed in the context of the media philosophy dichotomy between “tool” and “body”. The article reviews several scenarios of law students using neural networks and the conclusion is provided that not in all cases it is inadmissible. However, in the cases that concern the core competences that relate to understanding law as a phenomenon of information and communication, it is inadmissible. Such core competences imply command of natural language and writing reasoning skills. It is critical to take into an account the provisions of the legislation that focus on the concept and purposes of education which clarify the matter on the formal side. Ultimately, the “*blackout test*” is suggested to discern the cases were using of neural networks in education is not possible.

Keywords: law, media education, media and information literacy, MIL, new media, mass communication, neural networks, generative AI, large language models

1. Introduction

The article is dedicated to the use of generative neural networks as a media in education (especially in legal education) in the context of the Russian legal system. We address the topics of more than ten years issues such as: (a) media education today can be considered not only by mass communication processes but also contemporary non-mass forms of communication (Sharikov, 2012: 75); (b) the construct of media and information literacy (MIL) seems to be underperforming compared to media education (Fedorov: 2013: 73; Kačínová, 2018; Petranová et al., 2017; Šupšáková, 2016) because of the problem of using generative neural networks, which we know little about at the time.

In 2022, “The Information for All” public movement returned to the practice of holding the conference “Law and the Internet” with a section “Artificial Intelligence” where, among other things, there was a discussion about training lawyers in this difficult field. The new representatives of the specialized legal community will have to understand digital entities along with legal entities,

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but also philosophy, ethics and culture, including, first of all, media culture, for which the question of the connection of the issues with media education becomes logical and justified. As well it is justified due to the fact that members of the “Information for All” expert community are now working both on the platform of the conference “Law and the Internet” and within the framework of the “Media Education” program being implemented.

By 2024 the words “neural network” are heard more and more often in many areas. In turn, a kind of “new problem of the year” for educational institutions in 2023 was the use of generative neural networks by students. The story of a student of a Moscow higher education institution who used ChatGPT-3 to write his diploma and subsequently described the experience in detail is widely known (and has already received coverage not only in the media, but also in academic publications). As indicated, he used the program to compose at least an introductory and theoretical part. The supervisor's comments were insignificant, and the formal “percentage of originality” was high enough (Yaroshenko, Savushkin 2023: 281-282). This expected circumstance has generated a lot of discussions, and we do not see any uniform approach.

The question of whether it is possible to give students the opportunity to use generative neural networks when performing tasks like writing a diploma remains acute. The answer may depend on the specialty of education, but the problem is also objectively complicated by the fact that the “progress” (spread of practices of using generative neural networks) in general is not only apparently unstoppable, but also cannot be balanced directly by any verification tools. The text produced by a neural network ultimately lacks any metadata that would allow one to establish with a sufficient degree of legal certainty that it originated in this way and not simply, say, poorly (if applicable at all) written. Moreover, not all applications of neural networks raise direct and obvious ethical questions. What about, for example, a case when a learner (or even more so an established academic scholar) uses a translation made by a neural network for secondary purposes not related to his direct competences? Let us try to formulate one of the possible approaches, taking as a model the specialty of education that unites all co-authors and evaluating the ideas in the light of the current legislation.

Indeed, today there is a huge number of publications that analyze to varying degrees the interdisciplinary aspects of the use of neural networks, including in education (as the newest example: Sidorkin, 2024), but there is a lack of formal legal analysis of the possibilities of their application in terms of fundamental legal concepts reflected in the current legislation. The article presents the experience of overcoming this gap as well. It should be noted that the scope of the study includes only the issue of the limits of permissible use of generative neural networks by students in the educational process. Legal education is taken by us as a basic example. This choice is dictated not only by the fact that jurisprudence unites all the authors. It seems that considering the issue of the article on the example of legal education can be valuable. On the one hand, this type of education is classical and still uses many traditional educational technologies. This fact allows us to take into account the results for a wide range of educational specialties. On the other hand, the requirements for a law student are specific, because it is not only about mastering “neutral” professional tools, but also about cultivating a special form of thinking and value perception.

Thus, in the context of the issue, media education is involved in two aspects. First, the development of an optimal attitude to neural networks in the educational process is a part of media education itself, because generative neural networks, as will be discussed later, are modern media themselves. Second, the use of neural networks as new (or even “newest”) media is considered on the example of legal education.

The issues of using neural networks to manage the educational process itself, to allow predictive analytics of student performance, etc. are excluded from the subject of the article. Many of these issues deserve separate attention. For example, the mentioned area of application of predictive analytics is a very lively issue itself, as taken from the humanitarian perspective, like the issue of admissibility of predictive analytics of judicial decisions, now limited in some countries. Also, the article does not analyze general pervasive legal issues of neural networks related to personal data, intellectual rights, etc.

2. Materials and methods

The main sources of this article were the papers of other authors, as well as the text of normative legal acts, primarily the Federal Law of the Russian Federation dated 29.12.2012 № 273-FZ “On Education in the Russian Federation”. In addition to general research methods,

the study implies the use of the formal-legal (dogmatic) method of cognition, considered as a special method of legal science and including deductive-axiomatic and hypothetico-deductive methods of reasoning as the main components. The first of them involves the analysis of normative material with the conditional acceptance as “axioms” of its provisions, and then – the application of techniques and methods of interpretation of law. The hypothetico-deductive component involves the initial formulation of a hypothesis about the possible result of legal interpretation, which is then confirmed or refuted. This method allows establishing the content of positive legal regulation, assessing its formal certainty, and establishing its conceptual limits. Thanks to this, the analysis of the application of generative neural networks by students is not carried out in the abstract, but in relation to a specific regulatory environment. At the same time, based on the history of development of the main cited normative act, such research can be considered as representative for those legal systems that assume similar regulation from the point of view of comparative legal approach.

3. Discussion

Our primary focus is on generative neural networks that belong to “large language models” (“LLMs”), i.e., those capable of performing general-purpose text generation based on machine learning, examples of which include ChatGPT (OpenAI) or GigaChat (Sberbank). Technically, from a “functional” point of view, such neural networks differ from “expert systems” as an example of the “first wave” of artificial intelligence (Susskind, 2019: 264-265) – they “learn” from big data and can operate on any kind of data. That said, “at its core, deep learning is a statistical method for classifying patterns, based on large amounts of sample data, using neural networks with multiple layers” (Hunter, 2020: 1215). This technical description is generally important for understanding the general origins of the problem, but for the issue at hand it is fundamentally different – these kinds of neural networks are used by students to avoid doing the assignment themselves, but there is no third party “living” agent to do the assignment instead of the student (as in the more “usual” cases of academic misconduct, where someone with agency and special knowledge writes the work instead of the student). Moreover, producing a result using a neural network is not a passive process. This action requires writing the task for the software, which is itself an intellectual act and makes the problem multi-faceted. The implied context of having a “tool”, a “smart yet controllable assistant” and certain skills of interaction with it makes us pay attention to the media philosophical dimension of the problem, in which the issues of the relationship between the agent and the tool are actualized.

Neural networks are considered as a kind of media and hence the issue of using neural networks by students is by nature a question of media education, its application, and its limits. From the point of view of media philosophy, generative neural networks – a phenomenon that has become so popular in the world – certainly belong to the “new” (or even, as we may ironically note, the “newest”) media. L. Manovich characterized the “new media” by the idea that they are expressed in the form of numerical representations, are “modular” (“fractal”), automated, variable, and characterized by the phenomenon of “transcoding” (Manovich, 2001: 30-47), all of which are applicable to neural networks and convey a significant part of their general qualities. At the same time, unlike many other examples of the “new media”, generative neural networks are characterized by an unprecedented degree of automation and, as a result, they are considerably more distant from the agent as compared with other kinds of the “new media”.

It is this circumstance that will determine the essence of further analysis. Neural networks are becoming part of the toolkit in many professions, and the legal profession is not an exception. Will generative neural networks become (or “are they already?”) an imperceptible technical “extension” of humans, just as it is with more familiar tools (i.e. media)? The question is not only purely metaphorical in nature. Contemporary media philosophical studies emphasize that the *interface* is not even just something through which a person is represented in the digital world, but an extension of his or her “body” in the broad interdisciplinary sense of the word.

In this case, the “body” is a “corpus of instrumental practices and ways to find sensual experience/experience of ‘technical images’ that represents the body most adapted for survival in the media environment” (Ocheretyany, 2015: 143). Leaving aside the debate about the extent to which it is permissible to speak of a “body” in this case, in the light of the discourse of media studies, the question can be raised as to whether neural networks should be viewed as an external tool or as part of the “incarnation”/“reflection” (i.e. “body”) of a person in digital space. This question may only at first glance seem speculative on the practical side. In fact, the applied

discussion about the possibilities and limits of using neural networks in the modern educational environment is centered around this question.

Although the use of generative neural networks is often discussed uncritically in news publications, journalistic articles, and everyday discussions as a general phenomenon, in reality the situation is more complex and calls for a more differentiated approach. This is mainly due to the different ways of using generative neural networks (while neural networks themselves may allow one or more ways of use, including in combination with other similar tools). Generative neural networks that allow text generation are usually at the center of the discussion. At the same time, there are also neural networks that allow processing in a certain way of the information that is not created directly by them but is provided “from outside”. Neural networks used to translate text from one language into another belong to the latter type. Let us try to define several typical situations of using neural networks in legal education, which form the actual compositions that we will keep in mind during the formal legal analysis of the problem. Let us present them in the form of a table and give a preliminary assessment of admissibility based on generally accepted standards of common sense.

Table 1. Scenarios of law students using neural networks and their preliminary assessment

Scenario	Example	Preliminary assessment
Using a generative neural network to complete a written paper assignment in a case in which the student is required to write the paper independently, without the students' actual input.	Using of ChatGPT for writing a qualification paper (diploma) in jurisprudence, or a part of such diploma. In this case, the student does not edit the text.	Unacceptable (regardless of the need to be able to set tasks for a neural network), as this part of legal education is aimed at building and testing writing reasoning skills, and not skills in the area of computer science. The latter are important, but pertain to completely different area.
Using a generative neural network to complete a written paper assignment in a case in which the student must write the papers independently, but the student responsibly edits the text.	Using of ChatGPT for writing a qualification paper (diploma) in jurisprudence, or a part of such diploma. In this case, the student does edit the text.	It is also unacceptable (sic!), and also because this part of legal education is aimed at forming and testing writing reasoning skills. At the same time, there is a difference from the first option here: such behavior may be permissible in similar cases in professional activities, provided that the subject is a responsible professional.
Using generative or other neural network to find sources and/or perform other “mechanical” work related to searching and sorting of information.	Using ChatGPT to find preliminary sources on a topic under certain research assignment.	(For the sake of brevity, we do not split this situation into two subtypes as before). Acceptable, but subject to personal professional verification of the results.
Using generative or other neural network to perform functions that are not a required part of the competencies being mastered.	Application of translation tools based on machine learning (Yandex Translate, Google Translate, Deepl, etc.) of sources in a foreign language, including for translation of quotations from them (in a situation where it is not a lawyer who should be qualified with knowledge of the relevant language).	Acceptable, but subject to personal professional verification of results and/or verification of results by third party professionals, and transparency declaration of the process.

This illustrative generalization shows that the issue should be handled differently depending on the specialty and its nuances. Thus, for example, in Option 4, the demand from students (especially law students) without presumed knowledge of a foreign language should by definition be less than from lawyers with presumed knowledge of a foreign language – in the latter case, it is their direct knowledge that should also be tested. It is also clear that if the literary writing skills in one's professional field are not required in principle, the "editable" use of ChatGPT with a declaration of transparency of its use can also be allowed. For now, however, all this is an option for discussion. Anyway, our approach is based on the notion that it is mandatory for a lawyer to speak a natural language (or several natural languages), and it is not just a technical necessity. Such a state of affairs is closely related to the nature of law as a phenomenon centered on the text in the broadest sociocultural sense.

Of course, not even all the authors of this article agree with the communicative approach to law (with which others agree, however), but its central position – understanding law as an information and communication phenomenon in the center of which, nevertheless, there is a living agent who interprets and experiences values (Polyakov, Timoshina, 2017: 19) – for practical teaching purposes does not raise any substantial questions. A lawyer must have a command of language, it is primary competency. Without it, a lawyer – in the digital environment – turns into an information system operator. Such specialists will certainly be needed, and maybe in greater numbers, but a true higher legal education implies acquiring more than just technical or computer science skills. A specialist who can verify the results of a neural network is a specialist who can reproduce the process without using it. Research and practice show that using of generative neural networks (and artificial intelligence in general) with a high degree of delegation from human beings, especially law students and lawyers, can result a high risk of discrimination (Lee, 2018: 255), and violation of human rights (Brennan et al., 2009: 26-27; Southerland, 2021: 493; Werth, 2019: 10-11). In addition, legal education is unthinkable without the formation of personality and value worldview, understanding of general approaches and logic of legal regulation (Belov, 2023).

At the same time, it is crucial that all the problems under consideration are not abstract and that they relate to the current regulatory environment. Many things become clearer if we move from abstract reasoning to formal-legal analysis of the provisions of the current legislation. Thus, it is necessary to pay attention to the basic definitions established in the Federal Law No. 273-FZ "On Education in the Russian Federation" dated December 29, 2012 (hereinafter – the "Education Law"). Thus, according to Item 1 Article 2 of the Education Law, "education [is] a single purposeful process of upbringing and learning, which is a socially significant good and is carried out in the interests of the individual, family, society and state, as well as a set of acquired knowledge, skills, abilities, skills, value attitudes, experience of activity and competence of a certain volume and complexity for the purposes of intellectual, spiritual and moral, creative, physical and (or) professional development of a person, satisfaction of his/her educational needs and interests". From the point of view of ideas about the logical structure of a legal norm, definitions of normative legal acts contain part of the hypothesis of legal norms. On this basis, it can be concluded that those phenomena that do not meet the definition cannot be attributed to "education".

In the light of this consideration, it is fundamental that the scope of the concept of "education" includes, among other things, "a set of acquired knowledge, skills, abilities etc.", and the goal in this case is, among other things, "intellectual, spiritual and moral, creative, physical and (or) professional development of a person". Thus, the use of generative neural networks by students will be a part of "education" only in the sense in which it meets these parts of the definition. Based on this consideration, we can assume, for example, that the use of a generative neural network by students in specialties (directions) that involve the formation of skills exactly in the use of generative networks, and at the same time in the part in which such skills are mastered (and tested!) will correspond to the concept of "education". At the same time, in other cases – for example, when a learner who must perform a writing task independently – the use of a generative neural network at the most general level will not correspond to the concept of education. This conclusion has logic priority even over the question of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the use of neural networks, although, as we pointed out above, in some cases their use seems to be strictly inadmissible.

The application of generative neural networks can be considered in the context of other general provisions of the Education Law. In particular, we should note *inter alia* the following basic principles of state policy and legal regulation of relations in the field of education: ensuring the right of everyone to education and the inadmissibility of discrimination in education (Item 2

Part 1, Article 3); humanistic nature of education in accordance with traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, including, *inter alia*, the priority of individual rights and freedoms, free development of the individual, education of mutual respect, diligence, and responsibility (Item 3 Part 1 Article 3); inadmissibility of restriction or elimination of competition in the field of education (Item 11 Part 1, Article 3). It is also pertinent to note here the following general duties and responsibilities of students: conscientiously master the educational program, fulfill the individual educational plan, including attendance of classes provided for in the curriculum or individual educational plan, preparation for classes with own efforts, fulfill assignments given by teaching staff as part of the educational program (Item 1 Part, 1 Article 43); comply with the requirements of the charter of the organization carrying out educational activities, internal regulations, including requirements for discipline at classes and rules of conduct in such organization, rules of living in dormitories and boarding schools and other local normative acts on the organization and implementation of educational activities (Item 2, Part 1, Article 43). The use of neural networks can be analyzed in terms of each of these principles and each of the responsibilities of learners and summarized as follows.

Table 2. Potential interpretation of certain provisions of the Education Law in the context of the “neural network problem”

Provision of the Education Law	Potential interpretation in the context of the “neural network problem”
Ensuring the right of everyone to education and the inadmissibility of discrimination in education (Item 2 Part 1 Article 3)	The use of “third party assistance” (both of human agents and AI), as a rule, is incompatible with the concept of education. Uncritical acceptance of results from those students who use and those who do not use neural networks leads to discrimination. Neural networks themselves can be trained on discriminatory material.
Humanistic nature of education in accordance with traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, including, <i>inter alia</i> , the priority of individual rights and freedoms, free development of the individual, education of mutual respect, diligence, and responsibility (Item 3 Part 1 Article 3).	Unless we take into an account quite specific cases of computer science, free development of personality is incompatible with “delegation” of principal tasks to neural networks. When they are used unfairly, mutual respect towards other students and teachers is violated. Hard work and responsibility are not demonstrated.
Inadmissibility of restriction or elimination of competition in the field of education (Item 11 Part 1 Article 3).	Uncritical acceptance of results from learners using and not using neural networks among different institutions on a large scale leads to a violation of fair competition.
Duty of students to conscientiously master the educational program, fulfill the individual educational plan, including attendance of classes provided for in the curriculum or individual educational plan, preparation for classes with own efforts, fulfill assignments given by teaching staff as part of the educational program (Item 1 Part 1 Article 43).	The key problem is how to set the criterion of “own efforts”, provided that the neural network can be perceived as just a “smart tool”. We propose to take into account the approach from Table 1 and the principle outlined below.
Duty of students to comply with the requirements of the charter of the organization carrying out educational activities, internal regulations, including requirements for discipline at classes and rules of conduct in such organization, rules of living in dormitories and boarding schools and other local normative acts on the	As a rule, local normative acts presuppose independent, with own efforts, execution of tasks without the possibility to use auxiliary tools, unless otherwise expressly provided. Similar to the above.

Provision of the Education Law	Potential interpretation in the context of the “neural network problem”
organization and implementation of educational activities (Item 2 Part 1 Article 43).	

4. Results

As a result of all the reasoning presented above, the general principle is quite clear and can be formulated as follows: in the case if any of the components of the concept of education (knowledge, abilities, skills, values, competences) implies that the learner should perform it independently (i.e. with own efforts) in terms of a particular specialty, direction of education or other similar category, it cannot be performed using a generative neural network. Otherwise, the generative neural network is used *de facto* as an auxiliary tool. Whether or not a generative neural network is such a tool, or it is used in contradiction with the logic of the educational process can be established only by focusing on this general principle and based on the specific context of the situation. Thus, for example, the use of a neural network for the purpose of translating documents from one language into another would be an auxiliary tool for a lawyer whose training does not involve the acquisition of competencies in foreign languages, but the use of such a network would violate the logic of the educational process in the case of training a lawyer who acquires competencies in a foreign language and, even more so, for a translator.

Let us emphasize that it is precisely the educational process we are talking about. If a translator who has subsequently received the “appropriate” (in the meaning of this article) education uses a generative neural network to prepare a draft version of a translation with subsequent editing, there will be nothing objectionable in this.

5. Conclusion

In a sense, the approach suggested in this article can be called the “*blackout test*” (in the meaning of “*electricity failure test*”): a specialist, within the limits of specific competencies and other such indicators, should be able to do his or her job even if the devices powered by electricity are not working. So, for example, a legal practitioner should obviously be able to write a statement of claim with a pen on a piece of paper without using not only neural networks, but also legal databases and a text processing software. Otherwise, such a specialist cannot be said to have a real legal qualification. This hints at the fact that, from the point of view of media studies, the principle proposed in the article implies theoretical modeling of such conditions of a specialist’s activity, under which he or she is hypothetically acting at the “lowest” realistically permissible level within the framework of a given society and historical conditions of the media.

And, in any case, the percentage and cases of using neural networks must be declared. It seems that this rule – in spirit corresponding to the principle of “transparency” of application of artificial intelligence technologies in general – should become a new standard of academic ethics. At the same time, such a rule needs to be balanced by the recognition that with proper self-restraint and responsibility, artificial intelligence can be used in academic life (and probably should).

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Western Cinema on the Pages of the *Soviet Screen* Magazine (1969–1985): Reviews of Western Films

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Abstract

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the “stagnant” period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the following conclusions.

Of the wide range of Hollywood and British films, Soviet film distribution in the period we analyzed included mainly films with an acute social message, critically showing Western realities. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that these films received maximum support in the *Soviet Screen*; articles by Soviet film critics emphasized the “progressive anti-bourgeois significance” of these films. It is very significant that, even when reviewing American films, which seemed to be completely far from politics, the reviewers of *Soviet Screen* demonstrated ideological approaches.

Of course, among the reviews of American and British films in *Soviet Screen*, there also appeared texts that were devoid of a direct appeal to politics. “Apoliticalism” was especially evident in reviews devoted to film adaptations of classical works, which often took place in the 19th century and earlier.

Frankly entertaining Hollywood and British films were released into Soviet distribution in the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s quite rarely. And here, *Soviet Screen* reviewers often sought to distance themselves from edifying political and ideological assessments, concentrating on a professional analysis of the artistic quality of this or that entertaining film.

In Italian and French cinema, the *Soviet Screen* consistently gave preference to political films that “expose capitalist reality.” Of course, *Soviet Screen*, as before, could not ignore the works of Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, Francois Truffaut and other outstanding masters of cinema. But here, too, the magazine’s reviewers assessed their work mainly within the framework of Marxist ideological principles, on the basis of which even the films of such recognized masters as Federico Fellini were criticized.

The sharp rejection of *Soviet Screen* reviewers was often caused by entertainment films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo, which were reproached for promoting “supermanhood” and violence. The *Soviet Screen*’s reviews of famous French and Italian comedies were more benevolent, but overall rather skeptical.

Of course, the range of Western films, for one reason or another, did not reach the Soviet mass audience, was much wider than film distribution. And year after year, the editors of the magazine selected examples for criticism of bourgeois society and imperialism: films of an anti-

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communist and anti-Soviet orientation, as well as films “glorifying the American military” and “whitewashing the Nazis.”

The openly entertaining part of Western film production has traditionally been viewed by the magazine mainly in a sharply negative light.

Soviet Screen did not ignore the topic of film sex, popular in the West in the 1970s. Of course, articles were published about films of this kind, condemning the “decomposition of the morals of bourgeois society.”

In articles in *Soviet Screen* about international film festivals and the current repertoire of Western national cinemas and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, there was also a clear division of Western cinema into “progressive” and “bourgeois”.

Keywords: *Soviet Screen* magazine, Western cinema, film criticism, ideology, politics, reviews, articles.

1. Introduction

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the “stagnant” period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the following conclusions.

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2. Materials and methods

The research methodology consists of key philosophical provisions on the connection, interdependence and integrity of the phenomena of reality, the unity of the historical and the social

in cognition; scientific, film studies, sociocultural, culturological, hermeneutical, semiotic approaches proposed in the works of leading scientists (Aronson, 2003; Bakhtin, 1996; Balazs, 1935; Bibler, 1990; Casetti, 1999; Demin, 1966; Eco, 1976; Eisenstein, 1964; Gledhill, Williams, 2000; Hess, 1997; Hill, Gibson, 1998; Khrenov, 2006; 2011; Kuleshov, 1987; Lotman, 1973; 1992; 1994; Mast, Cohen 1985; Razlogov, 1984; Sokolov, 2010; Stam, 2000; Villarejo, 2007 and others).

The project is based on a research content approach (identifying the content of the process under study, taking into account the totality of its elements, the interaction between them, their nature, turning to facts, analyzing and synthesizing theoretical conclusions, etc.), on a historical approach-consideration of the concrete historical development of the declared theme of the project.

Research methods: complex content analysis, comparative interdisciplinary analysis, methods of theoretical research: classification, comparison, analogy, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization; methods of empirical research: collection of information related to the subject of the project, comparative-historical and hermeneutic methods.

3. Discussion and results

Reviews of Western films, which in the period of the 1970s – 1985 were in Soviet film distribution and/or were shown on television in the USSR

As before, the *Soviet Screen* willingly and very positively reviewed Stanley Kramer's (1913-2001) films that were regularly released: *Bless the Beasts & Children* (USA, 1971) (Lvov, 1971: 14-15; Shcherbakov, 1971), *Oklahoma Crude* (USA, 1973) (Warsawsky, 1973: 3), *The Domino Principle* (USA-UK, 1977) (Andreev, 1979: 14), emphasizing their "progressive anti-bourgeois significance".

So the film critic Y. Warsawsky (1911–2000) wrote that in *Oklahoma Crude* the motives familiar to his work sound: disgust for cruelty and indifference, for cruelty and loneliness, to which acquisitiveness, which has become a passion, dooms (Warsawsky, 1973: 3).

And the film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) pathetically asserted that contrary to the newfangled frills in the field of either demonology or erotica, *The Domino Principle*, through the medium of feature films, thoughtfully explores serious problems. ... Artistic generalizations helped the authors to create ... collective images of great explosive power, to rise to very disturbing realistic generalizations (Andreev, 1979: 14).

The position of the *Soviet Screen* was similar in relation to the drama of Sydney Pollack (1934-2008) *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (USA, 1969) (Rakoviny..., 1970: 14; Shcherbakov, 1971), as rare in power accusatory document.

As is well known, from a wide range of Hollywood and British films, the Soviet film distribution in the period we are analyzing mostly films with a sharp social sound, critically showing Western realities.

Therefore, it is not at all surprising that it was these movies that received the maximum support in the *Soviet Screen*: *A Soldier's Story* (USA, 1984) (Esina, 1985: 10-11), *Absence of Malice* (USA, 1981) (Ivanova, 1985: 22; Razlogov, 1983: 14-15; Savitsky, 1985: 18-19), *West Side Story* (USA, 1961) (Sobolev, 1980: 5), *The Day the Fish Came Out* (UK-Greece, 1966) (Khlopyankina, 1972: 15), *The China Syndrome* (USA, 1979) (Khojaev, 1979: 7; Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18; Shitova, 1979: 16-17), *Capricorn One* (USA-UK, 1977) (Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18), *Conrack* (USA, 1974) (Chertok, 1974: 18; Ivanova, 1976: 8-9), *O Lucky Man!* (UK-USA, 1973) (Doroshevich, 1976), *The Front* (USA, 1976) (Andreev, 1978: 6-7), *...And Justice for All* (USA, 1979) (Dmitriev, 1983: 8-9), *Missing* (USA, 1982) (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17), *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (USA, 1962) (Mikhalkovich, 1978: 3-4), *3 Days of the Condor* (USA, 1975) (Savitsky, 1985: 18-19; Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18), *Frances* (USA, 1982) (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17), etc.

So in the movie review *The Day the Fish Came Out* (UK-Greece, 1966) emphasized that the object of ridicule in it turned out to be rabid militarism, militarism, inhumanity (Khlopyankina, 1972: 15).

In an article about the film *The Front* (USA, 1976), film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) reminded the readers of the magazine that there is a real danger of even greater persecution of genuine fighters for civil rights, opponents of foreign policy adventures into which the reactionaries dream of dragging the country of all stripes, a powerful military-industrial complex (Andreev, 1978: 6-7).

And film critic O. Sulkin praised the drama *Frances* (USA, 1982), noting that it exposes to the utmost the monstrous mechanism of spiritual violence in a 'free' society (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

A very positive review in the *Soviet Screen* was also awarded to *A Soldier's Story* (USA, 1984): "So, racism is in the dock. Racism in a new guise, often demagogically hiding behind the 'interests of civilization', 'concern for ordinary people.' But, one way or another, we recognize him in any camouflage. According to its anti-human essence, it does not change" (Esina, 1985: 10-11).

Film critic N. Savitsky wrote that in *3 Days of the Condor* (USA, 1975) S. Pollack, shed light on the dirty methods that the US intelligence agencies constantly resort to, not stopping at gross violations of constitutional norms and the criminal code in order to achieve the hidden strategic goals of the imperialist state", and in the drama *Absence of Malice* shows the "kitchen" of the bourgeois press, and the work of the American police, using techniques even more unscrupulous than those used by newspapermen. ... In both cases, imaginary and essentially anti-social, inhuman goals are pursued (Savitsky, 1985: 18-19).

Analyzing the film *The China Syndrome* (USA, 1979), film critic and theater critic V. Shitova (1927–2002) wrote: "Honor and praise here to the famous Jane Fonda, who played surprisingly modestly in her sense of self, resolutely discarding the halo of a movie star ... This Fonda's role is directly related to the social position of the actress, who consistently and bravely enters into political battles on the side of peace and a fair solution to social problems" (Shitova, 1979: 16-17).

And indeed, film critic N. Shaternikova (1934–2028) acted as a Soviet political observer on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*, arguing that social and political life of America so often resembles a gloomy adventure scenario, replete with episodes of assassination attempts, murders, unsolved plots to eliminate unwanted witnesses, that it can compete on equal terms with the most daring fiction (Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18). And there fore movies *Capricorn One* (USA-UK, 1977) and *3 Days of the Condor* (USA, 1975) turned out to be truly prophetic. Before our eyes, what they warned against is coming true. "In the Near and Middle East, American militarism is increasingly openly demonstrating its aggressive intentions. The Pentagon is no longer shy about openly revealing its interest in space programs – they plan to use flights under the Shuttle program for military purposes. And all this is covered up with lies about the "external threat", about the need to protect the vital interests of the American people. ... *The China Syndrom* also turned out to be prophetic. ... But it's not just about actual coincidences. All three films are true in the main – they accurately recreate the atmosphere of the "crisis of confidence" in the American "top": monopolies in the apparatus of political power, which is generated by the general crisis of capitalism" (Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18).

True, another film critic, R. Yurenev (1912–2002), was much more critical of the film *Capricorn One* (USA-UK, 1977). He wrote that the desire to set up a topical topic and then exchange it in entertaining situations was clearly demonstrated by the American director Peter Hyams in his film *Capricorn One*. The beginning is exciting. American cosmonauts going to Mars are stolen from the rocket and hidden in an abandoned hangar: the flight is unprepared, and it was decided to "stage" it with the help of movie and TV stunts. This is where the social drama about the conflict between science and the capitalist world would unfold. But the director is not interested in social problems. He literally stuns the viewer with a cascade of stunts... The stunt technique is great, but the idea? (Yurenev, 1978: 6-7).

The *Soviet Screen* treated the film *The New Centurions* (USA, 1972) rather reservedly, since, according to reviewer A. Doroshevich, it is designed for those who are frightened by the steady increase in crime in the United States and at that At the same time, it is well known that only positive emotions are by no means associated with the figure of a policeman, ... [but] the plot moves are indicated in the picture too schematically for artistically convincing characters to grow out of them (Doroshevich, 1975: 5).

It is quite significant that even when reviewing American films, which seemed to be absolutely far from politics, the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* demonstrated ideological approaches. Eg, in a melodrama review *Kramer vs. Kramer* (USA, 1979) noted that the success of the movie is also due to the fact that, against the backdrop of unbridled cruelty and violence reigning on the screens of the United States, attempts to interpret family life exclusively in the spirit of Freudian and other "fashionable" concepts, the film *Kramer vs. Kramer* compares favorably with noble restraint, modesty, depth of penetration into the human soul. And this person is considered by the authors quite multifaceted. ... the film is a visible desire for aesthetic integrity and authenticity, the fullness of life, the indestructibility of good human emotions in relation to

everything that mass bourgeois cinema has been trying in vain to eradicate from the minds of the audience for many decades (Chernenko, 1981: 16).

Of course, among the reviews of American and British films in the *Soviet Screen* there were also texts devoid of a direct appeal to politics.

So V. Ivanova wrote about *Bobby Deerfield* (USA, 1977), that in this film a constant theme of Sydney Pollack arises, which runs through his films, well known to us. It turns out that he and Remarque have a common theme – the theme of human loneliness, struggle and overcoming it (Ivanova, 1983: 9).

The “apoliticality” was especially pronounced in reviews of film adaptations of classic works, the action of which often took place in the 19th century and earlier: *Jane Eyre* (UK-USA, 1970) (Doroshevich, 1973), *David Copperfield* (UK, 1974) (Anikst, 1975: 4), *The Moonstone* (UK, 1972) (Anikst, 1975: 4), *A Tale of Two Cities* (UK, 1958) (Shemyakin, 1985: 10), *Murder on the Orient Express* (UK, 1974) (Dmitriev, 1978: 5).

Discussions of Western films unfolded on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* in the analyzed period extremely rarely.

For example, the editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen* D. Orlov (1935–2021) considered that film *Gloria* (USA, 1980) is another version of a noble killer, in this case it turns out to be a woman, a representative of the mafia, overwhelmed by a sentimental attachment to a boy ... There is nothing to be surprised about – we have before us another example of a stereotypical, not even marked by a spark of talent bourgeois, in this case American, film production (Orlov, 1981: 16-18).

But film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) did not agree with him, noting in *Gloria* (USA, 1980) the moral sense of artists, rarely found in our pragmatic age, faith in the beauty of a senseless act, verification of what turns out to be the only guarantee of a high human destiny (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

Frankly entertaining Hollywood and British films were quite rare in the Soviet distribution of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s.

Many of them were reviewed by film critic and archivist V. Dmitriev. In his articles, he, as a rule, sought to distance himself from instructive political and ideological assessments, concentrating on a professional analysis of the artistic quality of the work.

He wrote that director Michael Anderson's *Orca* (*Orca: Killer Whale*. U.S.-British-Italian, 1977) was almost defenseless against criticism. Extremely non-self-sufficient in its problems and stylistics, it can and does cause irritation with its genre heterogeneity, incorporating elements of western, melodrama, horror film as well as science-fiction and species tape. All this is justified not so much by its naive anthology, though it is explicitly stated, as by a certain ... simple-mindedness that allows you to use the findings of others, inserting extensive cinematic quotations into your work, not being afraid of bloody or sentimentalized stamps. One could even say that in *Orca* the animal takes revenge for all the desecration by man to which it has been subjected in numerous other films. The problem of the animal's rightness, or rather the rightness of nature before man, was not born now, but in recent years it has taken on an exhilarated, almost hysterical character in Western art, as evidenced, in particular, by *Orca*, which is interesting not so much as an expression of a certain social trend. And in this respect, familiarity with the film is useful and necessary, even if the issues raised in it are addressed at a very superficial level (Dmitriev, 1982: 8-9).

B. Dmitriev regretted that the release of John Ford's western *My Darling Clementine* (USA, 1946) in Soviet distribution was delayed by almost 30 years, and, according to present-day views, it is just an old film, black and white, a bit monotonous, slightly slow in pace, with too much unnecessary dialogue and fabulist explanations. ... But even after 30 years one feels that it is a masterful film, with no plot or pictorial seams, and a bias toward excessive touching is immediately counterbalanced by a comedy trick (Dmitriev, 1975: 5).

About one of the Soviet box office hits, *Mackenna's Gold* (USA, 1968), V. Dmitriev very convincingly wrote that this is a fairly typical example of a late western, the plot side of which, moving from adventure to adventure, prevails over the psychological specificity of the characters. ... Jack Lee Thompson, who shot the picture, belongs to the type of artists who are above all afraid of untested solutions. ... A high-class professional, Lee Thompson tries not to repeat himself either in the ways of mise-en-scene or in the principles of editing. One cannot help but pay tribute to him in his skillful sense of the spectacularity of cinema (Dmitriev, 1974: 5-6).

But the *Soviet Screen* treated Hollywood film musicals much more strictly.

If the literary critic A. Anikst (1910–1988) wrote that *My Fair Lady* (USA, 1964): that is great entertainment. The film has humor, grace, and for lovers of sentiment – a little bit of theatrical love

– in a word, everything that is supposed to be pleasant.pastime. ... In general, there are many times more successes in this film than shortcomings (Anikst, 1970: 14-15).

That film critic N. Lagina, based on extra-genre requirements for a clear designation of sociality and political position, literally crushed another famous musical on the pages of the magazine – *The Sound of Music* (USA, 1965), arguing that almost all the characters in the film are unambiguous and very schematic. ... Yes, the sounds of music remain from *The Sound of Music*. But not the echoes of history, characters, nor the more important socio-political background that the screenwriter and director claim. ... We leave the cinema with the beautiful and catchy melodies of Richard Rodgers, the charm of music and acting. ... But there remains annoyance from far-fetched situations (Lagina, 1972: 14-15).

Film critic V. Ivanova (1937-2008) was even stricter about the musical *Funny Girl* (USA, 1968): “For some reason, this *Funny Girl* is not funny. Rather boring, honestly. There's a moment of overeating... The screen is so densely populated... with poker issues and the trappings of a sophisticated bourgeois life, that there's simply no room for anything else. The screen hits on the spot with tracer volleys of colors, the toilets are becoming more and more refined, the film is becoming more and more boring and petty-bourgeois. Once Wyler made a fairy tale called *Roman Holiday* (USA, 1953), which is well known to our viewers. ... *Roman Holiday*, however, was not a musical, but next to *Funny Girl* they seem almost a masterpiece of taste and elegance” (Ivanova, 1972: 14-15).

So strictly treated the comedy of W. Wyler *How To Steal a Million* (USA, 1966) film critic J. Bereznitsky (1922-2005): “The trouble with the movie is not so much in its diversity, but in its facelessness” (Bereznitsky, 1975: 4-5).

But the film critic V. Revich (1929–1997) appreciated another film popular in the Soviet box office *One Million Years BC* (UK, 1966) is significantly warmer (perhaps due to the complete absence in the plot of the movie of the bourgeoisie and other undesirable factors for the ideologized Soviet film criticism): “The technique of combined filming in the picture is quite high, especially in the earthquake scene, when people, distraught with fear, rush along the slopes of the mountain and fall into the abysses opening before them. The most accurate way to define the genre nature of the film is the word “comic”, which is not very popular with us – a complex combination of reality, fairy tale, fantasy, incredible adventures and parodies of the same adventures, that is, we have cinema entertainment in its purest form. But pictures of this kind deserve criticism if they carry some harmful charge. And so ... Probably, *A Million Years BC* will be a success with viewers who intend to relax and have fun for an hour and a half in the cinema. Especially in young people. But it would be good if, when they returned home, they looked at the book and added to their knowledge of dinosaurs, which had become extinct seventy million years before the advent of man...” (Revich, 1969).

On the other hand, recalling the “Tarzaniada”, film critic E. Gromov (1931–2005) instructively reminded the readers of the magazine that prhythmic films about the “man from the jungle” have repeatedly provoked sharp criticism from film experts, and indeed from all people with a good artistic taste. The falsity of the Tarzan films was felt by the vast majority of viewers. And although the last films of this series were made at a fairly high technical level, they were shown in half-empty cinema halls. ... These days Tarzan films are perceived as artistically helpless. That is why *Tarzan* left the screen in all countries long ago (Gromov, 1975: 19).

In the Italian cinema of the 1970s, *Soviet Screen* consistently gave preference to political films that “expose capitalist reality.”

In this context, film critic V. Demin (1937–1993) quite convincingly wrote that until quite recently, the rise of “political cinema” seemed strange, mysterious, and perhaps not accidental. A few years ago, a serious and objective observer, noting even the stunning success of Italian or Swedish films directly devoted to famous political trials, would still not dare to authoritatively predict that this cinematic line would soon evoke a response literally in all countries of the world. ... The second half of the twentieth century, with persuasiveness unknown to previous times, demonstrated the direct connection and dependence of the fate of man, society and politics. ... And in Sacco and Vanzetti (*Sacco e Vanzetti*. Italy, 1970) ... it was not only about the clash of pure souls with the world of bribery and betrayal, the individual – with the machine of capitalist statehood. No, the hero turned out to be, first of all, a politician, the conflict – a political conflict, and its solution, according to the artist, required active political actions.

At first it seemed that the “political film” irresistibly gravitates towards the form of a documentary detective close to it. Filmmakers diligently reconstructed the facts, revealed the secret

springs of events, brought out the circumstances hidden for the time being. What happened, how it happened, who is to blame – it seemed that this is the most important thing. However, over time, it became clear that the study of the actual plot of the murder for political reasons is not the most important thing in a film of this kind. It is much more interesting and tempting to reveal indirect springs, distant connections, to comprehend what happened not at the level of the first, direct culprits, but against the broad background of modern and historical political reality” (Demin, 1973: 4).

More traditionally (for Soviet film studies) film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) approached the subject of political cinema: the beginning of the 1970s in the West was marked by the flourishing of the so-called "political film", where traditional psychological collisions were replaced by clashes of ideas and political views. In the best "political films" of Italy, France, Sweden and some other bourgeois countries, the images of the communists are quite clearly outlined, though not always acting in the foreground. But this is no longer the fault, but the misfortune of the progressive artists of the West, who work under difficult conditions of pressure and daily control from monopoly capital. Let us be clear that the appearance on Western screens of every film that truthfully shows some facet of the labor movement and the images of its leaders is always an expression of the civic courage of its authors. And yet the dictates of time cannot be stopped. Even 10-15 years ago, talking about the image of a communist in Western cinema would have been impossible – such films simply did not exist. Today, no matter how difficult the path of art raising acute social problems is, we can name films that are well known to us... Of course, we are especially interested in and close to films created by masters whose life and work are firmly connected with the labor movement. The films of such directors show not only today's class struggles, but also the optimistic prospects of the social movement (Sobolev, 1976: 18-19).

Film critic B. Kokorevich was just as ideologically charged: “Progressive Italian cinema has repeatedly addressed the theme of the mafia. The neo-realists were the instigators of the anti-Mafist trend in the progressive cinema of Italy. ... The first big and significant victory of Italian filmmakers on the front of the fight against the mafia by means of art should be called the film directed by Francesco Rosi *Salvatore Giuliano* (Italy, 1962) – a passionate and bitter accusation not only of the mafia, but of the entire Italian bourgeois society, through and through rotten, affected by the malignant tumor of corruption. ... And a few years later, progressive Italian cinema releases a whole clip of anti-Mafist films ... However, progressive filmmakers in Italy are increasingly coming to the conclusion that it is not enough just to denounce this syndicate of criminals. Other means of dealing with them are also needed. And they can be found only by clearly imagining that the mafia will cease to exist only when the roots that gave rise to it – social injustice, blatant inequality, corruption, corrupt bureaucracy and police apparatus – disappear” (Kokorevich, 1978: 12).

Equally "politically correct" was the film critic S. Asenin (1922–2008), who emphasized that director Giuliano Montaldo belongs to that progressive wing of Italian directors who are true to the precepts and traditions of neorealism ... With his film *Sacco and Vanzetti* (Italy, 1970), he put himself in the first a number of masters of "attacking" political cinema, the art of uncompromising class positions (Asenin, 1971: 17).

The same S. Asenin argued that among the sharp socio-critical films, there is also Damiano Damiani's film *Investigation is over, forget it (L'Istruttoria è chiusa: dimentichi)*. Italy, 1971), which is merciless in its close revealing analysis, continuing and deepening the theme his *Recognition of the Commissioner of Police to the Prosecutor of the Republic (Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica)*. Italy, 1970). The action takes place in a prison, which is shown both as an instrument of power and as a “continuation”, a cell of bourgeois society infected with all its diseases and vices. Bribery, lawlessness and arbitrariness reign here, and the mafia stretches its tentacles here almost more confidently than in other areas of state life (Asenin, 1972: 17).

Highly, first of all, from a political point of view, other films by Damiano Damiani (1922–2013) were also rated: *I'm afraid (Io ho paura)*. Italy, 1977) (Filatova, 1981: 4-5) and *Man on his knees (Un Uomo in ginocchio)*. Italy, 1978) (Plakhov, 1983: 5-6).

So it was emphasized that in the film *I'm afraid* the author indomitably believes that it is in the power of people to change all this, stubbornly and furiously appeals to the viewer, prompting him to think, decide, act. The political cinema of Italy inherited the best features of Italian neo-realism. Faithful to his principles and Damiano Damiani ... The dramaturgy of his films is constructive and clear, understandable to any viewer, it does not contain excessive plot intricacies,

too complex psychological dramas, intricate love affairs. A simple plot unfolds rapidly, replete with unexpected twists and turns, the “shooting” dialogue is clear and precise (Filatova, 1981: 4-5).

In general, other Italian films of “political cinema” also deserved a positive assessment from the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen*: *Metello* (Italy, 1969) (Anninsky, 1972: 16), *The Day of the Owl* (*Il Giorno della civetta*. Italy-France, 1967) (Zorkaya, 1968), *In the name of the Italian people* (*In nome del popolo italiano*. Italy, 1971) (Dularidze, 1974: 4), *Respectable People* (*Gente di rispetto*. Italy, 1975) (Bachelis, 1978: 4), *San Babila Square: 20 hours* (*San Babila ore 20 un delitto inutile*. Italy, 1976) (Mikhalkovich, 1977: 4-5), *The Case of Matei* (*Il caso Mattei*. Italy, 1971) (Prozhogin, 1972: 17), *The Investigation into the case of a citizen beyond all suspicion* (*Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*. Italy, 1969) (Bogemsky, 1971: 16-17),

In particular, it was emphasized that the drama *The Case of Matei* shows how Mattei's activities restore the forces of international and internal Italian reaction against him. The invisible, but clearly tangible ring of intrigues weaving against him shrinks, and now comes the tragic denouement. ... And yet the end of the film is optimistic. Mattei, of course, was not a revolutionary, but the cause for which he fought and died was of progressive importance for Italy (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

Referring to the analysis of the sharply political film *The Investigation into the case of a citizen beyond all suspicion*, film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) wrote that the irony of the film is that the killer is the guardian of law and order himself, who, it turns out, can commit crimes with impunity. It is on this paradox that Petri's caustic, sarcastic film is built – a satirical “black” comedy, a grotesque, a political pamphlet – all together, and at the same time a work very strictly sustained in style, thorough and at the same time ironic through and through, sometimes mischievous “psychoanalysis” and ridiculed not any particular case, but the entire system of police arbitrariness and power in a bourgeois state, which gives rise to this arbitrariness, without law, violence. ... Gian Maria Volonté plays the role of a murderous policeman... Volonté is the No. 1 actor of the left political cinema and of the entire Italian cinema. ... This role is one of his brightest. The furious, sharply ironic style of play and the temperament of this great actor appeared in all its splendor (Bogemsky, 1971: 16-17).

Film critic E. Bauman (1932–2017) wrote that director Francesco Rosi (1922–2015), skillfully filming the book *Christ Stopped at Eboli* by Carlo Levi (*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*. Italy-France, 1979), addresses the acute socio-political issues reflected in the mirror of history. This picture, amazing in its picturesqueness, subtle psychologism, deeply lyrical intonation, is filled with a truly civic temperament in exposing fascism, in sympathy for the peasant poor, in protest against the lack of spiritual freedom. ... Rosie's folk fresco is a broad social canvas that continues the best traditions of Italian progressive cinema (Bauman, 1979: 6).

Film historian S. Freilich (1920–2005) (Freilich 1980: 17) and journalist A. Makarov (Makarov 1982: 8) also praised the film.

Film critic G. Bogemsky was delighted with the picture Brothers Taviani's *Father-master* (*Padre padrone*. Italy, 1977): the realities of folk life, the very theme of the film emphasizes the directors' loyalty to the traditions of neo-realism as much as possible in the 70s. But along with this, there are many signs of a new political cinema, its expressive means and language. For example, irony is the favorite weapon of the Taviani brothers... *Father-Master* is, in a sense, a return to the roots and at the same time the ideological and artistic pinnacle of their work. This is a significant contribution to the meridionalist culture of Italy, a passionate and sincere protest against age-old poverty (Bogemsky, 1980: 4-5).

But the literary scholar and film critic L. Anninsky (1934–2019) took a rather harsh view of *Metello* (Italy, 1969), which was praised by the Italian press, reproaching it for “calligraphy” and excessive picturesqueness. He admitted that the film is politically sharp enough, and the class battles of the workers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are shown here in all their clarity.

L. Anninsky wrote that faithfulness to social problems, which returns the viewer to the simple and clear truth of neo-realism, to the truth of social struggle and civic activism, is the very thing that has been picked up by the Italian critics who contrast *Metello* with commercial cinematography as an example of meaningful art. “This aspect is undoubtedly decisive for the success of *Metello* on the Italian screen... However, it is interesting to consider *Metello* from another perspective – from the point of view of the stylistic quest of contemporary cinema. ... While watching (with one half of my mind) the development of the social plot, with the other half I was catching the picturesque associations: the misty river reminded me of Claude Monet, the bright

yellow colors of the theater performance – of Toulouse-Lautrec, the group of strikers on the sun-drenched grass of the park – of Renoir. ... As for *Metello* himself... I can't name any associations, but I must confess: here one can admire the plastic sculpture of the face, the "completeness of the image" in general, but by no means feel that intense will, that fiery fire, that obsession with an idea which is typical for a working man in the cinema of the 20s. These traits are still present in such "political films" of modern Italy as *Sacco e Vanzetti* by G. Montaldo. Such "political" films of modern Italy as G. Montaldo's and F. Rosi's *People Against* (*Uomini contro*. Italy-Yugoslavia, 1970) – their harsh black-and-white (here L. Anninsky makes a mistake: both these films are in color) "chronicle" stylistics are still closer to the material... The director's solution of the film is built upon counterpoint: on the one hand – the passionate class psychology of an Italian worker-socialist of the early century; on the other – subtle tints and colors, the play of sunlight on the hero's face, the velvet depths of the gardens, the merry illumination of the market. ... How do I feel about the film *Metello*? It's complicated. It's a beautiful film. Beautiful red and black, cream and yellow, green and sunny. One word: Italy. But, apparently, I am used to a different language in depicting the class battles that defined the face of our century" (Anninsky, 1972: 16).

Of course, the *Soviet Screen*, as before, could not ignore the works of Federico Fellini (1920–1993), Luchino Visconti (1906–1976) and Michelangelo Antonioni (1912–2007).

So the film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) in his positive review wrote that the film by Federico Fellini, *Amarcord* (Italy-France, 1973) has the character of a film-memories: its director draws material not from historical chronicles and documents and not from the boiling cauldron of life around, but from the pantry of his memory. ... In Fellini's film, everything is dominated by irony and humor. And the humor here is mischievous, biting. ... The anti-fascist theme sounded in Fellini in this film for the first time, and with the same passion with which he used to sound anti-clerical motives. So, the desire for simplicity, humanity, love of life, a truly popular atmosphere, an anti-fascist spirit – all this allows us to say that *Amarcord*, despite the "familiarity" of the material, represents a new stage in Fellini's work, *Roma* (Italy-France, 1972) (Bogemsky, 1974: 14).

The film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) also highly appreciated another outstanding work of F. Fellini – a philosophical parable *Orchestra Rehearsal* (*Prova d'orchestra*. Italy-Germany, 1978), in which a troupe of musicians is considered as a model of society. As always with Fellini, there is no predeterminedness and schematism here. He sees the problems of democracy and power in the relations between the musicians and the conductor. Relations between the musicians themselves are also complex: by analyzing them, the director finds out the causes of fear and confusion that haunt people and prevent them from uniting their efforts. ... In "Orchestra Rehearsal" the grin of fascism flashed as a modern danger: the film is a warning to humanity and a desire to instill a sense of shame and guilt for passivity (Freilich, 1980: 16-17).

Another story F. Fellini's *And the Ship Sails On* (*E la nave va*. Italy-France, 1983) was regarded by G. Bogemsky as a metaphor for today's Western world, and partly for the work of the most outstanding artist, one of the patriarchs of Italian cinema. ... Fellini's anxiety for his creative destiny, for the destiny of art, inseparably merged with anxiety for the destiny of the world, for the very existence of mankind (Bogemsky, 1985: 20-21).

To the drama by L. Visconti *Conversation Piece* (*Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*. Italy-France, 1974) *Soviet Screen* returned twice (Prozhogin, 1975: 15; Zorkaya, 1978: 4-5).

And here the film critic N. Zorkaya (1924–2006) was right: made by a seriously ill and doomed to death master, *Gruppo di famiglia*... once again and, perhaps, with some kind of young frankness and clarity unprecedented before, demonstrated an amazing artistic phenomenon, called "Visconti cinematography" ... And the later creation of Luchino Visconti *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*, with all its deep personality, with open and ringing confession, bears the stamp of actual topicality, is full of echoes of the real political struggle unfolding in Italian society. The place of the intellectual in today's Western life, in its complex, vague, disturbing spiritual situation – so a little straightforward, but still exactly, the theme of the film should have been defined. ... the deep moralism of the artist gives rise in the *Gruppo di famiglia*... to the theme of a person's responsibility to his neighbor. The spectacle, recreated more with pain and sorrow than with the pathos of denunciation, calls for a more complex analysis of the reasons, one of which for Visconti is the position of non-intervention, egoistic peace detached from the world with its passions and sufferings (Zorkaya, 1978: 4-5).

But the drama of M. Antonioni *Profession: reporter* (*Professione: reporter*. Italy-France-USA-Spain, 1975) *Soviet Screen* even devoted four articles (Chernenko, 1976: 16-17; Nedelin, 1977; Prozhogin, 1975: 14-15; Svobodin, 1975: 16-17).

But if the film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) appreciated this work of Antonioni very highly, then his colleague M. Chernenko was more restrained: “I am not one of her admirers, the picture seems to me mannered, pretentious, and in its moral message it’s simply not new, but it’s not a matter of personal opinion, but that one of the largest masters of world cinema in his conversation about the human soul is trying to get out from a closed world to a wide expanse of political, social, ideological conditions and motivations” (Chernenko, 1976: 16-17).

Quite a mixed critic Valery Geydeko (1940–1979) reacted to the adaptation of Shakespeare's famous tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Franco Zeffirelli (1923–2019). On the one hand, he noted that the picture is far from theatrical, the film is dynamic, expressive, made in an emphatically modern manner. But on the other hand, some scenes shot in a fairly familiar and traditional manner, there are episodes that are probably obviously uninteresting to the director and therefore executed superficially and hastily. ... Zeffirelli consciously sharpens some motives, consciously, sometimes defiantly muffles and omits others. And it is precisely from here that some of the costs and losses of this original, polemically sharp, talented and bright film (Geydeko, 1972: 15).

But about the film by Ettore Scola *We All Loved Each Other So Much* (*C'eravamo tanto amati*. Italy, 1974) from three reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* (Bozhovich, 1977: 5; Demin, 1975: 8-9; Prozhogin, 1975: 14) there were essentially no disagreements. All of them noted the high artistic level taken in this picture by its authors.

So film critic V. Bozhovich (1932–2001) wrote about this uncommon in its artistic merits picture like this: cinematic analogies, quotations and half-quotes that fill the film by Ettore Scola are not at all the amusements of a film library scholar, they have a dual function: on the one hand, they convey the atmosphere of the time, and on the other, they confirm the connection of the film with the best traditions of Italian cinema. Following the example of his famous predecessors, director Ettore Scola strives to tell the bitter truth about the state of Italian society. But his film is warmed by sympathy for a person, and it cannot be called pessimistic in any way (Bozhovich, 1977: 5).

With a certain touch of excessive politicization, but on the whole quite adequately assessed on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* film critic G. Bogemsky another outstanding film – *The Desert of the Tartars* (*Il Deserto dei Tartari*. Italy-France-Germany, 1976) by Valerio Zurlini (1926–1982): the director managed to achieve complete identity between the literary fundamental principle and the film, which truly complement each other, managed to convey the gloomy, oppressive atmosphere of the novel. ... in philosophical metaphors and fantastic images, the anti-militarist spirit, the condemnation of military psychosis, is clearly read. It is precisely this that primarily attracts Zurlini's film, a parable film that sounds so modern today, when certain circles in the West are again whipping up military hysteria. ... So, what we have here is a film that, although not easy to perceive, reveals to an attentive viewer all the richness of its content, standing out among others for its genuine artistry and high professionalism (Bogemsky, 1980: 4-5).

The attention of the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* was also attracted by films dedicated to two outstanding Italian scientists: *Galileo Galilei* (Italy-Bulgaria, 1968) (Vasilyeva, 1970: 15) and *Giordano Bruno* (Italy-France, 1973) (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17; Chudov, 1974: 17).

But if in a review about Galileo Galilei emphasized that an interesting general idea of the film in the incarnation significantly suffers from excessive rationalism, from straightforwardness in this analysis of vices and evil (Vasilyeva, 1970: 15), that the film *Giordano Bruno* was perceived absolutely positively, as it is permeated with a fierce passion for the struggle of reason, knowledge, striving for the happiness of people on earth, against religious dogmas and canons, against the cold cruelty and arbitrariness of the Vatican – the eternal guardian of the inviolability of social foundations, the power of the most conservative forces (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

Among the Italian melodramas, the *Soviet Screen* undoubtedly preferred the work of the classics of neorealism: “Italian director Vittorio de Sica told a wonderful love story in the film *A Brief Vacation* (*Una breve vacanza*. Italy-Spain, 1973) ... De Sica and screenwriter Cesare Zavattini... made the film sincere and pure. ... The film lacks the austerity, harshness and uncompromising nature of De Sica and Zavattini's early work. This work is brilliant, artistic, but it has in common with neorealist films the truth of life, especially in the depiction of the life of a working family. *A Brief Vacation* is like a song with a well-known melody, but performed masterfully, with impeccable artistic taste” (Chertok, 1974: 18).

Analyzing another Italian melodrama – *Crime in the name of love* (*Delitto d'amore*. Italy, 1974) – film critic V. Demin (1937–1993) presented to the readers of the magazine her formula for success: Comencini openly emulates another, state-of-the-art superfilm model, combining sensitivity to the changing tastes of the public at once with strong, unchanging techniques that always and everywhere guarantee success. This model, this latest formula, was promulgated by the Americans in *Love Story*. The formula is simple, like all ingenious. It is necessary that there be two young people who romantically love each other, pure in heart and ardent in soul, and that there is a callous world around them that does not understand them. The hero's parents are infected with the selfishness of the rich, the heroine's relatives are endowed with the pride of the poor. There is no one to rely on, and inexperienced, touching heroes must endure in complete solitude, one after another, the terrible blows of fate, up to the fatal, inevitable illness of the girl ... Comencini produced the most social, most "neorealistic" version of the *Love story* formula. ... Everything is filmed soundly, solidly, diligently, and only genre fluctuations confuse – from the impassive fixation of an uncombed nature to openly farcical, conditional tones. ... The shot puts an end to this film, which at first had all the features of a social study, but in the main it remained a melodrama (Demin, 1976: 4-5).

Even stricter approached another melodrama – *The True Story of the Lady with the Camellias* (*La Storia vera della signora delle camelie*. Italy-France-Germany, 1981) – film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013), so, in his opinion, the picture as a whole is so aestheticized, that in the exhausting slowness of her action, there was almost no room left for a glimpse of a living feeling, and even the blood clots that the unfortunate heroine coughed up from her destroyed lungs looked here simply as bright spots of a colorful ornament (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

From the rather variegated spectrum of Italian comedies, the *Soviet Screen* singled out Pietro Germi's *Serafino* (Italy-France, 1968), awarded at the Moscow Film Festival (Bogemsky, 1972: 14-15; Galanov, 1969).

Noting in his review that this work by Germi is rough, harsh, sometimes imbued with too salty peasant jokes, G. Bogemsky was convinced that the film distribution, which we so often and quite reasonably criticize for releasing second-rate foreign films on the screen, acquiring *Serafino*, he did the right thing. The film is not as simple as it might seem at first glance. ... *Serafino* is a cheerful, cheerful comedy, full of folk humor, although it sometimes involves bitterness and mockery inherent in the talent of this director. ... The anti-bourgeoisness of *Serafino*, which laughed evilly at the money-grubbers and philistines, was not forgiven by the entire bourgeois press of Italy... However, a wide audience in Italy accepted the picture. ... Against the background of the gloomy movies that filled the Western screen, imbued with aching melancholy and despair or inhuman cruelty, murders and robberies, cheerful, the spiky, life-loving *Serafino* is by no means a negative phenomenon: it is controversial, one may like it or not, but it does its job of ridiculing bourgeois morality and mores. ... "Is it so scary that our children and grandchildren will see this comedy, as one of the readers worries about this? If they are 16 years old, if their family and school have taught them to look at life, sweeping aside everything superficial and dirty, instilled in them a sense of justice and morality, introduced them to the classics of world literature, then, I think, nothing terrible will happen" (Bogemsky, 1972: 14-15).

Approximately in the same vein, he assessed the comedy *Romanzo popolare* (Italy-France, 1974) film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999): the film is filled to the brim with coarse folk humor, splashing health, everyday scenes and scenes of love, taking place both in reality and in the imagination. Here are Italian folk types, here is the director's emphasized – even too emphasized – attention to the everyday joys of ordinary people, to the everyday events of their lives. ... *Romanzo popolare* is in many ways an epigone of the neo-realist films of the fifties (Svobodin, 1975: 17).

Quite benevolently were reviewed in the *Soviet Screen* and two very popular comedies in the Soviet film distribution with the participation of Adriano Celentano: *Bluff* (*Bluff storia di truffe e di imbroglioni*. Italy, 1975) (Bogemsky, 1979: 12-13) and *The Taming of the Scoundrel* (*Is Bisbetico domato*. Italy, 1980) (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

Film critic G. Bogemsky wrote that in *Bluff* directed by Sergio Corbucci (1926–1990) showed himself to be a master of bluffing: the lack of originality, fresh, thought, he replaces with varying success with a cascade of tricks, an inexhaustible fiction for more and more fraudulent tricks, deceptions of all calibers... It's all about the performers of the roles: here the director of *Bluff* has real, genuine trump cards, or rather, aces... These aces are Anthony Quinn and Adriano Celentano. ... Adriano Celentano attracts, although, as always, he hardly sings in the film. He is amazingly

plastic, his movements, gestures, grimaces are unexpected, unusual, conveying as well as his jokes, all the peculiarity of his own system of humor. This "system" is a complex mixture of folk, purely Roman humor with classical clowning and modern, slightly absurd humor in the spirit of the so-called "English"... We must also admit that Corbucci leads his rogue narrative with a certain amount of irony, with a smile, with a certain self-exclusion, sometimes even a little parody. The stylization of the film of the '30s also gives the film a certain conventionality. And what also saves *Bluff* is its supple, genuinely cinematic, old comic pace. What more could one demand from a blatantly entertaining movie?" (Bogemsky, 1979: 12-13).

And film critic V. Dmitriev rightly considered that in *The Taming of the Scoundrel* (*Is Bisbetico domato*. Italy, 1980) the unpretentious story was played very well, with a precise sense of the genre and with maximum inner freedom played by Adriano Celentano and Ornella Muti (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

There were noticeably fewer "progressive political films" in France in the 1970s than in Italy, but the *Soviet Screen* tried to support this particular direction in cinema on its pages.

So the drama of Bernard Paul *Time to Live* (*Le Temps de vivre*. France, 1968) was noted in the magazine as the beginning of a truly social cinema in France, as one of the first films about the working class, about the problems associated with the position of the proletariat during scientific and technological revolution in the West (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

For the same reasons, Michel Drash's film *Élise or Real Life* (*Élise ou la vraie vie*. France-Algeria, 1970), dedicated to the exploitation of Arab workers in France, the solidarity of ordinary people in the struggle for equality and human dignity (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

Moreover, the assumption was even made (reckless, as it turned out very soon) that these few shoots of a truly democratic French culture will merge in the near future with a "workers' cinema" created by the working people themselves – about their own problems and for themselves ... To be perhaps this is the key to the future of French cinema (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

From the same ideologized position films such as *Assassination/The French Conspiracy* (*L'Attentat*. France-Italy-FRG, 1972) were evaluated in the *Soviet Screen*, as he told about the massacre of the reaction over one of the leaders of the national liberation movement (Bozhovich, 1979: 18; Braginsky, 1973: 13) and *Judge Fayard Called the Sheriff* (*Le Juge Fayard dit Le Shériff*. France, 1977) (Bozhovich, 1979: 18).

Film critic G. Dolmatovskaya (1939–2021) noted that not being free from some clichés of the political-detective genre, Yves Boisset made a film that is extremely important for today's French cinema, a film imbued with the director's political temperament (Dolmatovskaya, 1973: 12-13).

And film critic V. Bozhovich (1932–2021) wrote that bourgeois society and the state are nothing but a system of organized crime – Yves Boisset returns to this idea again in the film *Judge Fayard Called the Sheriff*... The picture of bourgeois society painted by Yves Boisset in the film is quite real (Bozhovich, 1979: 18).

Other socio-critical films were also highly appreciated in the *Soviet Screen*: *Professional risk* (*Les risques du métier*. France, 1967) (Shcherbakov, 1969), *Direct report on death/Death Watch* (*La Mort en direct*. France-Germany, 1980) (Dolmatovskaya, 1981: 16; Razlogov, 1981: 18), *Order and security in the world* (*L'Ordre et la securite du monde*. France-USA, 1978) (Razlogov, 1981: 18), *The Prize of Peril* (*Le Prix du danger*. France, 1983) (Shitova, 1984: 10-11).

At the same time, it was emphasized that political analysis ... is much less accurate in the French painting by Laurent Heynemann *Birgit Haas Must Be Killed* (*Il faut tuer Birgitt Haas*. France-Germany, 1981), but and here the story of the romantic passion of an unemployed man who was tried to be used to kill a terrorist objectionable to the authorities, and his potential victim contains a call for the victory of sincere human feelings over ruthless criminal machinations (Razlogov, 1983: 14-15). But gradually the film deviates from the rails of a political detective story, as it seemed at the beginning... worse, but that the actions and feelings of the characters are more and more decisively ruled by melodrama (Plakhov, 1985: 10).

Approximately from the same position, the film critic V. Dmitriev assessed the "revealing potential" of the film *A Thousand Billion Dollars* (*Mille milliards de dollars*. France, 1982), since this picture for all the nobility of the original message cannot be compared with the best of these films, replacing artistic research with straightforwardness and dissolving revealing pathos in the intricacies of a criminal plot that begins to live its own life according to the laws of the genre (Dmitriev, 1984: 10-11).

Analyzing the film André Cayatte *Where There's Smoke (Il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu*. France-Italy, 1972; in the Soviet film distribution: *Blackmail*), film critic G. Dolmatovskaya complained about the simplified interpretation of the revealing subject: "This film leaves a feeling of some awkwardness, as if the motif of a frivolous song was inserted into a classical symphony. This happens because the director, apparently, fears that the social line of the film in its purest form will not attract the viewer. And now the picture is "enriched" with many juicy details. Beautiful details, admiring exquisite interiors, luxurious swimming pools... in a number of scenes become self-sufficient, and, naturally, the civic pathos of the film is muffled" (Dolmatovskaya, 1973: 12-13).

With respect to film adaptations of French literary classics *The Thibault Family (Les Thibault*. France, 1973), *Les Misérables* (France, 1972) the tone of the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen*, as it happened more than once before, was devoid of politicization (Krechetova, 1975: 6; Mikhalkovich, 1974: 4-5).

During the analyzed period, several notable French and Swiss francophone films appeared on the Soviet screen, addressed to modern everyday topics, with vivid female images played by Annie Girardot, Natalie Bay and Isabelle Huppert.

In particular, film critic G. Dolmatovskaya enthusiastically praised the film Jean-Pierre Blanc's *The Old Maid (La Vieille fille*. France-Italy, 1971) where the brilliant Annie Girardot plays the role of an unusual after recent spectacular and eccentric roles. ... The charm of this simple film lies in humanity, subtle, clever humor (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

And the film critic K. Razlogov (1946–2021) wrote very warmly about the *Week of Vacation (Une semaine de vacances*. France, 1980) that one of the strongest aspects of B. Tavernier's talent is respect for his characters, the accuracy and depth of understanding of the nature of the character and the individuality of the actor playing this or that role (Razlogov, 1983: 18-19), the desire for realism also distinguishes the *Week of Vacation* is the story of a Lyon teacher who suddenly doubted her vocation. Again, the focus of the author's view is a way out of the rut, an internal crisis, but finding resolution not in a crime or passive surrender, but in a return to normal life and to one's work, which is so necessary for oneself and others (Razlogov, 1981: 18).

The journalist A. Makarov, in our opinion, very correctly noted that the film *The Lacemaker (La Dentellière*. France-Switzerland, 1976) seems to be a *Boring story* in Chekhov's merciless sense of the word. That is, tragically terrible and at the same time ordinary and familiar, sometimes even not attracting special attention to itself. ... Ordinary for everyone, except for the one whose heart breaks (Makarov, 1985: 10).

Film critic V. Ivanova (1937–2008) wrote that the movies of Claude Goretta (1929–2019) – *The Lacemaker (La Dentellière*. France-Switzerland, 1976) and *The Girl from Lorraine (La Provinciale*. France-Switzerland, 1980) – captivate with noble restraint in expressing feelings, which might seem to someone a fashionable detachment, if not for the general intensity of the artistic temperament. Two perhaps the most popular actresses in France now – Isabelle Huppert and Natalie Bay – embody, as it were, opposite facets of the character of a modern young French woman. The property that unites them and, perhaps, the only one they have in common is "provincialism", a clear rejection of the spirit and essence of the modern capitalist city with its crazy rhythm, cynical pursuit of success and prosperity, mania of irrepressible consumption (Ivanova, 1985: 22).

The more politicized film critic N. Savitsky believed that *The Girl from Lorraine (La Provinciale*. France-Switzerland, 1980) provides an example of a deep and artistically convincing study of acute social problems of the modern West – unemployment, alienation of a person in a capitalist society, all-pervading amorality. ... Claude Goretta, an honest and observant artist, speaks from the screen calmly, without affectation. But under this apparent dispassion, the unimagined drama of a typical fate and true circumstances inherent in a privately owned society clearly emerges: an image of a cold and ruthless world, indifferent to human suffering and hostile to natural human aspirations, emerges (Savitsky, 1985: 18-19).

An unexpectedly sharp reception was received on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* by the philosophical parable of the classic of French cinema art Alain Resnais *My American Uncle (Mon oncle d'Amérique*. France, 1980), whose undisguised irony and parody for some reason were not noticed by reviewers.

Film expert V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) wrote that he was upset by this picture, where an extremely gifted artist, blindly trusting a controversial biological theory, maximally schematized

the complex relationship between human character, the possibility of an act and the world around (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

Film critic R. Yurenev (1912–2002) echoed him: direct transfer of conclusions from rats to people seemed to me too straightforward. ... To be honest, all this is done chaotically and boringly. ... And the episodes where the director put rat heads on the characters - masks, thereby resorting to direct analogies between rats and people, seemed not only vulgar, but also tasteless (Yurenev, 1984: 8-9).

As we have already mentioned, the *Soviet Screen* extremely rarely deployed polemics about Western films on its pages.

But in the mid-1980s, Ettore Scola's outstanding film *Le Bal* (France-Italy-Algeria, 1983) received this kind of controversy.

First, the magazine published a review of the famous writer Y. Nagibin (1920–1994), where he spoke of *Le Bal* sharply negatively: “The film, where not a word is spoken, but only dancing and gesticulating, where beautiful music sounds, deeply disappointed me. I did not find almost any innovations in it and very little simply human worse – it seemed to me professionally sloppy, hastily worked out, thoughtless and, most importantly, not experienced by its main creator – the director, although he has a big name. The device on which the film is based and which for some reason shocked my acquaintances so much has a long beard. Alas, this is not at all, not at all new: to show the movement of time, the change of eras through music, dance and simple pantomime. ... For the grotesque, there is not enough wit for satire – evil humor. It turned out to be a humorous spectacle, sluggish and cumbersome” (Nagibin, 1985: 18-19).

This was followed by a review by musicologist I. Taimanov, who wrote that Y. Nagibin's negative approach to *Le Bal* raises serious objections, and then dwelled in detail on the artistic merits of this film, its historical and cinematic references: “For Ettore Scola, *Le Bal* is not only the history of France, but also the history of French, more broadly, of world cinema. Or more precisely: *Le Bal* for him is the history of France through the prism of cinematic history. This important layer of the picture was completely bypassed by Nagibin. But to fully feel the film of Scola (and its poetics, we object to the reviewer, just requires empathy) can only be plunged after the director into the world of his memories – the world of cinema. ... if we agree that any work of art experienced and suffered by a talented artist is already a miracle, then *Le Bal* can certainly claim such an assessment” (Taimanov, 1986: 19).

As before, *Soviet Screen* published articles about French entertainment films.

Here the literary critic and film critic L. Anninsky (1934–2019), reviewing *Black Tulip* (*La Tulipe Noire*. France-Italy-Spain, 1964) Christian-Jacques (1904–1994), wrote that the authors of the film either try to seriously hurt important ideas along the way for entertainment, or, on the contrary, use these ideas for entertainment purposes, which, of course, is no better. ... As for the dances and final kisses with which the main characters (he and she) crown their activities near the gallows, this, in my opinion, is not just bad taste. ... It is a pity that Tulip has faded, blackened. He did not become sinister, of course, although he was put on a frightening black mask. Alas, we are not afraid. We are sorry (Anninsky, 1970: 15).

Film critic L. Dularidze reviewed even more “sour”, indeed, a weak film *The Royal Chase* (*La Chasse royale*. France-Czechoslovakia, 1969): Francois Leterrier is a student of Bresson, but, alas, a student who inherited little from him. In Leterrier's paintings ... the psychologism and philosophy of Bresson's work acquire the character of pretentiousness and idle talk. In *The Royal Chase*, claims are multiple (Dularidze, 1972: 19).

A sharp rejection of the reviewer of the *Soviet Screen* was caused by Georges Lautner's film *Cop or Hood* (*Flic ou voyou*. France, 1978): “For all his supermanship, the hero Belmondo is extremely uncharismatic. ... I don't want to “cheer” for Stan Borowitz. Everything human seems to be alien to him. Well, except for the love of his daughter. But this line is perceived as alien, unable to convince and truly excite. However, leaving the hall, you will think about the ease with which the guardians of the law turn into gangsters. Such “reincarnations” are apparently inherent in a sick society in which heroes like Stan Borowitz and his opponents thrive” (Kovshov, 1981: 4-5).

Another film by Georges Lautner (1926–2013) – *No Problems* (*Pas de problème!* France, 1975) did not please the *Soviet Screen*. Film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) wrote about him like this: “At the risk of remaining old-fashioned, the author of these lines must confess that playing with a corpse did not seem very appetizing to him” (Svobodin, 1975: 17).

Film critic G. Dolmatovskaya did not like the musical comedy *All are Stars* (*Tous vedettes!* France, 1980) by Michel Lang (1939–2014), because in it, according to the reviewer, humor recedes before the pressure of vulgarity (Dolmatovskaya, 1981 : 16).

More benevolent, but generally rather skeptical, were the *Soviet Screen* reviews of other well-known French comedies.

Film critic I. Lishchinsky wrote that in *The Big Runaround* (*La Grande vadrouille*. France-Great Britain, 1966) “the plot, and the whole atmosphere of what is happening, in fact, does not bother the director much. War and occupation, English pilots and German SS men – all this is quite arbitrary ... At the same time, you cannot refuse the director either in ingenuity or in professionalism. He knows his business. Ouri is staging, so to speak, a “pure” comedy, a comedy without any extraneous impurities ... But still, as you can see, a comedy that is too pure every now and then turns out to be a comedy on idle. Something is missing. From time to time you catch yourself thinking that you are both funny and bored at the same time” (Lishchinsky, 1971: 16-17).

It would seem infunny film adaptation of the play by Claude Magnier *Oscar* (France, 1967), director Édouard Molinaro (1928–2013) made full use of the comedic gift of Louis de Funes (1914–1983). The audience in the cinemas (as well as at the *The Big Runaround*) laughed with might and main, but the harsh Soviet film critics reproached the director that in the movie *Oscar*, in a work of banal and low taste, he surrounds his manufacturer with some kind of egg-shaped chairs, fantastic floor lamps, fills the house with ceramics, abstract structures, trellises, aquariums and an aviary with pheasants. ... Acting so much and so often, Louis de Funes, of course, hardly develops his already established image (Lishchinsky, 1972: 18-19).

Well, the reviews of I. Lishchinsky have long been forgotten, but the audience continues to laugh in the vastness of these funny and temperamental comedies...

But here Pierre Étaix's comedy *Big Love* (*Le Grand amour*. France, 1968) was praised by the *Soviet Screen*. Film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) wrote that this movie at first should produce a strange impression of slowness of pace, poverty of events, lack of adventure. ... If you look at an object for a long time, it may seem ridiculous. This is how Pierre Étaix uses a movie lens. ... Étaix in his film not only tells love stories, but shares some impressions about this love. He shares some of his observations and counts on the viewer's powers of observation. Monsieur Pierre is very cautious, thoughtfulness is his friend. Thought must become the friend of the spectator. Monsieur Pierre was in no hurry to go anywhere, and yet he made me laugh (Bogomolov, 1972: 15).

The parody comedy *Blond Man with One Black Shoe* (*Le Grand blond avec une chaussure noire*. France, 1972), popular with Soviet viewers, was also received favorably by the *Soviet Screen*. Film critic T. Khlopyankina (1937–1993) wrote that *Blond Man with One Black Shoe* is one of the films that critics are much more willing to watch than discuss. The goals set by the authors in this case are so obvious and this comedy looks so fun that there is no need to think anything. ... Isn't this why you appreciate the moments when the movement along the rut of the plot suddenly stops and you suddenly get a chance to be surprised anew that the fantastic situation of the film is ordinary, almost ordinary, because it is born of reality, and the people brought together on the screen by the conventional plot live this way in reality and consider this monstrous life quite normal (Khlopyankina, 1975: 9).

However, the continuation of this comedy – *The Return of the Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe* (*Le Retour du grand blond*. France, 1974) – was received much colder in the *Soviet Screen*: film critics wrote that the material looks already worked out (Dolmatovskaya, 1975: 18-19), without revealing anything fundamentally new to us, neither in life nor in art (Bozhovich, 1976: 4).

Édouard Molinaro's comedy *A Pain in the A...* (*L'Emmerdeur*. France-Italy, 1973) was clearly more fortunate in the *Soviet Screen*: the actors make this film a comedy of characters. Their choice is paradoxical, but accurate... Before us is not an eccentricity of the “de-Funesian” sense, but a story dressed in the form of a comedy about a kind man who did not allow a murder to be committed (Sergeev, 1975: 2-3).

Film critic V. Gulchenko (1944–2018) gave a fair assessment to the comedy *The Toy* (*Le Jouet*. France, 1976), emphasizing that Pierre Richard discovered there a rare and deep comedic gift – a fusion of the lyrical and the eccentric, declaring himself as a screen successor of the culture that shows the world as the protagonist of the “little man”, not skimping on all sorts of paradoxes and deliberate absurdity of situations. ... The creators of the film *The Toy* are concerned that everything human in a person does not die out (Gulchenko, 1978. 11: 4-5).

Following its rule, the *Soviet Screen* also supported politically biased films in Spanish cinema. So film critic E. Bauman (1932–2017) wrote that, with the picture *Seven Days in January* (*7 días de enero*. Spain-France, 1979) is an example of militant, incendiary journalism that passionately invades reality. The name of its author, the master of Spanish cinema, Juan Antonio Bardem, is well known to Soviet viewers... The director seeks to involve the viewer in violent socio-political battles. The plot of the picture, made with documentary persuasiveness and fiery pathos, is based on a real event: the villainous murder of a group of lawyers who fought for the rights of workers' trade unions, a murder committed in January 1977 by savage terrorists and directed by the supporters of the fallen Francoist regime. The film, merciless in exposing neo-fascist groups, conquers with its energy and pathos in depicting the masses (Bauman, 1979: 5).

Film expert V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) noted that behind the Spanish film *The Nest* (*El Nido*. Spain-Argentina, 1980) there are long-standing cultural traditions of the country and which cannot be unambiguously explained. It can be read simply as a strange and sad story about the friendship-love of an old man and a teenage girl, and as a metaphor for post-Franco Spain, and as an anti-feminist work that sees in the heroine of the film some kind of modern Lady Macbeth, ready to commit a crime in order to achieve her goals. In *The Nest*, there are preconditions for each of these interpretations. But the main thing in it is still human readiness for help, imprudent and doomed to failure, quixoticism lost in advance, which cannot bring visible results (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

But entertainment films of Spanish production *Soviet Screen* liked to ridicule.

So the film critic A. Zorky (1935–2006) published an ironic review of the musical melodrama, which had a huge audience success in the USSR *Let Them Talk* (*Digan lo que digan*. Spain-Argentina, 1967), simulating two opposite opinions: "Like" and "Dislike": Like: the romantic plot of the film. It is played out on great passions, which we, perhaps, lack in our current life. ... This is a film about songs and love, suffering and fidelity. Dislikes: The fact that the authors tell this hilarious story without any humor. ... It is clear that the authors needed the entire plot to connect purely pop numbers. But why, in general, pleasant, expressive singing should be wrapped in a heap of platitudes and utter fiction? (Zorky, 1970: 13).

Just as ironically finished with the Spanish melodrama *Magical Love* (*El amor brujo*. Spain, 1967) film critic F. Frantsuzov: Instead of the beauty of dances, the annoying flickering of the Navahs, humor gave way to the ominous aspirations of cheap romance, lightness and grace were replaced by the heavy pace of "realistic" passions ... Everything is serious, and everything is fake (Frantsuzov, 1971: 12).

The Spanish musical melodrama *My Last Tango* (*Mi último tango*. Spain, 1960) was released in Soviet distribution with a big delay: 11 years after its creation. But this did not in the least prevent more than thirty dozen spectators from watching and rewatching it in cinema halls.

But the Soviet film press reacted to this film very dismissively.

Film expert Victor Demin (1937–1993) wrote in the *Soviet Screen* that Sara Montiel is a good singer, and Maurice Ronet is a first-class theater and cinema actor. But the more they try to put on a cloak of plausibility over their experiences, the clearer it becomes that we are facing mannequins. ... Watching all this is very embarrassing. The laws of the genre make it difficult to believe that this is serious, that the happy ending will not take place. And if so, then the heartbreaking suffering of the heroine, who allegedly became blind and allegedly drove her lover away from herself, looks like blasphemous antics. So at the carnival, well-fed and happy people put on freak masks ... There are things that are unworthy to play with. In recent years, domestic cinema has not spoiled us with musical films. Naturally, the emptiness yearns to be filled, and some viewers, in the simplicity of their hearts, may mistake a speculative and untalented craft for "living life." That would be the most distressing thing (Demin, 1972: 19).

Victor Demin also tried to explain the reasons for the popularity of *My Last Tango*: Such films have their own charm, their own fabulous, ingenuous world, with songs, jokes, flowers and applause, with picturesque poverty and even more picturesque luxury, with tears in the penultimate part and with an indispensable final kiss on the so-called diaphragm. It's easy to say, "That doesn't happen in real life." And if the film is staged not according to life, but according to a dream? ... "Make us beautiful!" ... Life flies, anxious, difficult, stormy, to match the age. But another viewer still prefers to go to the cinema oasis. Everything is there as you want, there is the sea, the sun, youth, love, there a charming artist looks with a bewitching look and gently kisses – if not you, but your full-fledged representative Maurice Ronet, who perfectly showed what you

would like to be. It is a painkiller film, a healing film, and even with the guarantee of the most charming reveries (Demin 1972: 19).

Despite this, three years later, another article appeared in the *Soviet Screen*, designed to educate the audience in “good taste” and reveal the mechanisms of the mass success of such melodramas.

Film critic Y. Smelkov (1934–1996) wrote that it is very easy to be ironic about films like *The Queen of Chanticleer* (*La Reina del Chantecler*. Spain, 1962), *Let Them Talk* (*Digan lo que digan*. Spain-Argentina, 1967) and *Yesenia* (Mexico, 1971), and it is very easy to explain that [these movies] are lifeless, artistically primitive and made from ready-made stamps. But the irony seems inappropriate to me, because the tears in the cinema were sincere ...

Lifeless? And if a person wants it to be not like in life, but “like in a movie”? ... It is not difficult and even pleasant to prove the lack of content and artistic inconsistency of such paintings, but the trouble is that it can be proved only to those who themselves think so. ...

Therefore, it makes sense to take out, so to speak, the conversation about the level and quality of such films and try to look at them from the point of view of box office success and the reasons for it.

At first glance, these reasons are simple and understandable. He loves her, she loves him, there are obstacles on the way to their happiness... At the same time, one film containing all these indispensable elements is a noisy and stormy success, and the other is not exactly a failure, but collects, say, several hundred films in Moscow. Thousands of viewers, while the first – millions. There are, therefore, some qualities, seasonings to the mandatory set, without which everything depreciates.

It seems to me that there are two such qualities: the absolute seriousness of intonation and the equally absolute isolation, the tightness of the plot conflict, the absence of any correlation with real life. ... – no motivations, but a lot of passions. And the viewer's empathy arises, since the film appeals to simple and eternal human emotions, and it is quite clear who to sympathize with and who to resent. The simplicity of the plot and the seriousness of intonation open up scope for emotional perception; they go to such films “to worry” and after the session they say: “Good movie – I cried to my heart's content.” ...

To reinforce these considerations, we can cite an example – the rolling fate of the film *The Married Couple of Year Two* (*Les Maries De L'An Deux*. France-Italy-Romania, 1972). It did not work out as well as that of *Yesenia*, the box office success turned out to be smaller and short-lived. But what actors: Belmondo, Brassier, what fights, what chases! It was irony, in my opinion...

I am not against melodrama films or entertainment films, I am against them being recognized as the only ones worthy of attention and entitled to the title of works of art. Let there be a movie in which everything is “like in a movie”, but it hardly makes sense to fence it off from real cinema, which tells deeply and truthfully about real, unimagined life! (Smelkov, 1975: 8-9).

However, the majority of viewers either did not read such critical articles or did not pay any attention to them. And they got into such melodramas exactly what the Soviet film press so stubbornly criticized.

For the analysis of West German films in the *Soviet Screen* were chosen, first of all, “progressive works”.

For example, the drama of R.W. Fassbinder *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (*Die Ehe der Maria Braun*. FRG, 1978) (Krasnova, 1981: 16; Zorkaya, 1983: 8-9).

Film critic G. Krasnova wrote that this was “not only and not so much a study of the psychology of a female entrepreneur ... Fassbinder sought to reflect some of the patterns of the first post-war decade of the country, which went down in history under the name of the “Adenauer economic miracle.” And if in this picture Fassbinder managed to reach broad social generalizations, then, first of all, because he was interested not only in the heroine herself with her ambitions, but in Maria Braun as a typical character of the era” (Krasnova, 1981: 16).

Film critic N. Zorkaya (1924–2006) echoed her: Before us is the story of another female biography, mutilated by fascism, another victim of the war. ... Fassbinder's cinematic heritage is uneven, along with deep, serious, socially significant films, there were also trick films, paradox films. *The Marriage of Maria Brown* is one of the best works of the talented cinematographer (Zorkaya, 1983: 8-9).

In a review of the drama *Mephisto* (Hungary-Austria-FRG, 1981), film critic V. Dmitriev wrote that this story of a talented actor who sold his soul to the devil and became the official artist

of Nazi Germany, despite the fact that many of the realities of Nazi law and order were deeply disgusting, has a documentary basis ... But it's not about the authenticity of the source material. This picture is a merciless study of the fate of a person who does not have a moral core, who put his professional development at the forefront and naively believed that he could deceive the state machine of the Third Reich (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

And the film critic A. Troshin (1942–2008) reminded the readers of the *Soviet Screen* that this socio-political and moral problems, tightly tied into a tragic knot, the temperamental, masterfully staged, filmed and played picture of István Szabó was provided, of course, by the primary source. Klaus Mann's novel shows how far an artist's willingness to pay any price for success, willingness for the sake of success can take him! – sell your soul to the devil (Troshin, 1982: 14-15).

An in-depth analysis of another notable film – *Fedora* (FRG-France, 1978) – film critic and historian V. Dmitriev suggested in the *Soviet Screen: Sunset Boulevard* (USA, 1950), if its design is slightly coarsened, is built on a simple antithesis of winning Hollywood – losing artists. In *Fedora*, the situation becomes more complicated: the concrete mechanism of Hollywood is taken out of action, the artist (in the film, a famous movie star) gets the right to independently play out his fate and try to win it, but, and this is the main bitter conclusion of the picture, it turns out that you can win only in the traditional Hollywood manner – by renouncing oneself, on someone else's happiness and on "foreign bones." ... Maybe here is a memory of unproduced films, of failures, of working for the needs of the public, of endless self-repetitions, of the fear of new decisions, of his own great talent, largely wasted on trifles, – after all, all this was in the life of the director, and you can't get away from it anywhere. Here analysis gives way to conjecture, but one does not want to abandon it. It seems that there is some truth in it (Dmitriev, 1981: 5).

It is curious that, proceeding from the considerations of "progressive criticism of bourgeois society", *Soviet Screen* could present even weak films from an artistic point of view on its pages worthy of the attention of readers.

For example, here is the text published on the pages of the magazine about the film *The Mystery of the Honeymoon Motel* (*Meat/Fleisch*. FRG, 1979): Unheard of, fantastic experiments that turn people into robots, into an instrument of someone else's will! This is done by "specialists" in the secret laboratories of the CIA and the Pentagon. Psychotropic, biological, narcotic drugs were tested on unsuspecting Americans – students, athletes, military personnel, hospital patients – without their knowledge, without their consent. ... In [the film] it is precisely the power of the underground business that is shown – whether it trades in people, pornography or drugs. It shows the impotence of the victim, and the collapse of hopes for the law, for the forces of order. ... In the finale of the painting *Mystery of the Honeymoon Motel* with its dizzying flashing in the order of an intricate plot kaleidoscope, the sense of proportion betrayed the authors. This, in my opinion, from distrust of the audience, from the indestructible desire for proven commercial stereotypes: not sparing blood, breaking through to a happy ending. However, all these flaws are excusable, because the picture, made in accordance with all the laws of the adventure genre, turned out to be generally emotionally strong and, most importantly, true, accurate in displaying the signs of the "American way of life" (Dunaev, 1983: 17).

Film critic V. Revich (1929–1997) tried to isolate a serious political meaning even in the parody film *Agent reluctantly* (*Es Muß nicht immer kaviar sein/Diesmal muß es Kaviar sein/Top secret – C'est pas toujours du caviar*. Germany–France, 1961): Comedies are: a) serious works of art, b) cute little things, and c) not cute little things. Between these three types there are hybrid phenomena, lyrical comedy, suppose. The West German movie *Agent involuntarily* combines all three points at once. ... The theme of the lack of rights of a small person who accidentally fell into the game of alien and most often hostile "higher" forces is not resolved in the picture too deeply, but it is there. However, the authors of the film somewhat complicated the matter. ... Liven did not complete a single task of any intelligence, which also required considerable abilities and efforts from him. Indeed, a very small step is needed for him to turn into a real positive hero, even into an anti-fascist fighter (the film takes place in 1939–1945). But the authors did not take this step. ... No, he will not be burdened with heavy thoughts, the most natural comedy awaits him, at times almost eccentric. ... However, the authors seem to have overdone their diligence. At times, not only the endless leapfrog of intelligence and counterintelligence bothers. Interest in the film itself is blunted (Revich, 1970: 14-15).

Among the films of the Scandinavian cinematography, the *Soviet Screen* has traditionally positively singled out the works of the most famous masters. For example, *Autumn Sonata* (*Höstsonaten*. Sweden, 1978) by Ingmar Bergman (Rubanova, 1982: 9).

However, to pass by the popular music movie *ABBA* (*ABBA: The Movie*. Sweden-Australia, 1977) the magazine also could not get through, noting that the music of this quartet attracted millions of fans in many countries with its undeniable merits. It is melodic, singsong, rich in various moods from playfully cheerful to romantic nostalgic. There is in it captivating lyricism, sweet sincerity, sincerity of intonation. The secret of success lies in the unique coherence of the four, their perfected vocal technique. ... The filmmakers deliberately idealize their characters, wrapping them in a veil of musical selflessness, omitting those details and worldly touches that might seem prosaic. Such idealization and mythologization are generally characteristic of the wave of musical films about pop and disco stars (Sulkin, 1981: 20).

Reviews of Western films that were not shown in the Soviet film distribution in the period of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s

Of course, the range of Western films, for one reason or another, which did not reach the Soviet mass audience, was much wider than the film distribution. And here the editors of the magazine year by year chose anti-communist and anti-Soviet films as examples for criticism of bourgeois society and imperialism, as well as films that “glorify the American military” and “whitewash the Nazis”.

So film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) did not get tired of repeating that for a long time now, Hollywood has been conducting in films a crude and persistent operation to reassess the history of the Second World War, rehabilitating the Wehrmacht for this purpose, placing the blame for the well-known facts of crimes against humanity solely on the SS and Gestapo. ... Hitler's warriors are shown as honest and noble soldiers; they tortured people, killed and robbed only supposedly SS men. But no less cynical are some European films, especially those in which an attempt is made, if not to shift, then to share the blame for all the horrors of the occupation between the conquerors and the conquered. Cynicism was most often covered up by the demands for “psychologization” of films about the Resistance, the need to “expand the view” of the past, and similar quite respectable words (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

Particularly negative (and we must say, from a political point of view, quite natural) reaction was caused by the *Soviet Screen* Michael Cimino's drama *The Deer Hunter* (USA-UK, 1978).

Film critic R. Yurenev (1912–2002) was convinced that this work is a vivid example of a reactionary, slanderous film is *The Deer Hunter* – an American film directed by Michael Cimino. ... Let's leave aside the mysterious circumstance that the heroes of this film are Russian by origin. ... Apparently, all this was needed to demonstrate the notorious “secrets of the Slavic soul.” Or to explain the characters' innate, so to speak, interest in Russian roulette. ... The just war waged by the heroic people against the French and American imperialists for forty years is shown [in this film] only in a monstrous episode where a Vietnamese blows up Vietnamese women and children. The Vietnamese woman is shown as a prostitute who is not ashamed of her own child. ... And most importantly, the heroic Vietnamese warriors, whose courage and military prowess the Americans were given to experience to their fullest, are shown as savages torturing prisoners! And the justice of the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese, who defended their homeland, freedom, unity. But in *The Deer Hunter* it's the other way around. The Vietnamese are shown as fanatics, executioners, and the American interventionists are shown as innocent victims and invincible supermen. What kind of pacifism is this! This is undisguised racism, an insulting slander against a people who have won worldwide sympathy for their heroism! (Yurenev, 1979: 19).

No less negative reaction was caused by the *Soviet Screen* drama *Nicholas and Alexandra* (Great Britain, 1971), which tells about Emperor Nicholas II and his family.

In full accordance with the then Soviet textbooks, journalist V. Vasilets wrote that it is best to watch this film without knowing Russian history at all. Maybe then the story of two loving spouses and their sick heir would be able to arouse sympathy. One could believe in the anger of the tsar when he learns about “Bloody Sunday” and asks his prime minister who gave the order to shoot. It turns out no one. Just one soldier was frightened by the approaching crowd and fired, and after him others began to shoot. The story in *Nicholas and Alexandra* is distorted not out of ignorance, but for a specific purpose, and the last, deliberately detailed scene of the execution of the royal family puts an end to it: look, they say, look what lovely, innocently suffering people were killed by an inhuman revolution. This scene is not at least in contrast to the drama of Bloody Sunday and

many other tragedies of Nicholas's Russia, for which this mild and sweet – according to the film – man was nicknamed "bloody" by the people (Vasilets, 1972: 18).

The magazine's reaction to another Western film on the Russian theme, *Great Catherine* (UK, 1968), was rather ironic: The film was based on a little-known play by Bernard Shaw, and the authors managed to free themselves from all the advantages of the original. ... Going to the film, I tried to imagine in advance that "Russian cranberry" that almost inevitably accompanies such works, and I guessed something. Of course, there is a lot of snow (artificial, really), and all Russians without exception drink vodka from decanters. However, I underestimated the imagination of the director and his consultants. It turns out that in the Winter Palace, apart from the Empress and the courtiers, there lived... chickens, pigs and piglets; Potemkin had not shaved for months... dirty Cossacks in shaggy fur masks danced at balls... It is a shame about the actors who have to make faces in this vulgar, chauvinistic film, whose release coincided not by chance with the unfriendly campaign against our country unleashed recently in England (Khodjaev, 1969: 15).

The Soviet Screen also reacted quite actively to the youth theme that was gaining momentum in the West by the early 1970s (Sobolev, 1972: 16-17; Yakovlev, 1970: 14), while positively emphasizing that "with the desire of the authors to uncover the social roots that push the youth of America to violence and cruelty", gives these films a special relevance (Yakovlev, 1970: 14).

However, R. Sobolev wrote that the film *The Born Losers* (USA, 1967) by Tom Laughlin (1931–2013) (in the credits he is under the pseudonym T.S. Frank), tells about a youth motorcycle gang "wild angels", does not possess any special artistic merits ... Here the truth is cleverly mixed with lies. ... The film, in fact, shows such vile things that if it had not been filmed by the Americans, one would think: this is an anti-American work. After all, if what is shown in the film can happen in any society, then it means that this is already a stinking corpse, and not a society. ... [But everything] ends happily. There was a man in a frightened town who was not afraid of the "angels". It is characteristic that the "green beret" is presented in the role of this "hero", which, remembering the training received in Vietnam, picked up a carbine and ... opened fire on the gang. ... The film ... contains two conflicting thoughts. On the one hand, he condemns violence, on the other hand, he shows the hero of yesterday's rapist who returned from Vietnam ... Some publicists argue that the "angels" are potential fascists. Director Roger Corman depicted them in the film *The Wild Angels* (USA, 1966) (where the name came from) – with swastikas, iron crosses and other attributes of stormtroopers (Sobolev, 1972: 16-17).

At the same time, the same R. Sobolev noted that director Dennis Hopper (1936–2010) in *Easy Rider* (USA, 1969) showed another version of motorized vagrants – it's just young people who refused to live in American society, who left on their motorcycles about a kind of hermitage and social non-existence. They are not enemies or friends of modern America, they are "strangers", but true Americans, intuitively feeling their denial of the "American paradise", are really hunting for them. ... They shoot, despite the fact that one of them has a star-striped US flag on his chest ... in any case, the "angels" are evidence of the deepest crisis in American society (Sobolev, 1972: 16-17).

R. Sobolev argued that about the youth actively participating in political life, Hollywood is diligently silent. Only strata of declassed youth, by no means the most important in the social system, were shown in Hollywood films due, obviously, to their exoticism. This is, first of all, hippies, whose protest took the ugly, in fact, suicidal form of leaving society for the world of voluntary begging and drug hallucinations. Such a protest does not threaten the system in any way (Sobolev, 1972: 16-17).

However, film critic E. Kartseva (1928–2002) believed that We saw those who protest in *Punishment Park* (USA, 1971) by Peter Watkins... The picture of the massacre of dissidents painted here is so reminiscent of today's America that many viewers mistook the director's fantasy for a documentary. Indeed, only the punishment park is fantastic in the picture – this prototype of the concentration camp of the future. Everything else is a true reflection of US life in the early seventies. In the same way, participants of all kinds of progressive movements are seized there, they are judged in the same way, they are thrown into prisons in the same way, from which many no longer come out. What is projected on the screen here is what worries and torments Americans today (Kartseva, 8: 16-17).

The Soviet Screen wrote very approvingly about the drama *Rage* (USA, 1972) by George Scott (1927–1999), where the protagonist's combat with the monstrous machine of militarism aroused sympathy (Alexandrov, 1974: 16-17).

And, of course, the magazine wrote very warmly (Moikin, 1974: 20; Sobolev, 1976: 18-19) about Sydney Pollack's drama *The Way We Were* (USA, 1973), where the main characters – american communists – were shown very sympathetically.

R. Sobolev did not hide his joy because in this film among the complex everyday situations and vicissitudes caused by McCarthyism, the idea of communists as people of the highest moral standards is clearly drawn. In this film, one of the most exciting was the scene in which a person who has achieved material well-being, but mentally broken during the time of the “witch hunt”, betrayed the ideals of youth, realizes that he was happy only in that short period when friends were standing next to him were communists (Sobolev, 1976: 18-19).

R. Sobolev was pleased and (as it turned out, very quickly stalled) a new and interesting and characteristic phenomenon in the West – the beginning of filming by the workers themselves, supported by many major masters of professional cinema, including one of the founders of Italian neorealism, C. Zavattini, an outstanding French documentary filmmaker C. Marker and others. Film groups of workers shoot films about the political and economic struggle of the proletariat, about the activities of party and trade union activists. ... It is also clear that these films are hushed up by the bourgeois film press. However, for example, Zavattini believes that today, when the culture of the ruling class is collapsing, a culture that is still resisting, using even its teeth”, the only alternative to bourgeois art is folk art, in particular workers' cinema (Sobolev, 1976: 18-19).

A positive reaction from the film critic R. Yurenev caused serious, realistic, socially deep film *Bound for Glory* (USA, 1976) directed by Hal Ashby (1929–1988), where the traditions of American realistic cinema are clearly visible. The film critic saw in this film the features of socialist realism: truthfulness, nationality, political sharpness (Yurenev, 1978: 6-7).

Criticism of the capitalist society, to one degree or another seen in the films *Scarecrow* (USA, 1973), *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (USA, 1972), *The Great Gatsby* (USA, 1974), *Hammett* (USA, 1982), *Sleeper* (USA, 1973), etc., were approved by other reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* (Chudov, 1975: 17; Moikin, 1974: 18; Pogozheva, 1973: 16-17; Razlogov, 1983: 14-15).

Journalist V. Chudov wrote, for example, that let the picture of Woody Allen *Sleeper* (USA, 1973) does not rise to expose the foundations of a 'sick society', but Allen's diagnosis of this society is accurate and uncompromising (Chudov, 1975: 17).

The *Soviet Screen* devoted two articles (Kapralov 1972: 15-16; Vasilets 1972: 18) to Stanley Kubrick's much acclaimed film *A Clockwork Orange* (UK-USA, 1971), which mercilessly explored the nature of violence.

V. Vasilets believed that the author of the novel based on which the film is based believes that evil cannot be corrected with good. But Kubrick claims with his film that nothing can fix it at all. Such a view of a person is incredibly gloomy. This is a cry of horror (Vasilets, 1972: 18).

Film critic G. Kapralov (1921–2010) agreed with this in principle. He noted that although *A Clockwork Orange* (UK-USA, 1971) shone with a rainbow of colors, rumbled with bravura music and went at a frantic pace. He parodied, sneered, prophesied, predicting to the modern capitalist world a further escalation of violence, immorality, permissiveness, its creator wandered in the darkness of modern bourgeois so-called civilization and saw no way out of its gloomy dead ends (Kapralov, 1972: 15-16).

Recognizing the high artistic level of the film F.F. Coppola's *Apocalypse now* (USA, 1979), reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* assessed its anti-war pathos ambiguously.

So the poet R. Rozhdestvensky (1932–1994) wrote that this is a powerful and violent film. The cruel madness and some kind of planned senselessness of the actions of the Americans in the Vietnam War are shown here so accurately, summarized so passionately that it becomes chilly and disturbing. You watch two-thirds of the film excitedly, in one breath. But the last third of it is clearly worse. The film stops moving, stops living. There is a feeling of conventionality, a hoarse false note begins to sound. On this very note the film ends (Rozhdestvensky, 1979: 21).

And the film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) emphasized that the title of the picture corresponds to its style: the American aggression in Vietnam is shown as a tragedy of the human spirit, as the destruction of morality. ... How does Coppola achieve this? He tames horror, aestheticizing it. But this, in my opinion, is the contradiction of the picture: Coppola aestheticizes the evil he opposes. The social conflict is resolved aesthetically, and therefore the artist passes by the tragedy of the Vietnamese people. But what and how is shown on the screen – the dehumanization of the aggressor, his moral collapse, inspires respect for the picture, made with the latest cinematic technology (Freilikh, 1980: 16).

On the pages of *Soviet Screen*, the film critic G. Kapralov rather superficially assessed B. Fosse's masterpiece *Cabaret* (USA, 1971) (this musical came out in the Soviet distribution only in the era of "perestroika"). Kapralov, arguing that this film, created in the variety-spectacular style, entertained the viewer with the love affairs of a frivolous cabaret singer, through the "prism" of life which, according to the authors, supposedly viewed the years when fascism came to power in Germany. But, in fact, a few cleverly presented slips and dashing danced and sung numbers by Liza Minnelli made up the content of this feature film (Kapralov, 1972: 15-16).

Reviewers of such notable films as *The Hireling* (UK, 1973), *The Triple Echo* (UK, 1972), *The Romantic Englishwoman* (UK-France, 1975), *Airport-75* (USA, 1974), *The Godfather, Part II* (USA, 1974), *Nickelodeon* (USA, 1976), *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (UK, 1982), *The Return of the Soldier* (UK, 1982), *Heat and Dust* (UK, 1983), *The King of Comedy* (USA, 1983), *One from the Heart* (USA, 1982), *The Outsiders* (USA, 1983) (Bauman, 1983: 1-2; Chernenko, 1976: 16-17; Ivanova, 1975: 16-17; Khlopyankina, 1973: 4-5; 1977: 1-2; Razlogov, 1983: 14-15; Svobodin, 1975: 16-17 and others).

In particular, film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) wrote that monotony, repetitiveness, a sense of emptiness, meaninglessness – this whole complex of states of a person in the Western world became the subject of analysis in Joseph Losey's *The Romantic Englishwoman...* The film is internally ironic, the acting is full of psychological paradoxes (Svobodin, 1975: 16-17).

Film critic V. Ivanova (1937–2008) noted that *The Romantic Englishwoman* is a very English film, that is, everything in it is as ironic as it is bitter, as frivolous as it is wise. ... Everything is very vague, unfinished, unsaid, everything in English is restrained and ironic. And... so endlessly dramatic. Because there is all this, it all lives in the souls of people – and the cage, and nightmares, and the bitterness of resentment, and the tragedy of misunderstanding. And a fierce desire for protest – spontaneous, senseless, desperate. And all these abysses are not at all terrible, it would seem, the abysses of a comfortable world (Ivanova, 1975: 16-17).

And the film critic and screenwriter T. Khlopyankina (1937–1993) was, of course, right that the picture of Peter Bogdanovich *Nickelodeon* (USA, 1976) does not at all aim to document the history of the formation of cinematography. Rather, it is a stylization, a sly fantasy on the theme of silent films. All the heroes of *Nickelodeon* live in the rhythm of silent comic movies. Endless falls, slaps in the face follow one after another, creating on the screen an atmosphere of funny and absurd fuss, which is now so striking to us when we watch old films (Khlopyankina, 1977: 1-2).

And here is another cinephilic declaration of love to Hollywood cinema – F. Coppola's melodrama *One from the Heart* (USA, 1982) film critic K. Razlogov, alas, did not like it: "An attempt to restore traditions on a new basis of video technology characterizes Coppola's painting *One from the Heart*. The combination of a banal tear-jerking plot with the refined formalism of electronic special effects and deliberately archaic pavilion shooting led to the appearance of a picture that is strange, aesthetically interesting in its own way, but essentially stillborn" (Razlogov, 1983: 14-15).

Was negatively evaluated in the *Soviet Screen* and *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (UK, 1971) by Roman Polanski, as the bloody tragedy of Shakespeare became bloody in the literal sense of the word. And yet the film leaves the viewer cold. Spectacularly impressive scenes have become an end in themselves, overshadowed the characters. The screen shows a terrible story rather than a great human tragedy – the tragedy of passions and delusions (Vasilets, 1972: 18).

The frankly entertaining part of Hollywood and British film production has traditionally been viewed by the magazine in a largely negative way.

Thus, a review of Hollywood science fiction films emphasized their stampede from reality, or rather, from the bleeding American reality, with its rampant crime and rampant devastating inflation, with rising unemployment and exacerbation of class and racial contradictions. In a word, this is a traditional for Hollywood immersion in the world of dreams, illusions, carried out today with the involvement of the broadest technical innovations. ... Modern Hollywood science fiction presents the past, present and future in the form of fairy tales, legends, comics. Old fairy tales, well known to everyone and having a happy ending, are dressed up in futurological attire. ... *Superman* does not know defeat and is called to personify the "American way of life". The spectators are hammered into the idea that the American superman "can do anything" (Romanov, 1982: 18).

The same negative attitude was applied to such sensational films as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (USA, 1981), *Clash of the Titans* (USA, 1981), *Star Wars, Episode IV – A New Hope* (USA, 1977), *Excalibur* (USA-UK, 1981), etc: Hollywood has nothing to say to American moviegoers, the only

thing left to do is to dazzle their imagination with intricate stunts, the splendor of 'special effects' and the opportunity to escape for at least two hours into a world of illusion and fairy tale from the bleak reality, from the restless contemporary issues (Romanov, 1982: 18).

Film critic M. Chernenko (1931–2004) reviewed S. Spielberg's film *Jaws* (USA, 1975) quite ironically (Chernenko, 1976: 16-17).

The films *Cat People* (USA, 1982), *Class of 1984* (Canada, 1982), and even *Blade Runner* (USA, 1982), which has now become a classic of the sci-fi genre, received negative attention from the *Soviet Screen* (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

In particular, film critic O. Sulkin wrote that in the "cold phantasmagoria" of *Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott could not overcome "and the taste of commercialism" and "relishes the bloodbath perpetrated by his hero, without stinting on disgusting details" (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Much warmer O. Sulkin spoke about *ET* (*The Extra-Terrestrial*. USA, 1982) "The Western viewer is tired of the massive attack on his mind with the help of unbridled violence, pornography, pathology. Isn't this the reason for the audience success of the next movie of the American director Steven Spielberg – *ET*? In the story of the touching friendship between Los Angeles kids and a harmless creature with sad eyes that has strayed from the starship, there is a clear echo of the ethics of the famous Disney cartoons. Children, as it were, cleanse civilization from the filth of cynicism and fear. ... The author of recent box office record holders ... Spielberg knows how to choose a "sure" plot. Intuition did not disappoint this time either. *ET* beats all previously registered attendance figures" (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Of course, the Italian cinema of the 1970s gave *Soviet Screen* much more reason to write about "progressive political" and anti-bourgeois cinema.

The film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) once again reminded readers that the militant tradition of neo-realism lives on and develops in Italian cinema. There, in the atmosphere of the intensification of neo-fascism, documentaries and historical films were given priority... Using film archives and actual events, they remind us of the past and passionately urge people to be vigilant. ... The debate on the screen about the Resistance continues. The decisive role in the defeat of fascism was played by the Soviet Army. ... The significance of the Resistance, among other things, is in establishing the people as the driving force of history, in establishing the organizing role of communist and workers' parties (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

In an article with the characteristic title "Tent on the square. The working class on the screen of Italy" film critic G. Bogemsky, that although there are a lot of costs on the way of the Italian "workers' cinema", such films as *The Working Class Goes to Paradise* (*La Classe operaia va in paradiso*. Italy, 1971) by Elio Petri (1929–1982), *The Seduction of Mimi* (*Mimi metallurgico ferito nell'onore*. Italy, 1972) by Lina Wertmüller (1928–2021), *Trevico-Torino* (Italy, 1973) by Ettore Scola (1931–2016), documentaries shot by Ugo Grigoretti (1930–2019) and others brave, unusual for Western art, films about workers are made under difficult, sometimes dramatic conditions. All the more valuable are these attempts to "master" the acute working-class subject matter, to reveal it in the complex context of contemporary social reality. And with each film, "workers' cinema" becomes an increasingly important aspect of the progressive direction of Italian political cinema (Bogemsky, 1973: 14-15).

True, some of the "progressive and anti-bourgeois" Italian films about the working class were cautiously criticized in the *Soviet Screen*. This applied, for example, to the movies *The Secret of N.P.* (*NP il segreto*. Italy, 1971) by Silvano Agosti and *The Working Class Goes to Paradise* (*La Classe operaia va in paradiso*. Italy, 1971) by Elio Petri.

For example, the journalist N. Prozhogin (1928-2012) believed that E. Petri's film far from everything can be agreed, it rather one-sidedly touches on the problems of the labor movement, but he touches on the burning issues of Italian reality, shows the contradictions in modern the labor movement of the capitalist countries and does not hide its difficulties, in particular, both the threat of reformism of the social democratic persuasion, and the objectively provocative role of leftist groups. From this followed a very optimistic (but in reality not justified) conclusion that, "returning to the themes dictated by life itself, Italian cinema again rises, as it did in the first post-war years, on fertile ground (Prozhogin, 1972: 20).

The Abuse of Power (*Abuso di potere*. Italy-France-FRG, 1972), quite traditional for Italian political detectives of the 1970s, told the story of a young police commissioner who "too" conscientiously undertook the investigation of the circumstances of the murder committed by the mafia entrusted to him, however, N. Prozhogin emphasized that using the example of Badzoni's

film, one can trace the danger that constantly threatens art with a commercial approach to it on the part of producers (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

But the strongest satire on the morals of the upper strata of Italian society seemed to N. Prozhogin of the film *Respectable Rome* (*Roma bene*. Italy-France-FRG, 1971) by Carlo Lizzani (1922–2013). He also praised the movies *Let me introduce myself: Rocco Palaleo* (*Permette? Rocco Papaleo*. Italy, 1971) and *A beautiful, honest immigrant from Australia would like to marry a pure girl, my compatriot*, (*Bello onesto emigrato Australia sposerebbe compaesana illibata*. Italy-Australia, 1971) because they told about the sad life of Italian emigrants in the USA and Australia (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

Film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) spoke warmly about another Italian film, where the characters were revealed in the unusual conditions of a foreign country – *I will put things in order in America and return* (*Sistemo l'America e torno*. Italy, 1974) (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

But in the political position of the authors of the film *Lucky Luciano* (Italy-France-USA, 1973), G. Bogemsky discovered a significant flaw, since the documentary style in itself does not yet fully provide either artistic or historical truth. Francesco Rosi, focusing on the machinations of American politicians who use the mafia for their own purposes, wittingly or unwittingly makes Luciano, the king of drugs, almost a victim of "big politics" (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

Another picture of the cruel world of mafia and gangsters *The Valachi Papers* (*Cosa Nostra/Le dossier Valachi*. Italy-France, 1972) was accused in the *Soviet Screen* of promoting violence, because murder and violence are the essence of the film (Moikin, 1973).

Among the Italian films about the war, the *Soviet Screen* responded positively to the drama *Men Against...* (*Uomini contro*. Italy-Yugoslavia, 1970) (Lipkov, 1971: 15). But about the film *Mussolini: the last act* (*Mussolini: ultimo atto*. Italy, 1974), film critic G. Bogemsky responded rather negatively, noting that in the performance of Rod Steiger, the Duce is a sick, crushed man – a victim of his own ambition, past mistakes, betrayal of his accomplices and, in general, historically unconvincing (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

G. Bogemsky also reacted ambiguously to two dramas about the life of prominent scientists – E. Galois – *I have no time* (*Non ho tempo*. Italy, 1973) by Ansano Giannarelli (1933–2011) and *Socrates* (Italy-France-Spain, 1971) by Roberto Rossellini (1906–1977).

He reproached the film *I have no time* for an avalanche of endless monologues, popular lectures, because of which for all the nobility of the idea, the film becomes boring and tedious (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17). And in the work of R. Rossellini he was completely disappointed: Perhaps, in short-term television programs, "in portions", the viewer can withstand the popular film presentation of the teachings of Socrates, his disputes with Plato and his students, numerous historical comments. But right away, in a two-hour film, emphatically devoid of entertainment, entertainment, all this is perceived very difficult (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

But, of course, the *Soviet Screen* could not pass by the works of Federico Fellini (1920–1993), Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975), brothers Paolo and Vittorio Taviani and Bernardo Bertolucci (1941–2018).

Journalist N. Prozhogin wrote, for example, that in *Rome* (*Roma*. Italy-France, 1972) by Federico Fellini the hand of a great master is visible. There are no loose scenes, sloppy shots. Everything in it is carefully thought out, weighed. Even the deliberate, like an obsessive dream, the protractedness of individual episodes and the fragmentation of the film with a sudden, seemingly without apparent connection, change of scenes showing Rome either forty years ago or today, have their own semantic load. The author clearly wants to convince the audience that, no matter how the appearance of the city and even the political system of the country changes – from fascism to parliamentary democracy, Rome remains the same – both comic and tragic gathering, in fact, disunited people, carriers of voluptuousness and insane carelessness, leading them to inevitable death. This theme of Rome as "eternal Babylon" is not new in Fellini's work. ... But ... [Fellini's] look at Rome, life is ultimately dictated by the confusion of an intellectual who is in a deep spiritual crisis, who received a Catholic upbringing and lost faith in his former ideals" (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

Thus, according to the article by N. Prozhogin, one could get a complete picture of the reasons why *Rome*, as well as *The Sweet Life* (*La Dolce vita*. Italy-France, 1960); *Satyricon* (Italy-France, 1969); *Casanova* (Italy-USA, 1976) and *City of Women* (*La Città delle donne*. Italy-France, 1980) never came out in Soviet distribution.

N. Prozhogin criticized Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Decameron* (*Il Decameron*. Italy-France, 1971) even more sharply: "Having preserved the plot outline of several novels by Boccaccio, Pasolini

distorted their spirit. Instead of the coarsely sensual, but joyfully provocative atmosphere of the Renaissance, he created an extremely monotonous and dull world of adultery. ... Perhaps Pasolini needed the Decameron only as a pretext for expressing his views not only on the Renaissance. But in this case, his film should evoke an even stronger objection" (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

The works of the Taviani brothers in the *Soviet Screen* were also evaluated ambiguously.

If the film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) believed that the philosophical drama *Alonzanfan!* (Italy, 1973) breathes with "deepest pessimism" (Svobodin, 1975: 17), and film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) upset *The Meadow (Il prato)* (Italy, 1979) with its unbridled "literaryness" of the plot, the conventionality of the characters and the incomprehensibility of the final conclusions (Dmitriev, 1981: 16–17), then film critic O. Sulkin argued that "the excellently filmed folk drama *The Night of San Lorenzo (La Notte di San Lorenzo)* (Italy, 1982), epic in form, saturated with folklore symbols, plastically expressive, is worthy of the highest praise: "With all artistic passion, the Taviani brothers assert: fascism is the worst of evils, the tragedy of the nation, which cannot be forgotten, cannot be forgiven, justified "because of prescription" (Sulkin, 1983: 16–17).

Reviewing drama Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Moon (La Luna)* (Italy, 1979), film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) wrote that by design, this is an interesting picture. The young man is a drug addict, his mother cures him with her love. Love conquers illnesses and fears, it would be wonderful if love itself was not a disease – mother and son find themselves in physical proximity. The Oedipus complex in the most fatal way destroys the poetry in the picture, there are beautiful scenes in it, it is with great regret that we have to talk about it as a whole (Freilikh, 1980: 17).

And the shocking *Salomè* (Italy, 1972) by Carmelo Bene (1937–2002) aroused complete indignation among film critic G. Kapralov (1921–2010): "The Italian snobbish artist, esthete writer, formalist director, enjoyed that that in his disgusting, pretentious film *Salomè* for almost half an hour he showed footage in which the heroine, with thin fingers, literally skinned King Herod with her thin fingers... It is difficult for anyone who was not at this session in the Venetian Cinema Palace to imagine that happened in the hall. Some fans of sadism tried to applaud, but hundreds of spectators truly screamed in indignation and disgust, demanding to stop showing the picture. After the session, Carmelo Bene appeared, accompanied by two policemen guarding him" (Kapralov, 1972: 15–16).

Film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) ambiguously approached Ettore Scola's drama *Passion for Love (Passione d'amore)* (Italy-France, 1981), which told about human deformity, and not moral, but physical, not hidden, but put on display occupying a significant portion of the screen space. The principle of extreme shock impact ..., of course, is debatable and cannot be considered the only one in the case of cinematography addressing such anomalies, but the moral purity [of the film], which calls for compassion in relation to any representative of the human race, cannot be questioned (Dmitriev, 1981 : 16–17).

The tragicomedy *The Smell of a Woman (Profumo di donna)* (Italy, 1974) by Dino Risi (1916–2008), film critic A. Svobodin was reminded of the theater of the era of guest performers. In the middle is a big artist – the rest is not so important! But Gassman once again showed that he was worthy of this position. His playing is so rich in psychological details, nuances, details, his vigilantly. The awn is so great, and the temperament is so volcanic, that the role must be recognized as exemplary. The problems of the film, although not new and somewhat academic, are serious. The collapse of a "strong personality", the drama of individualism (Svobodin, 1975: 16).

And with regard to the tragicomedy *Traffic Jam (L'Ingorgo – Una storia impossibile)* (Italy-France-FRG-Spain, 1979) by Luigi Comencini (1916–2007), film critic V. Shitova (1927–2002) noted that the final of Comencini's shallow but likable movie lays claim to an apocalyptic universality: life has stopped, it has bottled up itself, there is nowhere to expect deliverance. ... The symbolism of the finale is straightforward, but it would be unfair to deny it expressiveness (Shitova, 1979: 16–17).

So, the *Soviet Screen* of the 1970s evaluated Italian cinema mainly according to strictly adhered to Marxist ideological principles, on the basis of which even the films of such recognized masters as Federico Fellini were criticized.

But two sensational films of the 1970s were subjected to the most fierce criticism in the magazine: *The Night Porter (Il portiere di notte)* (Italy-France, 1973) by Liliana Cavani (this movie got into Soviet distribution only in the era of the late "perestroika") and a film adaptation of the novel by M. Bulgakov *The Master and Margarita*.

The high intensity and reasons for the condemnation of *The Night Porter* in the Soviet press can be judged by a very characteristic article in this sense by film critic R. Sobolev: As for *The Night Porter*, no lengthy comment is needed here. Cavani, a young Italian who has not experienced the horrors of war, told reporters that she decided to make a "truthful film" after learning that some female prisoners in the concentration camps were in touch with the guards and still wear flowers on their graves. Her "truth" is that the young guard, unrestrained by anything, willingly shows his worst instincts towards the prisoners. But this, according to Cavani, is only one side of the "truth". The other is that the girl-prisoner who became his mistress also throws back moral prohibitions and does not lag behind her SS man in anything. The film argues that a person will certainly become a beast, if he can become one. To prove this thesis, Cavani creates an extremely dirty, erotic film. Youth does not free a person from the need to think sensibly. Cavani could have judged what Hitler's concentration camps were by the documents, by the number of millions of people who died in them, and not by the stories of SS mistresses. Therefore, she was offended in vain when one of the spectators – former prisoners – spat in her face – that was criticism, of course, extraordinary, but completely deserved by Cavani (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

D. Pisarevsky (1912–1990), editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen*, was no less harsh in relation to the film *The Master and Margarita* (*Il Maestro e Margherita*. Italy-Yugoslavia, 1972):

"The author turned out to be very far from understanding the humanistic idea of the work and the era depicted in it, and not only did not bring the novel closer to millions of moviegoers, but gave a false impression of it. ... the novel became just an excuse to slander about literary Moscow. ... From the very first shots, when a wooden, snow-covered, similar to a wretched village Moscow appears, it turns out that the talented writing of M. Bulgakov has been replaced by popular prints in the style of a la russe. ... However, it's not just about the "spreading cranberries" of the production. The philosophical idea of the novel, a cross-cutting thought penetrating and merging together the modern, historical, and fantastic layers of the book, has undergone a radical revision. Revealing in all the bizarre polyphony of things the conflict of good and evil, the writer, with the whole system of his images, affirms the inevitability of the victory of good, the doom of everything that is hostile to human happiness. This is the most important task and pathos of the book. A. Petrovich puts everything upside down. His film is about the triumph of evil, about the hopelessness of human destiny. ... The notorious problem became the center of the film "freedom of creativity", freedom, interpreted from the bourgeois-anarchist positions. Here the novel "preparirovan" with surprising shamelessness. His plot and images have undergone such fantastic metamorphoses in the film, before which even the fun and tricks of evil spirits described by M. Bulgakov pale. ... All this is a gag of the authors of the film, from which a mile away reeks of bourgeois insinuations about Soviet literature. ... The wonderful fusion of Bulgakov's prose, the fusion of realistic everyday life, violent fantasy, high symbolism, satirical grotesque, turned into pretentiousness and eclecticism in the film. ... In all this, the calculation of philistine tastes, commercial success comes through. In an effort to please that part of the Western public, for whom the more scathingly told about Moscow, the better, the authors have become like peddlers of stale goods" (Pisarevsky, 1972: 18).

Film critic G. Kapralov fully agreed with the opinion of D. Pisarevsky, whom the film *The Master and Margarita* (*Il Maestro e Margherita*. Italy-Yugoslavia, 1972) outraged as a bad caricature, smacking of an "anti-Soviet odor" (Kapralov, 1972: 15-16).

A connoisseur of Italian cinema, film critic G. Bogemsky (1920-1995) undertook the "dirty job" of analyzing Italian commercial cinema in the *Soviet Screen*.

At first, he spoke negatively about the "spaghetti westerns" popular at that time: From these pictures (the films of Sergio Leone can be named as an example...) love, friendship, nobility, mutual assistance and solidarity are expelled – those good human feelings that warmed and made this genre of adventure film attractive. But cruelty – brutal beatings, senseless torture and torment – and gross naturalism are brought to their maximum. Even two or three such adventure films, with dozens of murders in each, are hard to endure, but when they are at the box office, as it was in Italy, 80 titles at once, it becomes a real national disaster! In addition, many of these inhumanly cruel films are imbued with the spirit of racial discrimination brought from American cinema, which is generally alien to Italians (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

Then he exposed the harmful "subtexts" of entertainment films about "robbery in Italian": "It would seem that films about crooks, which are also extremely numerous, are less dangerous. They are imbued with humor, sometimes really funny, they are, so to speak, "thieves' comedies." ... no matter who steals where, no matter what: the diamonds of a Brazilian bank or the crown of the

English queen, the treasure of St. Januarius or the secret of the superbomb, it is important how, in what way it is done. But even these purely conventional films sometimes turn out to have a double bottom: the plot of a funny thieves' comedy suddenly contains a fair dose of foul-smelling politicking. So, in the painting by Marco Vicario *The New Major Operation of the Golden Seven* (*Il grande colpo dei 7 uomini d'oro*. Italy, 1966), a gang of gangsters abducts a Soviet ship using a submarine with a magnet, allegedly arrived in Havana with a load of gold bars to "arrange" revolutions in Latin America! The Cubans in this film are shown in an evilly caricatured form, and our sailors are so careless that when they take their ship away, they sing "Dubinushka" as if nothing had happened" (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

But G. Bogemsky's greatest regret (in our opinion, quite justified) was caused by the flow of Italian "militarist films": Home-grown militaristic films poured onto the Italian screen. It doesn't matter who performs "feats" in these pictures – unknown red berets, English commandos or Italian (and fascist!) warriors – they are equally bloodthirsty, they kill in the same cold-blooded way, terribly naturalistically, enjoying "right" to kill the weak and defenseless (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

A similar attitude to the Italian commercial cinema was in the article of the journalist N. Prozhogin: Those who profit from films seem to be convinced that the most salable commodity in the West these days is sex, murder, robbery, any form of violence. Even leaving aside frankly low-class films, we have to admit that the alcove theme captivated some directors who were known in the past for meaningful works. This, for example, comes down to the latest film by Luigi Comencini with the intriguing title *My God, how low I have fallen!* (*Mio Dio come sono caduta in basso!* Italy, 1974) (Prozhogin, 1975: 14).

The approach of the editors of the *Soviet Screen* to French films of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s was also consistent (moderate) criticism of films of outstanding masters and sharp criticism of commercial film production.

The films of Francois Truffaut and Claude Chabrol practically did not get into the mass Soviet film distribution in 1970s, but the *Soviet Screen* wrote about them quite often.

So film critic E. Kartseva (1928–2002) regretted that Francois Truffaut (1932–1984) in the film *Fahrenheit 451* (UK-France, 1966) largely simplified the idea of the story. There is not that all-encompassing atmosphere of mass stupidity of people that is so impressive in Bradbury, there are no attempts to analyze why people voluntarily put up with this situation (Kartseva, 1972: 16-17).

The refined and psychologically subtle melodrama by Francois Truffaut *Two Englishwomen and a Continent* (*Les Deux anglaises et le continent*. France, 1971) was disappointing for journalist Y. Bocharov, who thought that even in this film the talented artist remains faithful to his lyrical manner, but the plot seems far-fetched (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

Film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) wrote that Francois Truffaut's drama *The Last Metro* (*Le Dernier métro*. France, 1980): is distinguished by a very high visual culture. One can only be surprised at the maximum accuracy with which the everyday structure of Parisian life during the Nazi occupation is reproduced on the screen. However, one should also be surprised that the former rebel, the head of the "new wave" François Truffaut, who in the past fiercely opposed academic art, has now himself removed an academic, geometrically calculated movie, almost indifferent in its Olympian contemplation. Because of this academicism, scissors arose between the tension of the plot and the manner of its implementation, and the anti-fascist pathos of the film turned out to be greatly muted (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

It seems that a much more objective assessment of the artistic significance of *The Last Metro* was made by film critic and culturologist A. Razlogov (1946–2021), who highly appreciated this outstanding picture: The idea of the indestructibility of creativity even in hostile environment, bizarre intersections of the real life of the actors and their stage roles make this film a logical continuation of Truffaut's reflections on the meaning of art in the modern world (Razlogov, 1981: 17).

Referring to the work of another master of French cinema art, Claude Chabrol (1930–2010), journalist Y. Bocharov reminded the readers of the magazine that this director released a series of films imbued with bitter irony and criticism of the society in which he lives and works. The artist set out on an ambitious plan to create a gallery of images of the contemporary bourgeoisie, a panorama of bourgeois morals. ... *Ten Days Wonder* (*La Décade prodigieuse*. France-Italy, 1971) caused mixed responses. The artist is reproached for the excessive complexity of the plot, the lengthiness of the action. ... Despite the fact that this film cannot be called a completely successful author, it did not cause alarm among admirers of his talent. Chabrol is full of strength, energy,

ideas and courage. He goes his own way, and one can undoubtedly expect new interesting works from him (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

Not so optimistic, although, in general, quite respectfully, film critic G. Dolmatovskaya (1939–2021) perceived the work of C. Chabrol: made the film *Let the Beast Die* (*Que la bête meure*. France-Italy, 1969). Here are excellent actors (and especially Jean Yann), cold landscapes that smell like the sea, thoughtful interiors, there is dynamics and tension, and the music is involved in the action, but the word "commercial" is spinning somewhere close if you want to retell the plot (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

And quite ironically approached the film by C. Chabrol *Innocents with Dirty Hands* (*Les Innocents aux mains sales*. France-Italy, 1975) film critic A. Svobodin (1922-1999): "There were two famous actors at once – Rod Steiger and Romy Schneider. ... It is twisted masterfully, but, alas, interest in the film fell from time to time. Then an erotic scene was given. A method that is used quite widely. ... The powerful personality of Rod Steiger with all recently with the incomprehensible force of penetration who played Napoleon and Mussolini, did not save. Romy Schneider seemed like an average actress. But their desperate professional conscientiousness was instructive. Nothing can be done – such is the acting life!" (Svobodin, 1975: 16).

The films of Claude Lelouch, which were not included in the Soviet film distribution, were presented to the readers of the *Soviet Screen* quite ambiguously: *Life, love, death* (*La Vie, l'amour, la mort*. France, 1969); *New Year* (*La Bonne année*. France, 1973); *Smic Smac Smoc* (France, 1971), *Bolero* (*Les Uns et les autres*. France, 1981).

Film critic G. Dolmatovskaya wrote that we again observe a kind of diffusion – the penetration into the social film of commercial style to the needs of the philistine taste. Diffusion, which was so noticeable in the paintings of Claude Lelouch *Live for Life* (*Vivre pour vivre*. France-Italy, 1967), where the background was a political theme, and *Life, love, death* (*La Vie, l'amour, la mort*. France, 1969), conceived as a social drama. In the end, commerce supplanted everything. ... The hand of Lelouch the operator is correct. Perhaps he became stricter in the visual solution of his films. Only that sincerity and true warmth that were in *A Man and a Woman* (*Un homme et une femme*. France, 1966) disappeared. In the movie *New Year* Lelouch seems to be slightly ironic about yesterday. Above the purity, romance, sadness of *A Men and Women*... Not the playful atmosphere created around the robbery, not for a moment the beautiful performance of Lino Ventura saves the viewer from boredom. The film is empty, like an empty street in a southern town out of season. Not even a single thought can be found in this film. ... Many years of improvement of the director in the ways of commerce made his professionalism unnecessary. And this is the most terrible consequence that awaits the director, who sacrifices the meaning of art for the sake of the evening delight of the layman (Dolmatovskaya, 1973: 12-13).

Journalist Y. Bocharov also wrote about C. Lelouch in the same spirit, noting that in the film *Smic Smac Smoc* (France, 1971), the director touched on the topic of low-paid workers, which is acute for France. ... But Lelouch facilitates this theme by creating a vaudeville based on it. A half-hearted position takes revenge on the artist – ribbons come out of his hands, extremely superficial (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

Criticized in the *Soviet Screen* and large-scale work of C. Lelouch *Bolero* (*Les Uns et les autres*. France, 1981): An attempt to embrace the immense, to cover the most important events from 1936 to the present day. ... A movie complicated in form, a wide canvas that claims to be generalizations. With a lot of events that are impossible to enumerate. The film is immensely dragged out (Frez, 1982: 17).

The attitude to the drama of C. Lelouch was also ambiguous *Matrimony* (*Mariage*. France, 1974) (Svobodin, 1975: 17).

But the drama *The Last Train* (*Le Train*. France-Italy, 1973) by Pierre Granier-Deferre (1927–2007), which took place in 1940 in the Nazi-occupied France.

Film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) wrote that compassion for the heroes of this film is not only momentarily sensual, but philosophical and poetic, as happens, for example, when reading Tyutchev's tragic poems (Svobodin, 1975: 17).

And film critic R. Sobolev (1926-1991) noted that *The Last Train* talks about high moral purity, about the impossibility of betrayal for a real person and about love that elevates people (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

Referring to other French films about the Second World War, film critic G. Dolmatovskaya regretted that in this film there is no complete picture of the heroic Resistance. It is not the army

that operates, but single individuals, connected only with each other in a strange, hostile world. How exactly they fight the Germans, we did not find out (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

Much more negative reaction was caused in the *Soviet Screen* by the drama *Lacombe Lucien* (France-Italy-FRG, 1973) by Louis Malle (1932–1995). Film critic R. Sobolev wrote that Malle took a real case of betrayal and considered the fate of the village boy Lucien, who served in the Gestapo, and then shot by the verdict of the court. Outwardly, Mal is objective: France, in fact, was split by the occupation and the Vichy regime, which bore the shadow of a swastika. There were French people who wrote denunciations about the French, and there were French policemen who tortured and shot French patriots. All this can and should be told, but... only if the "ashes of Klaas" knock in the heart of the artist. Malle is trying to create a "portrait of the era", making her the hero of a traitor, a cruel and mentally limited person. ... The indifference of the film's author to those who supported the greatness of the unbroken national spirit in those years, turns into an equation between the partisans and the Petain police. In the end, according to Malle, it turns out that Lacombe accidentally became a traitor (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

Found in a magazine "and for criticism of exquisite films *Benjamin* (*Benjamin ou les Memoires d'un Puceau*. France, 1968) by Michel Deville (1931–2023) and *Claire's Knee* (*Le Genou de Claire*. France, 1970) by Éric Rohmer (1920–2010) and others, none of whom made it into Soviet film distribution in the 1970s.

For example, film critic G. Dolmatovskaya wrote that the elegant, very beautiful in color "costume" comedy by Michel Deville *Benjamin* [would not be worth] mentioning if it were not for the magnificent Michel Morgan in the title role and the exquisite camera work of Ghislain Cloquet (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

And G. Dolmatovskaya (in our opinion, without evidence) accused the psychologically subtle picture of Éric Rohmer's *Claire's Knee* (*Le Genou de Claire*. France, 1970) of the fact that in a film with such a bold name, there is not even a drop of sensuality ... What well, against the background of rampant sex on the Western screen, it seems that this is not bad. The only bad thing is that there is no feeling. ... And if the director wanted to show people who died at the age of 35 for feelings, he achieved his goal (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

Recognizing in the sensational film *Blow-Out* (*La Grande bouffe*. France-Italy, 1973), a cruel satire on the consumer society, film critic L. Pogozheva (1913–1989) was convinced that the trouble with this movie is that the critical fuse contained in it is combined with a solution of the problem that is vulgar in its very nature. Four excellent actors – Marcello Mastroianni, Philippe Noiret, Michel Piccoli, Ugo Tognazzi – played not only an apocalyptic vision of the death of the modern world, but also a humiliating zoologism, showed the disgusting details that accompanied the actions of the heroes in their intention to commit suicide with the help of gluttony. Both grub and "love" are shown on the screen with some amazing shamelessness, with savoring and naturalism truly unbearable (Pogozheva, 1973: 17).

The film critic K. Razlogov was also very strict, claiming that in *The Woman Banker* (*La Banquière*. France, 1980) by Francis Giraud (1944–2006) the viewer is given the opportunity to admire the dubious enterprise of the heroine-banker. This frank apology of bourgeois morality did not become an artistic achievement (Razlogov, 1981: 17).

Film critic O. Sulkin was no less severe in his article. He first accused Andrzej Wajda (1926–2016) of "artistic" running of "pseudo-historical ideas" in the French film *Danton* (France-FRG-Poland, 1982). And then he lamented that in the film by Jean-Jacques Annaud *Quest for Fire* (*La Guerre du feu*. France-Canada, 1981) "ahistoricity is clothed in the clothes of a scrupulous study of primitive society. We seem to be convinced: "homo sapiens" has always been cold and heartless, it is "in his blood". A gloomy, meaningless spectacle..." (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Active protest from the editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen* D. Orlov (1935–2021) was caused by the film *Charlie Bravo* (France, 1980) by Claude Bernard-Aubert (1930–2018): Returning his memory to the last days, hours and even minutes of the stay of the French colonialists in Vietnam, the director is trying to sort of revise not so much the political (which would be just stupid today!), but the moral results of that war imperialist, colonial. On the one hand, and people's, liberation – on the other. Depicting the suffering of a bunch of thugs dressed in khakis, and with them a blond girl from a medical school, the director is trying to win over the sympathy of the audience to their side. The partisans are cruel to the point of senselessness, and they set traps and traps, and for some reason they shoot from behind every bush. The creator of this movie does not try to answer only one question: who invited this flying detachment of flayers to a foreign land, what do they

need here, why weren't they at home? Hopeless are attempts to overestimate and rethink what history long ago gave its clear, clear and final answer (Orlov, 1981: 16-18).

Other notable French films deserved higher ratings from the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen*: *To Die of Love* (*Mourir d'aimer*. France-Italy, 1970), *The Infernal Trio* (*Le Trio infernal*. France-Italy-FRG, 1974), *Loulou* (France, 1980), *Watchmaker from Saint-Paul* (*L'Horloger de Saint-Paul*. France, 1974), *Vincent, Francois, Paul and the Others* (*Vincent, François, Paul... et les autres*. France-Italy, 1974), *Slap* (*La Gifle*. France-Italy, 1974), *Jean's Wife* (*La femme de Jean*. France, 1973), *Lily, love me* (*Lily, aime-moi*. France, 1975), *Cage* (*La Cage*. France, 1975), *Molière* (France, 1978) (Andreev, 1979: 18-19; Bocharov, 1972: 155; Chernenko, 1975: 9; Dolmatovskaya, 1975: 18; Golubev, 1975: 19; Ivanova, 1975: 16-17; Markova, 1975: 17; Razlogov, 1981: 18).

The *Soviet Screen* of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s also published a number of articles about films traditional for the French entertainment cinema about policemen and bandits.

Here K. Razlogov positively noted that Michel Drash (1930-1990) in *The Red Sweater* (*Le Pull-over rouge*. France, 1979) denounces the inertia and bias of the actions of the police and prosecutors during the trial, and *The Police War* (*La Guerre des polices*. France, 1979) is directed primarily against the police themselves. He also praised the detective Yves Boisset *The Woman Cop* (*La Femme flic*. France, 1980), where the heroine is forced to leave the police service, since her investigation revealed the involvement of very high-ranking persons in the crimes (Razlogov, 1981: 18).

And then the conclusion followed that the combination of the futility of the fight against crime and the assertion of crime as the only way to restore trampled justice, the inability to find oneself in the grip of the bourgeois way of life and the doom of any active protest ... are also inherent in many other movies – a wide range of anti-bourgeois works, films of various subjects, genres, styles, individual creative manners. Their authors are united by the idea of leaving society, the rejection of traditional norms, the desire to gain true freedom outside the restrictive framework of the bourgeoisie (Razlogov, 1981: 18).

But at the same time, “the professionalism of other masters can easily degenerate into craftsmanship, brilliant acting can become self-indulgent actors' "numbers" (for example, in recent adventure comedies starring Jean-Paul Belmondo), the coherence of stories can become clichés repeated from film to film. ... With all the talent of their creators, the significance of these pictures does not go beyond variations on traditional themes that are essentially deadpan for contemporary Western art” (Razlogov 1981: 18).

One of such films with the participation of Belmondo – *The Inheritor* (*L'Héritier*. France-Italy, 1972) – was analyzed in the *Soviet Screen* by film critic G. Dolmatovskaya: In the plot structure of *The Inheritor* much resembles *The Mattei Affair* (*Il caso Mattei*. Italy, 1971) is a strong, poignant political film by Italian director Francesco Rosi. Already the “secondary” itself, the variation of the finds of a talented predecessor, is a quite clear sign that *The Inheritor* belongs to commercial cinema. ... And the director himself has no power to resist this force. Instead of the notorious cinematography of white telephones, he offers the viewer the cinematography of his own jets, equipped with the techniques of intelligent cinema: the wandering camera, the meaningful retrospections, the terseness of dialogues – all this cold and precise professionalism and directorial sophistication substitute the civic passion of the author, without which there is no political film (Dolmatovskaya, 1973: 12-13).

Critically presenting the film *The Burglars* (*Le Casse*. France-Italy, 1971) by Henri Verneuil (1920–2002) and other French films about crime on the pages of the magazine, the journalist Y. Bocharov wrote that the time of noble detectives like Sherlock Holmes or Maigret passed. Now detectives are increasingly competing with gangsters in atrocities. And the sympathy of the audience is given most often to gangsters. I have not seen a single detective on the screen who would die with glory in the line of duty. But gangsters invariably die like heroes in an unequal battle. There is no point in explaining what the educational value of such movies is. Even if we assume that in this way the police, standing guard over the interests of the bourgeoisie, are exposed (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

The *Soviet Screen* did not bypass the popular in the West (and, of course, in France) theme of cinema sex in the 1970s.

So film critic L. Pogozheva informed readers that in the French film *Mother and the Slut* (*La maman et la putain*. France, 1973) for more than an hour and a half, the characters cannot make a choice with whom to stay: with his wife or mistress. The film takes place mainly in bed. The film contains social criticism of society, interprets the problem of society's disastrous indifference

to man, condemns morality, or rather immorality, prevailing in bourgeois reality ... But still, modern man, according to the author of the film, first of all, shows interest in sex (Pogozheva, 1973: 16-17).

Moreover, the film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) was convinced (in fact, erroneously, since the example for proving this thesis was chosen extremely unsuccessfully) that the satirical picture became the limit of showing sex in French cinema. Bertrand Blier *Get Your Handkerchiefs Ready* (*Préparez vos mouchoirs*. France-Belgium, 1978): Here bourgeois art has crossed limits that until recently it was not decided: children now enter into sexual games as characters (Freilich, 1980: 17).

Among the French comedies that did not get into the Soviet film distribution, the magazine chose, as a rule, the works of famous comedians. For example, he praised Gerard Ury's comedy *The Brain* (*Le Cerveau*. France-Italy, 1969) for satire (Revich, 1971).

The film critic G. Dolmatovskaya wrote quite kindly and another well-known comedy by Gerard Ury – *Delusions of Grandeur* (*La Folie des grandeurs*. France-Italy-Spain-FRG, 1971): Free exercises on the theme of *Ruy Blas* by Victor Hugo testify that Ury is a comedian and Louis de Funès have a rich arsenal of comic tricks, sometimes already familiar, because de Funès is not inexhaustible, and we happened to see much more subtle manifestations of French humor (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

The works of notable masters were selected by the *Soviet Screen* for articles on Spanish cinema.

So film critic L. Pogozheva (1913–1989) wrote about the film *Anna and the Wolves* (*Ana y los lobos*. Spain, 1973) by Carlos Saura (1932–2023) (Pogozheva, 1973: 16-17).

A film critic Y. Warszawsky (1911–2000) wrote about another film by Saura: *Hole* (*La Madriguera*. Spain, 1969).

And it should be noted that this film evoked generally negative emotions in the venerable film critic: "Photo advertising at the entrance is alarming: some disgusting bugs and spiders are crawling over the body of a young woman; another photo frame shows the bloody face of a young man. Isn't it a horror movie? No, we are told, [*Hole*] is a problematic work by a sharp-minded artist, responding to the dramas of the times. ... But do not rush to summarize – everything is deceptive in the film of Carlos Saura. The film hardly needs your viewer's analytical skills – it takes the incompatibility of human beings as the eternal curse of the human race. Bardem and Berlanga meditated, grieved, called for humanity – their student Saura becomes hardened. Either the heroes of the film, or the author come up with new and new tortures for young souls, then in a dream – as, for example, with bugs – then in reality. ... From time to time you remember: somewhere all this has already happened, and more than once. Two people living inseparably together is hell. Whose motive? Of course, Sartre. The young woman is forever traumatized by her childhood fear of a Catholic trial; whose motive? Everyone will tell you: Fellini! A homemade masquerade with dressing up to revive love passion – who did we meet this with? Cinema connoisseurs will answer without hesitation: Buñuel! "Theater for yourself" becomes too cruel, threatens spouses with death ... Many viewers will remember the film with Elizabeth Taylor *Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (USA, 1966). Saura's film is also made up of "blocks", only different ones. ...

Obviously, a few fans separate [*Hole*] from the flow of the usual film repertoire because in the film, whatever you say, the director's talent and serious school make themselves felt: after all, he was a student of Bardem and Berlanga. And it is felt somewhere that the underlying basis of the drama is a crisis of life values. But where is the "nerve" of the artist? Bardem once said about Carlos Saura and other young filmmakers of his generation: "We tried to convey our heartache and anger to them, it all turned out to be only cruelty." The film by Carlos Saura confirmed this disappointing characterization" (Warszawsky, 1969: 14-15).

Like the cinematographies of other Western countries, the *Soviet Screen* looked for anti-bourgeois and anti-militarist films in West German cinema.

In particular, the film critic E. Gromov (1931–2005) believed that the anti-war film of Michael Verhoeven *OK* (West Germany, 1970) for all its miscalculations – one of the best works of "young cinema" of Germany, or, as it is also called, "German new wave" (Gromov, 1972: 16-17).

Further, E. Gromov noted the artistic merits of P. Fleischmann's philosophical and analytical drama *Hunting Scenes in Lower Bavaria* (*Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern*. FRG, 1969) and films-parables of A. Kluge: These paintings are very different both in genre and in style, and ideologically and aesthetically. But there is something in common between them: frankness bordering on

naturalism in the depiction of the shady sides of life and the predominance of a negative, critical principle (Gromov, 1972: 16-17).

E. Gromov highly appreciated F. Schlöndorff's *Minute Flash* (*Strohfeuer*. West Germany, 1972): Unlike the avant-garde frills of the directors of the "young German cinema", ... his film is staged in a realistic manner, there is no naturalism in it. The topic is taken quite relevant and serious – the position of women in Germany. The film shows with its own eyes that despite all the declarations of politicians and various "sex revolutions", discrimination against women in public life continues to be a fact. The soft and sincere play of the leading lady ... gives the picture a special charm and subtlety (Gromov, 1973).

Film expert K. Razlogov praised another sharply social movie – *Lead Times* (*Die bleierne Zeit*. Germany, 1981) by Margarethe von Trotta: Not accepting terrorism, the director and the main character – and this is the depth and historical accuracy of the film *Lead Times* – understand that a sense of hopelessness often pushes on the path of bloody actions that do not achieve the desired results (Razlogov, 1983: 14-15).

In this context of support for socially oriented West German films, film critic E. Gromov wrote indignantly about the film *Touch, my friend* (*Las jucken, Kumpel!* West Germany, 1972): Today the working theme is in fashion, and the film is declared as "proletarian" – about the Ruhr miners. However, the working family is shown in it as a completely bourgeois social unit in its way of thinking and even in everyday life. Vulgarly screams in every frame. And not only because the picture is implicated in the most explicit pornography. More symptomatic is the ethical position of the author and his characters. A wife can cheat on her husband with anyone. He pays her in the same coin. Something like a "group marriage" is also permissible, only a violation of external decorum, order in the apartment, decency in clothes, and so on, is unacceptable. And this is a "proletarian" way of life?! (Gromov, 1973).

However, the *Soviet Screen* wrote relatively rarely about West German films like *Touch, My Friends*.

In the foreground were still the paintings of the first row: *The Tin Drum* (*Die Blechtrommel*. FRG-France, 1979) by Volker Schlöndorff, *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (*Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle*. FRG, 1974) by Werner Herzog and others.

So the film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) highly appreciated Volker Schlöndorff's *The Tin Drum*, noting that the film is based on the novel by Günter Gross in the tradition of expressionism and satirical grotesque, who always resorts to a fantastic situation (Freilikh, 1980: 17).

And film critic M. Chernenko (1931–2004) wrote that in the drama *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, the director is trying to break through to the secret of psychological, philosophical, universal. For how many times has the screen tried to convince the viewer of the original human meanness, bestial cruelty. And this German Mowgli of the twenties of the last century, not burdened with the vices of civilization, turns out to be the embodiment of decency, kindness, goodwill, and such that it becomes one of the reasons for his tragic death – a complete inability to self-defense, the inability to believe in evil, ill will, cynicism (Chernenko, 1976: 16-17).

True, other films by W. Herzog in the *Soviet Screen* were much less fortunate. Film critic S. Freilich wrote that in bourgeois cinema the apocalyptic theme is treated in a decadent way. ... the spiritual crisis of bourgeois society is accepted as a crisis of the human race. Hence the fear of the end of the world, the aestheticization of horror (in connection with which various kinds of monsters and monsters appear on the screen in abundance), in these pictures the importance of the subconscious and instincts is exaggerated (which is the reason for excessive attention to sex and human pathology). Unfortunately, this also includes the film *Nosferatu* (*Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht*. West Germany-France, 1979) (Freilich, 1980: 17). The film critic O. Sulkin and another mystical visionary film by W. Herzog – *Fitzcarraldo* (West Germany, 1982) (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Turning to the work of another famous West German director – R.W. Fassbinder – film critic O. Sulkin wrote that "There is some tragic sense in the fact that Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who flashed like a comet across the cinema sky and left at the age of 36 as the author of 40 (!) movies, put an end to his work with the painting *Querelle* (West Germany-France, 1982), which absorbed all the inconsistency of his talent, which crossed all conceivable boundaries of morality, reflecting deep pessimism, the crisis of the artist's worldview" (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

The attempts of the authors of some West German films to whitewash the Nazis and distort the events of the Second World War aroused justifiably sharp rejection among the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen*.

So film critic O. Sulkin wrote about the military drama *The Boat* (*Das Boot*. Germany, 1981) by Wolfgang Petersen (1941–2022): “The most expensive film in the history of West German cinema was made on a grand scale, inventively, technically flawlessly. What do we see? Everyday life of the crew of a Nazi submarine. Her life is specific. And morals even more so. Fascist pirates, it turns out, do not like the Fuhrer, despise the Nazi uniform, ignore the greeting “Heil Hitler”. But they listen to the BBC, sing English and French songs with pleasure, and openly conduct “seditious” conversations. They have never heard of genocide, concentration camps and similar “land” horrors perpetrated by “colleagues”. Do they kill themselves? They kill, but... immeasurably suffering and tormented by a guilt complex. The viewer is trying to convince that these are “good guys” to evoke sympathy and admiration for their fortitude and endurance. This is how an attempt is made to justify what cannot be justified, this is how historical truth is distorted, this is how they try to rehabilitate Nazism. It is far from accidental that the right-wing press on both sides of the Atlantic praises in every way the film “useful for NATO”, clearly adjusted to the current imperialist conjuncture” (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Journalist M. Borisov rightly argued that the film *Cross of Iron* (Steiner – *Das Eiserne Kreuz*. West Germany-UK, 1977) shows the fascist thugs with the *Magnificent Seven*, and the war in the form of a sports game with the participation of experienced professionals: if they lose, then this is not so scary – happiness, they say, will smile another time. ... the viewer should be on the side of Steiner: he is kind, humane, the idol of a captive boy killed by cruel, soulless Russian barbarians (Borisov, 1977).

Film critic A. Karaganov (1915–2007), who wrote that in the military drama *Cross of Iron*, was in complete agreement with him: *Cross of Iron* idealized was shown a sergeant of the Nazi army, fighting somewhere near Novorossiysk, so this movie was on a par with dozens of less noticeable and not so skillful in art movies, directed by a vile and cunning idea that if the Wehrmacht was “cleansed” of “extremes” “SS” army, this army of courageous and experienced soldiers can serve the “West” well in the military confrontation with the “East” (Karaganov, 1982: 1).

Following M. Borisov (Borisov, 1977), A. Karaganov (Karaganov, 1982: 1) and V. Chernenko (Chernenko, 1983: 16-17), film critic L. Melville emphasized that in the film *Cross of Iron* “the German invaders fighting on the Russian front are falsely romanticized. In the director's interpretation, they are “just people”, by the will of fate beyond their control, thrown into difficult conditions, the same for all parties: both the aggressors and the defenders of their homeland. It is quite clear that such an “existentialist” equalization of political and moral opposites does not clarify the true meaning of the events of the Second World War, but obscures it to the limit. And in the film *The Boat* (*Das Boot*. West Germany, 1981), W. Petersen “tries to present the horrors of war through the eyes of ordinary Germans, who, without hesitation,” carried out orders “given” from above “... Depicting the torment and horrors, through which ordinary submariners pass, W. Petersen tries to arouse sympathy and sympathy for them. Insidious intent: after all, in this way they are trying to distract the viewer from the question – why are they following orders? Their conscience is not burdened, not one of them awakens a sense of guilt and responsibility for what they have done” (Melville, 1985: 20).

We can agree with the final conclusion of L. Melville even today: in a number of Western films, the events of the Second World War are distorted in favor of speculative schemes and reactionary concepts that are beneficial to those circles in the West who seek to pervert the lessons of the fight against fascism, to justify, and sometimes even rehabilitate the plans revanchists (Melville, 1985: 20).

Presenting Swedish cinematography on its pages, the editors of the magazine again turned to the work of the director Ingmar Bergman (1918–2007), who was almost inaccessible to the mass Soviet audience.

Here journalist A. Dumov wrote with regret the following: “When I watched *The Touch* (*Beröringen*. Sweden-USA, 1971), the impression of Bergman's previous painting *Shame* (*Skammen*. Sweden, 1968) was still vivid in my memory, a vivid work in which the destructive effect is revealed wars on human souls. Against this background, Bergman's new ribbon appears to be a cheap commercial craft, a zigzag in creativity” (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

And the film critic L. Pogozeva remained dissatisfied with the pessimism of another psychological drama of the great Swedish director – *Cries and Whispers* (*Viskningar och rop*. Sweden, 1972) (Pogozeva, 1973: 16-17).

True chamber drama of I. Bergman *After the Rehearsal* (*Efter repetitionen*. Sweden, 1984) received an assessment in the *Soviet Screen* (Bauman, 1985: 16-17).

It was also noted that Roy Andersson's *A Swedish Love Story* (*En Kärlekshistoria*. Sweden, 1970) enjoys great and well-deserved success in Sweden: This film is not only about the younger generation, but also about Sweden itself today, about the everyday life of ordinary people. R. Andersson, by all accounts, has a bright talent. They predict a bright future for him (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

As before, *Soviet Screen* tried to impress upon its readers that the most interesting phenomenon in Swedish cinematography are the social works of young artists... Being honest before their conscience, they look upon art as a weapon in the struggle for the reorganization of society on progressive principles. Each of them, to the extent of their understanding and skill, opens the audience's eyes to capitalist reality, to the world of social injustice (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

Journalist A. Dumov believed that the best of these works is *The Line*: A small Swedish village, blooming summer, joyful faces. Suddenly, a foreign aircraft with bacteriological weapons on board crashes nearby. An epidemic begins. The authorities don't fight it. Only an order is given not to let anyone into the infected area and not to let them out of it. The film blames capitalism as a system in which the common man becomes a pawn in the hands of politicians and the military (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

Another movie in this series, – continued A. Dumov, the film *Comrades, the enemy is well organized*. It is documentary, tells about a two-month strike of miners in the Swedish North, one of the largest in the country in the post-war years. Members of the strike committee were involved in the processing of the footage. This was of considerable benefit, for it helped to focus attention on the main thing. Perhaps not all the assessments of the authors can agree. But the film undoubtedly contributes to the intensification of the workers' struggle for social progress (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

However, knowing that Swedish cinema is not only philosophical films by Ingmar Bergman and films about the working class, the *Soviet Screen* did not get tired of exposing Swedish films that to one degree or another reflected the tendencies of the sexual revolution.

In particular, it was noted that director V. Sjöman shocked the audience with the dilogy *I am curious* (*Jag är nyfiken*. Sweden, 1967–1968), and, perhaps for the first time in the history of cinema, stuffed them with scenes of sexual acts, which caused a storm of discussions in Western cinema. In order to rid the movie of censorship prohibitions, he equipped it with a "parallel" line – the search for heroes of social justice. Sjöman seemed to have found a gold mine. But she quickly faded. The film business began to search for a new vein. And found it in the form of "popular scientific" films... Their essence is the on-screen demonstration of sexual acts mixed up with the speculations of sexologists about sexual problems (Dumov 1972: 12-13).

Articles about international film festivals and foreign film weeks in the USSR

In articles in the *Soviet Screen* on international film festivals, the current repertoire of Western national cinematographies, and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, a clear division of Western cinema into "progressive" and "bourgeois" still reigned.

Most willingly, the *Soviet Screen* wrote about the state of affairs in Italian cinema and the Venice Film Festival.

In particular, the film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) recalled that the cinema of Italy is well known to our audience. It once gave rise to neorealism, an outstanding artistic phenomenon in the entire world cinema, which arose, as the Italians themselves do not get tired of repeating with gratitude, under the beneficial influence of our cinema – the films and theoretical works of S. Eisenstein, V. Pudovkin, A. Dovzhenko and other Soviet masters. Even today it remains in Italy the leading edge of the daily struggle for national and democratic culture against the expansion of American capital and ideology. True, today in this struggle, the preponderance so far – at least quantitatively – is on the side of the so-called commercial film production. The commercialization of Italian cinema goes hand in hand with its Americanization. Having taken over a significant part of film production, American capital is taking over the film distribution, and now the cinema chain. ... If you analyze Italian film production over the past year or two, you see that a good 90 percent are movies that are a mass consumer product in the Western sense of the word, a product that is skillfully made, in beautiful packaging, but no less rotten, if not poisonous. . The vast majority are films about gangsters. This does not mean that erotica and just pornography have lost their positions on the Italian screen, but they are being pressed by cruelty, violence, robbery and murder.

At the same time, “in the Italian “consumer society”, the process of commercialization of cinema has gone so far that even some films that seem to be protesting against the bourgeoisie immediately become an object of sale and purchase, a subject of speculation. Following Marco Bellocchio's film *Fists in the Pocket* (*I Pugni in tasca*. Italy, 1965), which anticipated the “cinema of protest”, dozens of films by young directors came out – with rehashings of the motifs of this “rebellious” film. However, extreme “leftism” accompanies fashion speculation in them, pseudo-protest covers up sophisticated eroticism and cruelty more purely than in commercial films (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

On the other hand, as the same G. Bogemsky noted, the main theme of the advanced cinema in Italy has been and remains the anti-fascist and anti-war theme. ... These are very different films, but all of them are imbued with a strong condemnation of fascism and sound like a reminder of its atrocities. However, progressive Italian filmmakers now approach the anti-fascist and anti-war theme even more broadly: fascism yesterday is neo-colonialism and American imperialism today is the thought that pervades some of the new films (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

As examples, further cited the films of Valerio Zurlini *Seated at His Right* (*Seduto alla sua destra*. Italy, 1968) is a passionate anti-colonialist work inspired by the feat of Patrice Lumumba; *The Battle of Algiers* (*La Battaglia di Algeri*. Italy-Algeria, 1965) and *Quemada* (*Burn!/Queimada!* Italy-France-Colombia, 1969) by Gillo Pontecorvo (1919–2006).

At the same time, G. Bogemsky admitted that not everything is so simple and prosperous in the sphere of progressive, anti-bourgeois, anti-fascist, anti-colonialist cinema: some films are of an anarchist, leftist character, in some, along with extremist motives, revisionist-capitulation sounds (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

The TASS correspondent in the UK, V. Vasilets, complained on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*: Filmmakers are sure that sex and violence are what keep the audience in the hall. The opposite is now almost impossible to prove, because other films in London are not so easy to find. Indeed, of 436 films shown in West End theaters last year, only eight were free of explicit violence and sex and could be watched by children. Here are some of the titles of films currently on the London screen. ... The lion's share of the rental is violence, sex, anti-Soviet propaganda. ... The campaign of spy mania, which recently swept through England in a dirty wave, finds continuation in endless television series, newspaper “ducks”, and film handicrafts. Soviet people are most often represented in them as stupid, treacherous, poor in spirit. Subsidizing such “works” are not interested in art. They cook them, spurred on by the menacing noise of the demonstrations of the English unemployed, the desperate pensioners who cannot live on meager handouts, the students' unions, whose rights are trampled on by the Conservative government. They avert the eyes of the public, slipping it, instead of deep social causes, an imaginary reason from outside the “red danger” (Vasilets, 1972: 18).

Film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) created a similar panorama of American cinema, arguing that in the United States, as always in the past, only individual paintings really deeply and reliably reflect the reality of life. The bulk of the approximately 340 films that are now shot annually in the United States are purely commercial productions. A large place is occupied by films that were previously divided into “gangster”, “detective”, “police”, etc., and are now increasingly called “crime films” (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17).

Further, R. Sobolev spoke sharply negatively about Hollywood “horror films”: Although vampires, werewolves, and all sorts of monsters still densely populate the screen, the ruler of the underworld himself, Satan, comes to the fore today. R. Polanski laid the foundation here, having filmed *Rosemary's Baby* (USA, 1968): an story about how an anti-messiah came into the world instead of a messiah – the son of an American woman and the devil. There have been many such films in the past seven years. The most sensational of them is *The Exorcist* (USA, 1973) by W. Friedkin (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17).

And then the film critic reminded readers that a special and significant part of modern American film production is made up of pictures that critics began to call “retro” ... They appeared quite a long time ago – the already famous gangster ballad *Bonnie and Clyde* (USA, 1967) by A. Penn not only showed the horrors of the great depression of the early 1930s, but to a certain extent romanticized that time. However, the true heyday of “retrocinema” came in the 1970s. ... One must agree that, in principle, turning to history has nothing wrong: history often helps to understand the present, to avoid mistakes. It seems, however, that for the most part retro is a cinema of illusions, so familiar to Hollywood, the factory of dreams (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17).

As for another English-speaking country, Australia, the pages of *Soviet Screen* emphasized that in all the film studios of the country, all its cinemas, have passed into the grasping paws of the American and partly English film companies and are completely controlled by them. More than 400 feature films are imported into Australia each year, mostly from the US. A stream of foreign-made commercial movies promoting violence, cruelty, greed, bestial attitude towards women, explicit pornography filled the screens of literally all cinemas. But where will you go and to whom will you tell if colonial times have come in Australian cinema, if the "enlightenment" of the population has been completely transferred to foreign film companies? ... In addition, Australian producers generally do not dare to invest any significant funds in national films, rightly fearing that they will not be able to compete with Hollywood action films worth millions (Romanov, 1971: 12-13).

According to TASS correspondent R. Serebrennikov, French cinema in the 1970s also experienced a difficult period of creative difficulties and sharp social contradictions. ... Catastrophically reduced the total number of cinemas. ... There is a continuous rise in prices for cinema tickets (Serebrennikov, 1973: 14-15). And then the article expressed regret that progressive French films about workers and peasants ... are experiencing difficulties in France with access to mass film distribution. And all this is happening at a time when French cinema is experiencing an acute shortage of ideas, when the screens are crammed with ordinary production, when there are too few topics that have a public and social sound (Serebrennikov, 1973: 14-15).

No matter what happened in the cinema, according to the *Soviet Screen* went in the 1970s in Sweden: In the mid-50s, up to 72 million film visits per year were registered in the country, and in 1970 only 28 million tickets were sold, that is, an average of 3.5 tickets for each of the eight million inhabitants. The attendance of Swedish films has especially decreased. ... An important role in the process of renunciation of the masses from the art of cinema was played by the low artistic quality of most films. Cinematography could effectively fight to retain its audience by developing their artistic tastes and offering them great art. However, it is easier for businessmen to "make money" on surrogate films than on good films. ... And Swedish commercial cinema most often follows the well-trodden path of producing purely entertainment films. All these crafts are without fail "peppered" with bed scenes in a concentration that meets the tastes of their creators. ... Today, the Swedish movie screen is dominated by American, French, English, Italian and other Western film products, mostly low-quality, entertaining (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

Similarly, Norwegian cinematography was presented on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*. In particular, it was reported that almost half of all films that were released in general distribution in Norway glorified violence: 190 films featured murders, and in 51 films the victims of the murderers were women, and yet "these statistics do not include "permissible", which is not contrary to "moral principles" "society sexism!" (Vesenberg, 1969: 12).

An alarming picture of the state of film distribution in Germany and West Berlin also arose in an article by film critic E. Gromov (1931–2005): "Most of the films shown on the West Berlin screen are stereotypical products of bourgeois mass culture. The themes of violence and sex vary in every way" (Gromov, 1973).

But when at the Workers in German Cinema Festival held in West Berlin ... titles of films devoted to the modern class struggle flashed on the screen, critics began to talk about the 'second breath' of [West German] proletarian cinema. The critics spoke of a 'second breath' of [West German] proletarian cinematography... A number of films attracted the attention of spectators and the press, owing their birth to a general intensification of political life, workers' mass demonstrations, and the indignation of youth against social injustice and the inequality of women (Chudov, 1974: 16). However, this article went on to criticize R.W. Fassbinder's television film *8 o'clock – not all day* (*Acht Stunden sind kein Tag*. FRG, 1973), where the consciousness of the necessity of the class struggle is somewhat blunted and even replaced by conciliation. The talented artist's subjective views on the class struggle and other problems of capitalism (Chudov, 1974: 16).

Film critic A. Novogradsky (1911–1996) was glad that at the film festival in Oberhausen a storm of passions was caused by the competition film of the West German director Axel Engstfeld *Festive Evening* (*Feier-Abend*. Germany, 1983), which was awarded the jury prize. ... The entire space of the documentary frame is filled with helmeted policemen. Eight thousand keepers of order on the streets of Bonn. Who are they protecting? It turns out that this evening the Bundeswehr is celebrating its 25th anniversary. The associated parade processions with torches, so reminiscent of the marches of the Nazi military, cause indignation among many ordinary residents of the city (Novogradsky, 1983: 18-19).

Having visited the next West Berlin Film Festival, the editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen*, D. Orlov, was pleased to inform the readers of the magazine that the West German directors and producers who made a joint statement during the festival expressing their indignation at the incompetence of the film forum management that had admitted such helpless films to the competition were also right. They also said that they would not participate in the festival from now on unless the situation changed in the future (Orlov, 1981 16-17).

However, D. Orlov went on to say that the lack of competence alone cannot explain the essence of the problem. It would be more accurate to speak about bias, about tendentiousness, about a certain, unambiguous position of those who lead the festival, directing its course – publicly and unspokenly. It is not without reason that one of the "incompetent" managers blurted out the admission that the West Berlin festival is being held on American money. In the context of this confession, the story of the screening at the festival two years ago of the slanderous American film *The Deer Hunter* also becomes especially clear (Orlov, 1981 16-17).

The competition program of the Cannes Film Festival in 1983 included such significant films as *Nostalghia* (Italy-USSR, 1983) by Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986), *Money* (*L'Argent*, France-Switzerland, 1983) by Robert Bresson (1901–1999), *The Legend of Narayama* (Japan, 1983) by Shohei Imamura (1926–2006). However, despite this, in the report about this festival, the key phrase was a standard phrase for this kind of material: "Looking at the long series of films you watched at Cannes with one glance, you come to a sad conclusion: his program clearly ignored the main, burning problems of the time, those that worry the people of the planet: the problems of peace and security, the preservation of life on Earth, the assertion of social justice" (Shulyukin, 1983).

Short informational materials about events in Western cinema (from neutral reports to "yellow" gossip).

In the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s, *Soviet Screen* from issue to issue published on its pages short messages about the release of filming and the release of foreign films on the world screen.

Very rarely, but among these informational messages slipped those that are usually classified as "yellow".

In particular, in 1972, the *Soviet Screen* published an article about how the Frenchman Jean-Claude Dag became the world's first robber director: he was arrested by the Paris police on charges of seven bank robberies. And although Jean-Claude motivated his activities by the fact that he needed funds to stage a grandiose gangster action movie, the court sentenced the filmmaker-robber to many years in prison (Radi ..., 1972: 16).

Similar material from the category "their morals" was dedicated to the actor Jose Antonio Valdelomar González (1958–1992): he first played the central role of a gang leader in Carlos Saura's *Fast! Hurry! (Deprisa, deprisa!)* (Spain, 1981), who received the main prize at the West Berlin Film Festival, and then, together with his partner, was arrested by the police after a real bank robbery (Kudrin, 1981: 18).

In 1975, film critic G. Bogemsky told the readers of the magazine in some detail about how Fellini was robbed of a film with key episodes of the not yet released *Casanova* (Italy-USA, 1976) (Bogemsky, 1975: 17).

In 1982, a note was published that the people of the 'world's most democratic state' were shocked to learn that Monroe had not committed suicide, but was the victim of a planned assassination committed by agents of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. In the grave atmosphere of bourgeois ideology in a society where pragmatism and militant callousness have long been a tool in the deception of people, the grinding and corruption of souls, where disappointment, pessimism, despair are the main motif of both real life and the life of art generated by this reality, the tragic story of the actress acquires a truly symbolic sound (Birukov, 1982: 17).

And in the pages of the 1984 magazine *Soviet Screen* described the details of the scandal associated with the fact that Hollywood director John Landis was threatened with imprisonment because on the set of *Twilight Zone: The Movie* (USA, 1983) actor Vic Morrow and two children who starred in the film six and seven years old were killed (Leonidov, 1984: 20).

4. Conclusion

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the "stagnant" period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the following conclusions.

Of the wide range of Hollywood and British films, Soviet film distribution in the period we analyzed included mainly films with an acute social message, critically showing Western realities. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that these films received maximum support in the *Soviet Screen*; articles by Soviet film critics emphasized the “progressive anti-bourgeois significance” of these films. It is very significant that, even when reviewing American films, which seemed to be completely far from politics, the reviewers of *Soviet Screen* demonstrated ideological approaches.

Of course, among the reviews of American and British films in *Soviet Screen*, there also appeared texts that were devoid of a direct appeal to politics. “Apoliticalism” was especially evident in reviews devoted to film adaptations of classical works, which often took place in the 19th century and earlier.

Frankly entertaining Hollywood and British films were released into Soviet distribution in the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s quite rarely. And here, *Soviet Screen* reviewers often sought to distance themselves from edifying political and ideological assessments, concentrating on a professional analysis of the artistic quality of this or that entertaining film.

In Italian and French cinema, the Soviet Screen consistently gave preference to political films that “expose capitalist reality.” Of course, *Soviet Screen*, as before, could not ignore the works of Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, Francois Truffaut and other outstanding masters of cinema. But here, too, the magazine’s reviewers assessed their work mainly within the framework of Marxist ideological principles, on the basis of which even the films of such recognized masters as Federico Fellini were criticized.

The sharp rejection of *Soviet Screen* reviewers was often caused by entertainment films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo, which were reproached for promoting “supermanhood” and violence. The *Soviet Screen*’s reviews of famous French and Italian comedies were more benevolent, but overall rather skeptical.

Of course, the range of Western films, for one reason or another, did not reach the Soviet mass audience, was much wider than film distribution. And year after year, the editors of the magazine selected examples for criticism of bourgeois society and imperialism: films of an anti-communist and anti-Soviet orientation, as well as films “glorifying the American military” and “whitewashing the Nazis.”

The openly entertaining part of Western film production has traditionally been viewed by the magazine mainly in a sharply negative light. In particular, it was emphasized that Hollywood has nothing to say to American moviegoers; all that remains is to amaze their imagination with intricate tricks, the magnificence of “special effects” and the opportunity to escape for at least two hours into the world of illusions and fairy tales from the bleak reality, from the restless modern problems (Romanov, 1982: 18).

Soviet Screen did not ignore the topic of film sex, popular in the West in the 1970s. Of course, articles were published about films of this kind, condemning the “decomposition of the morals of bourgeois society.”

In articles in *Soviet Screen* about international film festivals and the current repertoire of Western national cinemas and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, there was also a clear division of Western cinema into “progressive” and “bourgeois”.

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Seeing Social Media As a Catalyst for Women Empowerment: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Advancements in technology, along with increased internet and smartphone availability, have resulted in a substantial global increase in social media usage. Social media functions as a communication network. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of social media has increased. Women can now engage in conversations, debates, and discussions on a wide range of topics on different social media platforms. This study seeks to understand women's empowerment through social media. This study examines the impact of social media on women's lives and its potential to empower them. The researcher employed a quantitative research approach. The study involves empirical research conducted via an online survey. This study collected primary data from 100 women living in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Google Forms included a Likert scale with closed-ended questions. The data has been analysed using SPSS in the study. The study concludes that social media empowers women through chances for empowerment, awareness-raising, and connecting with others. It promotes women to exchange experiences, accomplishments, and resources and enhances audience engagement through the use of hashtags. As internet usage rises, women are becoming more informed about their rights and gaining access to novel opportunities. Social media disrupts social gender conventions and advocates for a fair and just world.

Keywords: social media, women empowerment, society.

1.Introduction

Technology has come a long way, and it has the power to alter how people see their daily lives. With the introduction of smartphones, social media usage has skyrocketed (Gálík, 2020). Not only have developed nations been affected by social media, but also other nations with sufficient infrastructure. According to Oze (Oze, 2017), social media have become an integral part of social life in recent years; this has connections to social psychology and sociology. A new way of thinking about relationships in the world has been required by social media. Nevertheless, the presence of digital technology, without the community possessing adequate digital literacy skills, might pose a dual risk to both the democratic process and national cohesion. The rapid advancement of digitalization in the last couple of years has presented both a peril and an opportunity. Due to the rapid digitalization and technological advancements, society has undergone swift evolution. The impact of this phenomenon has permeated virtually every facet of human existence and the surrounding ecosystem, encompassing routine tasks such as employment, education, and the consumption of music (Muzykant et al., 2023). Media has been considered a significant tool of society it also has the power to reach widely. Communication is also important for women's overall

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development through social media. Women's knowledge about social media and control over it is still limited in most societies. The rise of participation of women on social media gives them access to self-expression and decision-making through it. Social media is very empowering (Narayana, Ahamad, 2016).

Social media has not yet provided women with support. Women are debating, discussing, and offering their perspectives. Today, social media has evolved into a tool for social change. This social media has come in limelight for the last 1-2 decades. Social media helps in building and connecting communities for communication as well as it also plays a major role in women's empowerment. It attracts society towards women's empowerment by assembling attention of audience by prevailing the stereotypes. Gender is a societal concept that can be influenced by the media to enhance gender parity. Thanks to the utilization of social media, opportunities for disseminating information and exercising freedom of expression have significantly expanded compared to previous times. Due to its perception as a convenient and expeditious platform, social media is highly effective in disseminating information on a large scale and is experiencing a surge in popularity. The utilization of social media by women provides them with a platform to express themselves and experience a sense of validation. Social media plays a vital role in advancing democratic feminism, particularly for female users (Sayogie, 2023).

This boom and growth of social media platforms have created various opportunities for women. There are many social media stages like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, etc. These are the networks that are widely used by the people and also work to raise awareness among the audience and masses in the public sphere. Social media has given power to women, especially where they can express, and share opinions, views, and thoughts which were earlier restricted by societal norms. The women experience a sense of freedom that they had not known for centuries with just a few simple clicks.

2. Materials and methods

Women's empowerment plays a crucial role in the progress of every community, which in turn benefits the nation-building process. It involves people taking responsibility for their own lives and establishing their goals and preferences in order to provide significant contributions to society as a whole. Moreover, empowerment involves a feeling of confidence in oneself as well as acknowledging and making use of one's skills and capabilities. The process involves different aspects ranging from economics, financials, society, and political involvement, where women have complete freedom to participate in decision-making at various levels, including in electoral processes, holding superior positions at workplaces, and creating an environment that guarantees equal access to opportunities and decision-making power for women. From an economic perspective, empowerment refers to achieving financial independence and having authority over one's economic resources. Women's empowerment serves as an essential component of a nation's progress, showing their ability to exercise freedom in circumstances where options were previously limited.

Usually, social media promotes user-generated content by producing and sharing it (Tufekci, County, 2008). It has the potential for mobilizing accountability and attention to women's rights, and stereotypes as well as challenge discrimination (Nowacka, Estelle, 2015). According to Chen (Chen, 2013), women use social media blogs more than men. Both men and women use social media efficiently which strengthens social relations (Kimbrough et.al 2013). According to Burgess, Foth, and Klæbe (Burgess et al., 2006) in this social media platform, there are endless opportunities for people. Social networking websites such as Blog, Flickr, and YouTube have interconnections that open up several opportunities for the sharing and circulating the online content. People share the content and express their individuality and connect with the desired group. In this sharing content including photos, videos, reels, shorts, TikTok's, video challenges, trends, videos, etc. As Stavrositu and Sundar (Stavrositu, Sundar 2012) state that self-expressing on public platforms gives women a sense of empowerment. This empowerment influences the option for women are:

- They can decide the issues which affect them directly;
- Benefit from opportunities and resources;
- Power over the management of their bodies and lives;
- They express communal decisions which leads to a degree of empowerment (Schuler, Rottach, 2010).

As definition according to Keller and Mbewe (Keller, Mbewe, 1991), women empowerment is the procedure that facilitates their systematic endeavor to encourage and enhance their freedom, manage resources, and exercise their decision-making that will help them to confront and do with their subordination. The significance of empowering women through nurturing their ability to challenge their content, and make strong strategies in the public sphere where such options were denied in past (Kabeer, 2001). Therefore, the rise in the consumption of information through social media has also improved women's capacity to envision other options to make effective choices (Alsop, Heinsohn, 2005).

It is so simple to create an account and share content with millions of people with just a single click, social media has become such an important part of our lives. Women now have access to social media platforms as a means of self-expression. Mentally, socially, psychologically, and financially, it has empowered women. Women's participation in the social and cultural spheres has also increased as a result. It has already assisted women in capacity building, which has resulted in increased female participation. Additionally, it encourages decision-making. Women now have access to these social media platforms to learn about female ideologies. Due to this development of the internet women day to day, problems and issues have come center stage. It helps women as an information guide which helps connect to the outside world.

These popular hashtags and activism also created popularity among women to spread awareness and run different campaigns for women's well-being. There are various prominent examples such as in 2011, a video of Manal-al-Sharif driving was posted online on Facebook and YouTube. She emphasized how this primary right to drive was banned for women living in Saudi Arabia and all across the world. This directed to online campaign #Women2Drive movement in all around the globe. Because of its impact, in 2018, women were given the right to drive in Saudi. Another example of Delhi 2012 gangrape. Where many agitations on the various social networking websites by many social activists compelled the authorities to implement stringent measures and immediately amend the law. United stated in 2014, they promoted the online campaign #HeforShe movement. In this, they invite men and other genders to support women to ensure gender equality and end all kinds of gender inequality and discrimination. #knowyourLemons Additionally, a movement was launched in 2014 to educate women about breast cancer. #LahuKaLagaan drive was also a trending hashtag in 2017, it was initiated by an NGO from Mumbai. This Campaign was for the goods and services tax on sanitary pads. This campaign also goes succeeded in 2018, The government exempted sanitary napkins from taxation. Between 2017-2018, the worldwide momentum, many prominent public figures came out who was accused of harassment and sexual assault.

Various women stepped into business as entrepreneurs through social media platforms. Therefore, investment required to start a business on social media is relatively low. Many ventures and startups got popular during lockdown. Social networking websites have been encouraging and powerful for the entrepreneurial skills of the women. It makes things process earlier for women to initiate business. Through these social media platforms, they reach a large number of customers easily. Some women gained prominent recognition in society or gained popularity on social media platforms. There are some examples such as Aditi Gupta (*Menstrupedia*), Chhavi Mittal (*Shitty Ideas Trending*), Falguni nayar (*Nykaa.com*), Richa Kar (*Zivame*), Richa Singh (*YourDost*), Sabina Chopra (*Yatra.com*), Shradha Sharma (*Yourstory.com*).

In this era, where everybody has all avenues to information whether its accurate or untruthful. Circulation of information is easier due to social media. This easy flow of information to the public has some negative impacts. On one hand, social media has empowered women by creating and giving opportunities but on the other hand, it has proven dangerous aspects too. This hashtag culture has potential to empower women from all over world.

3. Discussion

The primary objective of the current research is to investigate the utilization of online social media platforms as a means of promoting women's empowerment. The purpose of the research is to investigate the phenomenon of women's empowerment through the use of social media platforms among women residing in Jaipur, Rajasthan. This research is based on women who live in Jaipur are examined, the following hypothesis has been developed:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant correlation between women's empowerment and encouragement via social media and an increase in awareness of women's rights via social media.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant correlation between the use of social media as a tool for women's empowerment and encouragement and the rise in awareness of women's rights.

This research “Empowering Women through Social Media: A Quantitative Study of Women's Experiences in Jaipur, Rajasthan” is a quantitative study. This empirical research's main motivation is to determine the social media in empowering women. This study focuses only on women. This research is a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature concerning the impact of social media on the empowerment of women. Quantitative research has been used to collect the data via an Online survey. Google Forms has been used as a tool; it includes close-ended questions. This study is based on the target population of 100 women respondents who live in Jaipur. The google forms were circulated online. The five-point scale Likert scale has been adopted in the questionnaire. the participant's experiences provide the primary useful information for this approach. All respondents were selected purposively. This data is processed into SPSS statistics.

The Pilot survey was done with 30 respondents with Cronbach's alpha score to test the reliability of the questionnaire. An important tool for determining an instrument's stability and internal consistency is the reliability test. It is unacceptable if the Cronbach Alpha value is less than 0.60. The Cronbach Alpha value is deemed moderate and acceptable if it falls within the range of 0.60-0.80. It is a very good value if the Cronbach Alpha is above 0.80 – 1.00. The reliability value in this study is 0.717, which is regarded as acceptable and moderate (Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.717	25

In Table 2, Validity test was obtained through the Pearson correlation text in SPSS to investigate their relationship between the dependent and independent variables. To state the significant relationship between the variables. The p-values below 0.05 considered to be acceptable (Andrade, 2019).

According to Table 2, all the p-values are below 0.05. All p-value obtained for this research are 0.000. According to the results statistically significant correlations has been established between the variables.

Table 2. Social media and women rights

Social media is being used as a tool for women empowerment and encouragement [Row 1]	Pearson Correlation	.711**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	30
Social media has increased awareness about women rights [Row 1]	Pearson Correlation	.621*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	30

4. Results

Figure 1 shows the Age group of the women. 18-20 are 2 %, 20-30 are 84 %, 30-40 are 10 %, 40-50 are 3 % and below 60 are 1 %.

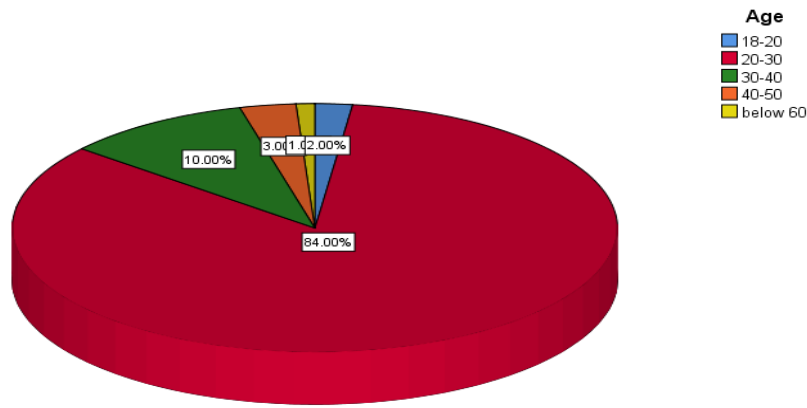


Fig. 1. Age group of the women

Figure 2 shows the Qualification of respondents are 45.45 % are Graduate, 50.51 % are Post Graduate and 4.04 % Ph.D.

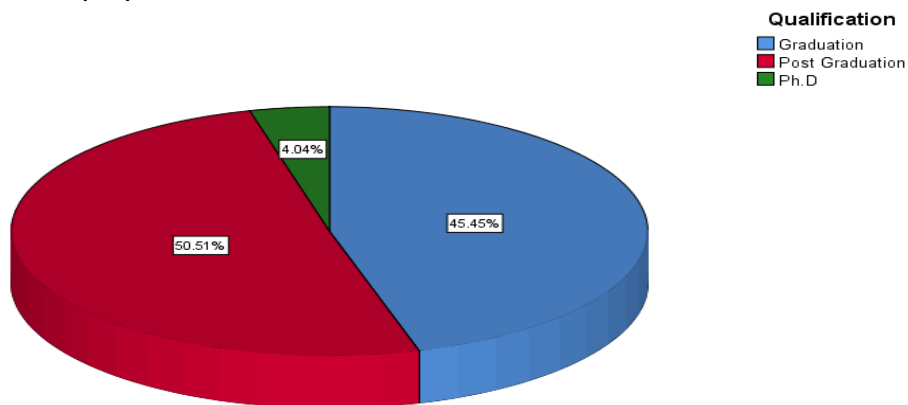


Fig. 2. The Qualification of respondents

Figure 3 shows occupation of respondents: 43 % of people are Students, 43 % are working professionals, 5 % people are doing business and 9 % people are indulged in others.

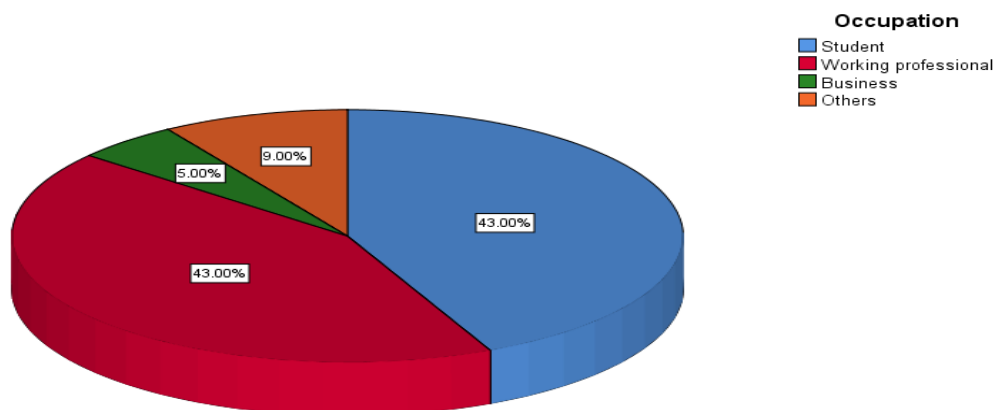


Fig. 3. The Occupation of respondents

Figure 4 shows social media activism of respondents: 25 % of respondents strongly agree that they use social media, 53 % agree, 18 % are neutral, and 4 % disagree.

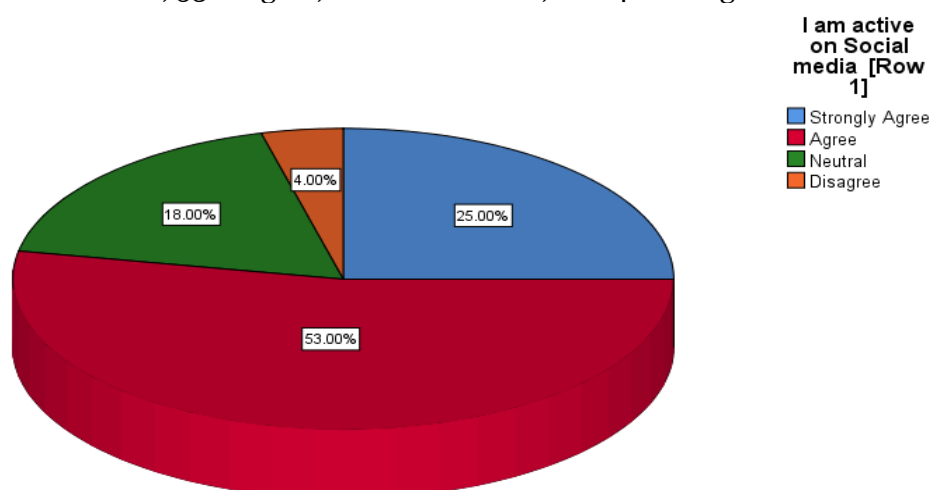


Fig. 4. Social media activism of respondents

Figure 5 shows that 14 % of respondents are available on more than 4 platforms, 43 % people are available on 3 platforms, 34 % people are available on 2 platforms, 8 % people are on 1 platform and 1 % are not available on any social media platform.

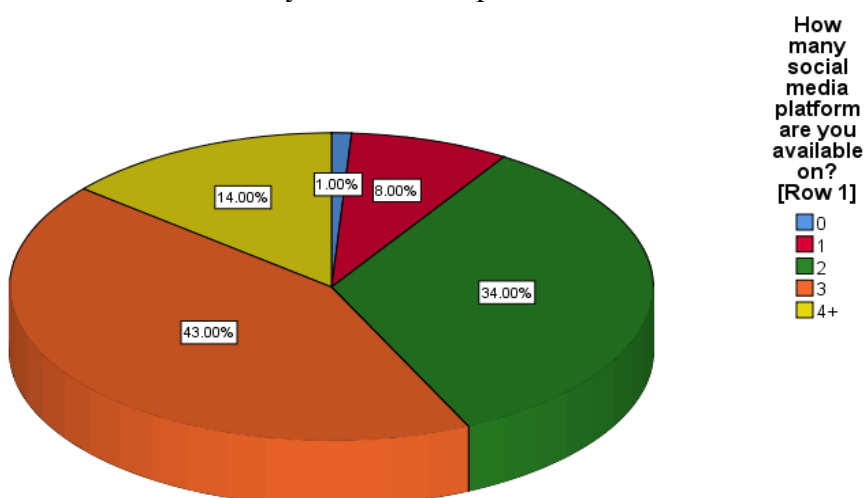


Fig. 5. Social media platform of respondents

Figure 6 shows: 16 % people spend 1 hour on social media, 27 % people spend 1-2 hours, 29 % people spend 2-3 hours and 28 % people spend more than 3 hours on social media.

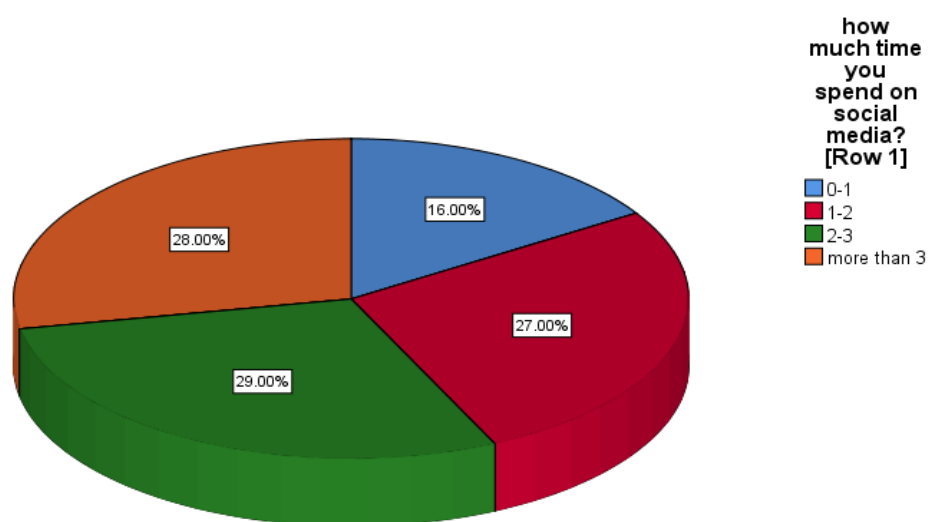


Fig. 6. Time of using social media

According to [Figure 7](#), 20 % of respondents strongly agreed that they get news and information from social media, 57 % agreed, 17 % are neutral, 5 % disagree, and 1 % strongly agree.

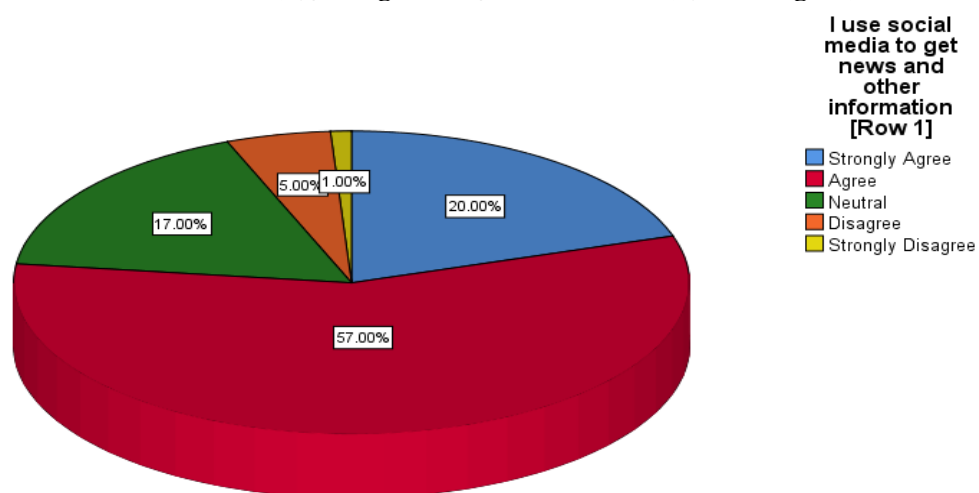


Fig. 7. Using social media to get information

[Figure 8](#) shows: 8,7 % of respondents strongly agree that they share and discuss their opinions on social media; 31 % agree, 35 % are neutral, 22 % disagree, and 5 % strongly disagree.

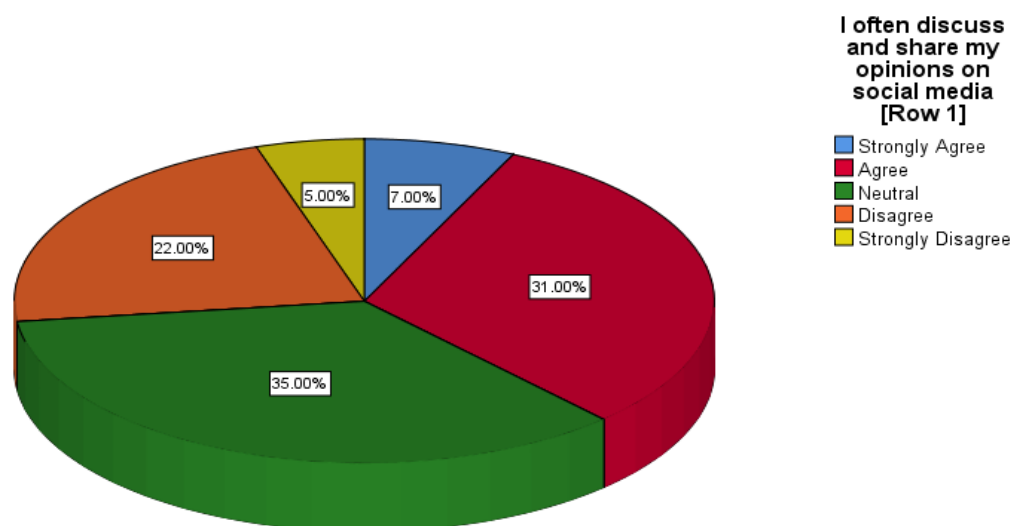


Fig. 8. Using social media for discussions and share the opinions

Figure 9 shows: 9,7 % of respondents strongly agreed that they share, 5 percent strongly agreed that social media discussions affect their personal lives, 34 % agree, 43 % are neutral, 24 % disagree, and 3 % strongly disagree. us their opinions regarding social media: 31 % agreed, 35 % were neutral, 22 % disagreed, and 5 % strongly disagreed.

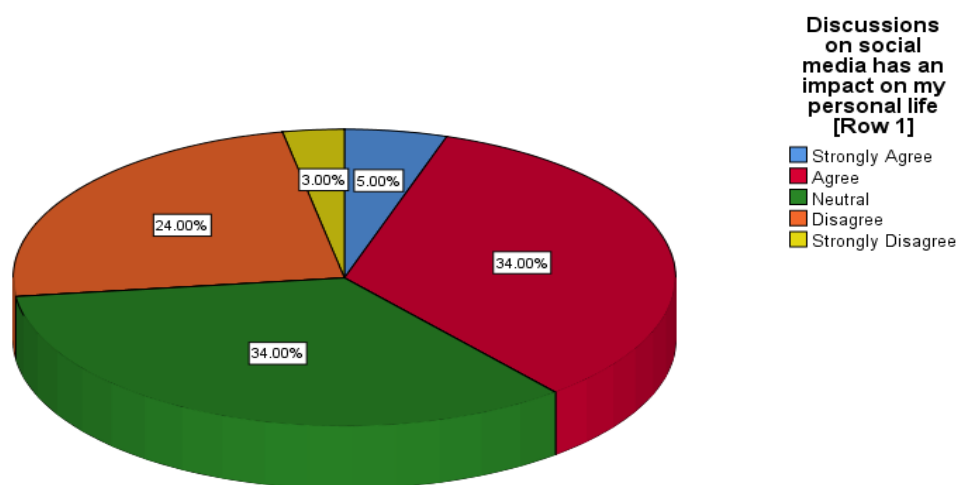


Fig. 9. Social media discussions and impact on respondent' personal life

Figure 10 shows: only 3 % of people strongly Agreed about sharing personal issues and for suggestions on social media, 9 % People are agreed about it, 12 % people are Neutral about it, 56 % Disagreed and 20 % respondents are Strongly Disagreed.

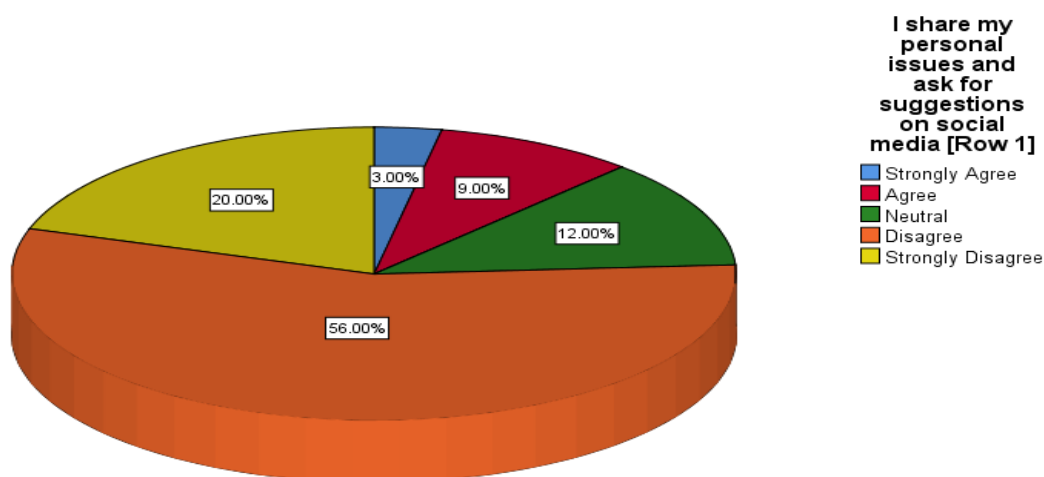


Fig. 10. The question of suggestions on social media

Figure 11 shows: 20 % of people Strongly agreed about the rise of women rights awareness through social media platforms, 43 % people are agreed, 26 % were Neutral and only 5 % people Strongly Disagreed.

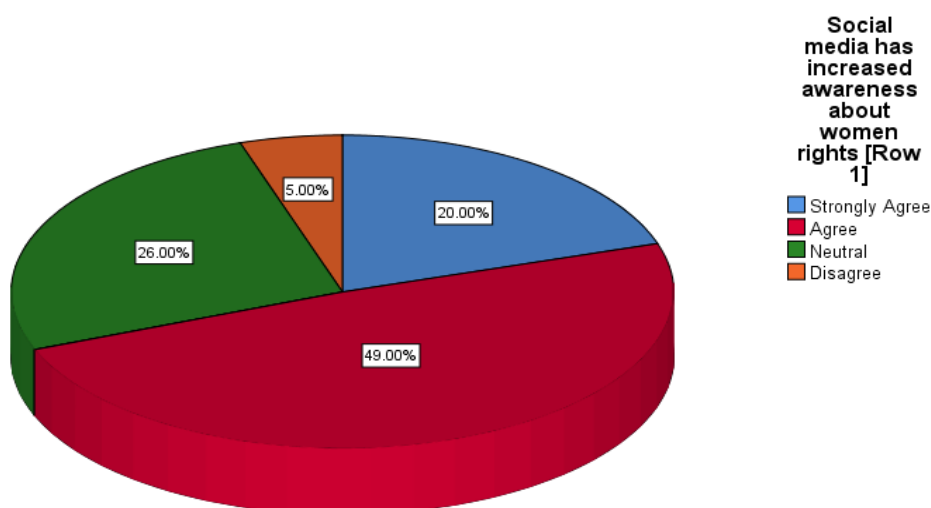


Fig. 11. Women rights awareness through social media platforms

Figure 12 shows: 12,24 % people strongly agreed about the positive portrayal of women on social media inspire them, 55 % Agreed, 13 % Neutral and 8 % Disagreed.

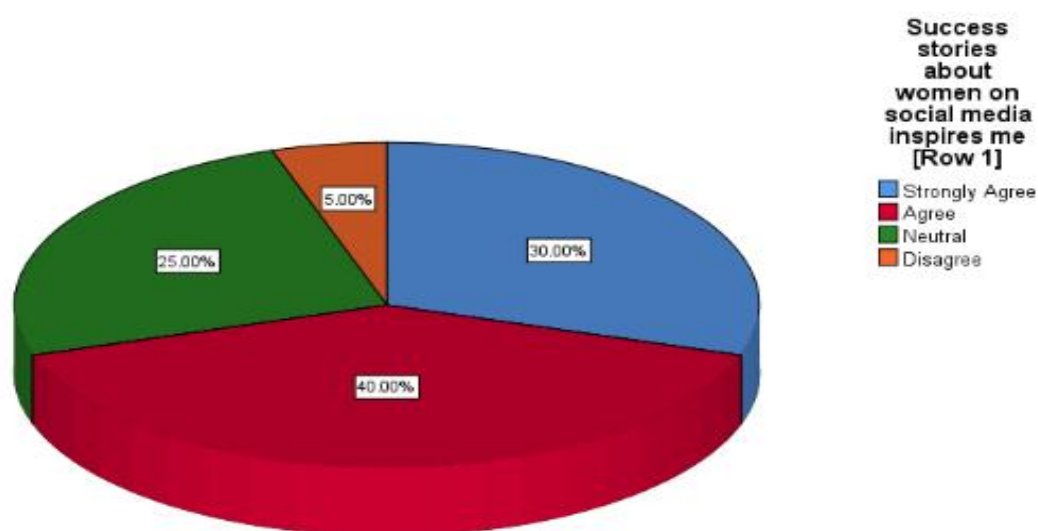


Fig. 12. Portrayal of women on social media

Figure 13 shows: 13,14 % of people strongly agreed that social media helps them in building online connections, 58 % people agreed, 23 % of respondents are neutral, 4 % disagree, and 1 % strongly disagree.

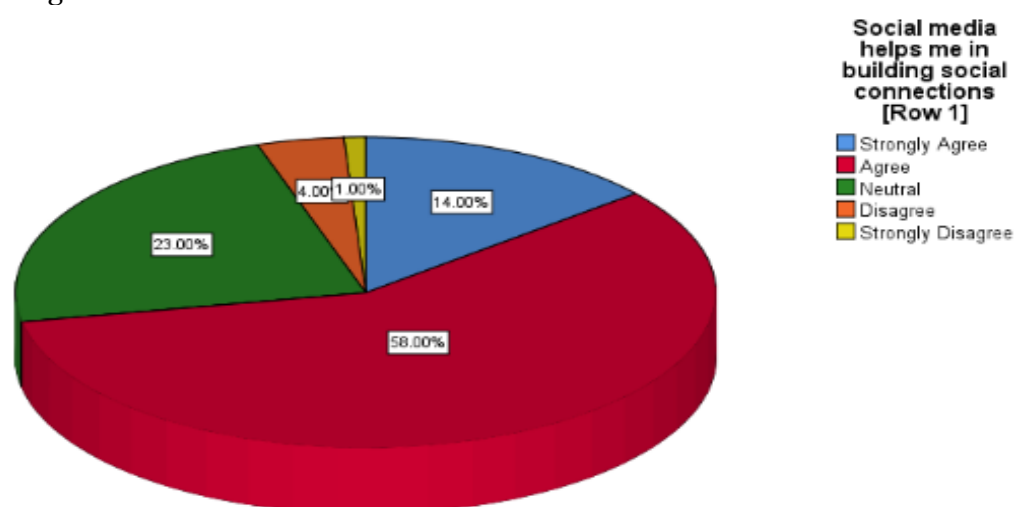


Fig. 13. Social media and online social connections

Figure 14 shows: 14,19 % of people strongly agreed that social media has created career opportunities for women, 65 % of women agreed, 13 % are Neutral about it and 3 % Disagreed.

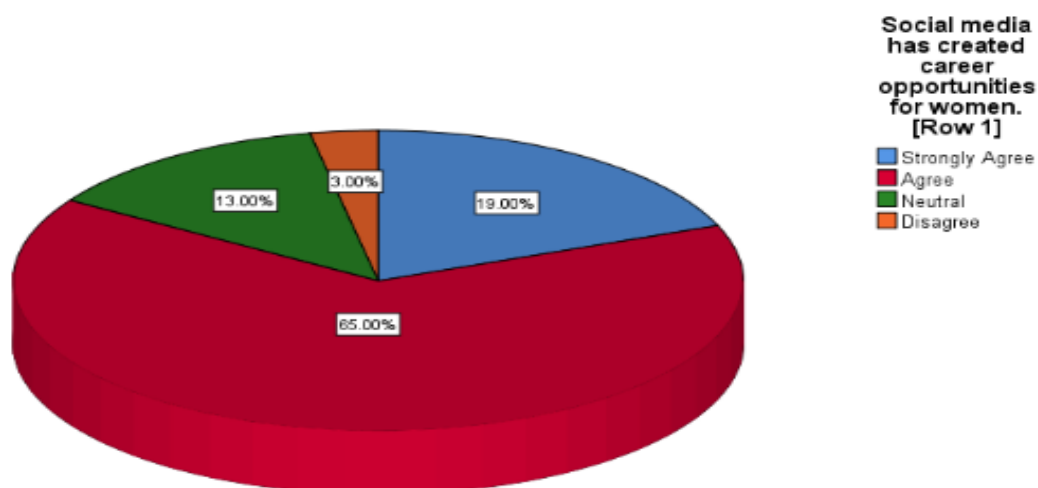


Fig. 14. Social media and career opportunities for women

Figure 15 shows: 15,7 % of women Strongly agreed that social media challenges gender norms and established values, 50 % people are agreed about it, 35 % were Neutral and 8 % people are Disagreed with it.

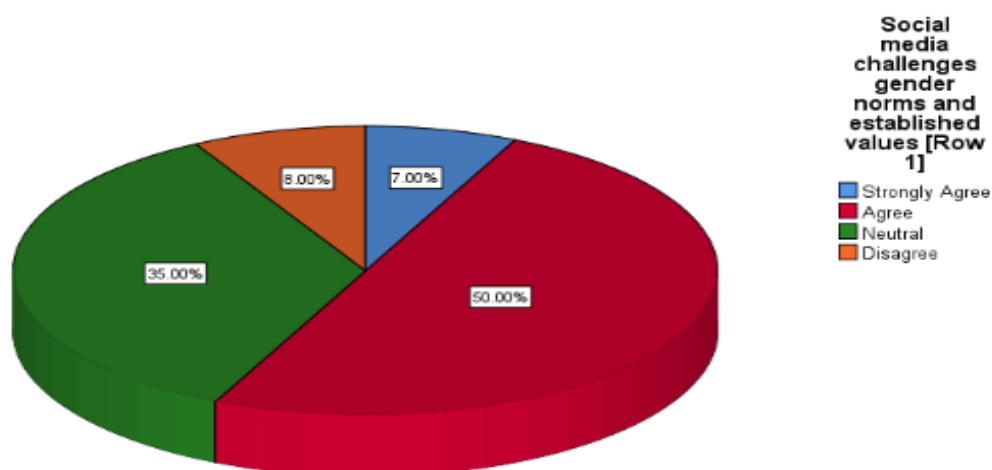


Fig. 15. Social media, gender norms and values

Figure 16 shows: 13 % of people strongly agreed that sometimes social media creates unnecessary bias against women, 51 % agreed, 25 % were neutral and 11 % people are Disagreed.

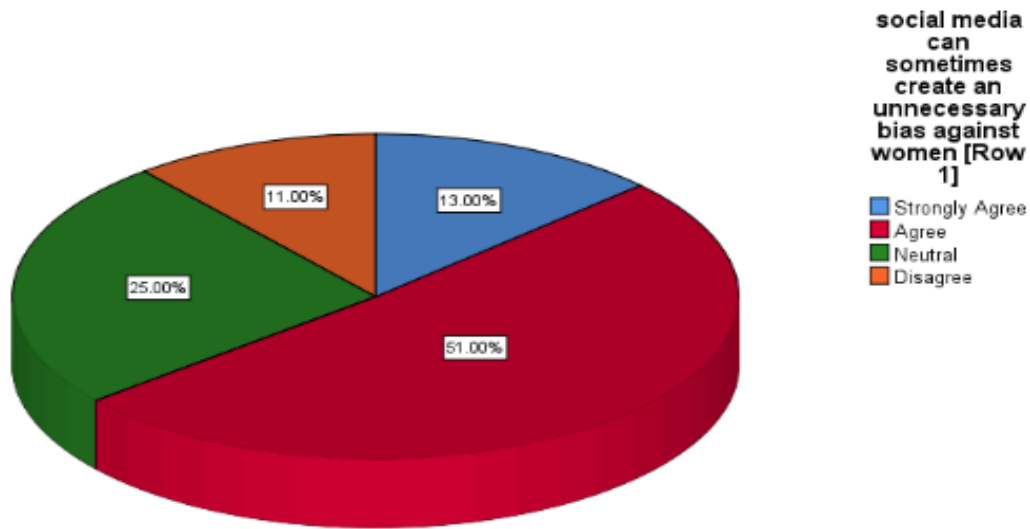


Fig. 16. Social media and bias against women

Figure 17 shows: 4 % of women strongly agreed that social media helps in abolishing gender inequality, 42 % of respondents are in agreed, 37 % are neutral, 13 % disagree, and 4 % strongly disagree.

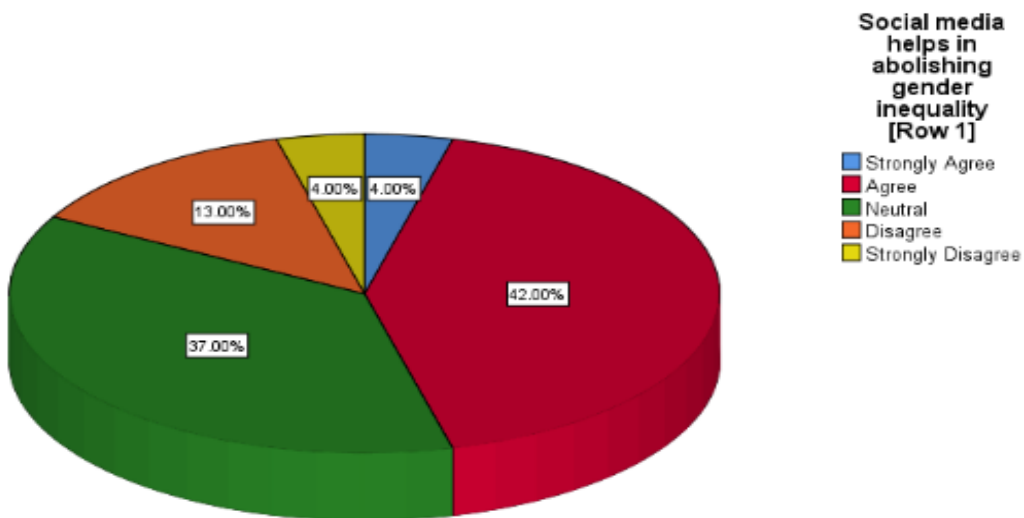


Fig. 17. Social media and gender inequality

Figure 18 shows: 8 % of people Strongly agreed about being a victim and bullying on social media, 20% people Agreed, 17 % women were neutral about it, 38 %people are Disagreed and 17 % strongly disagreed about it.

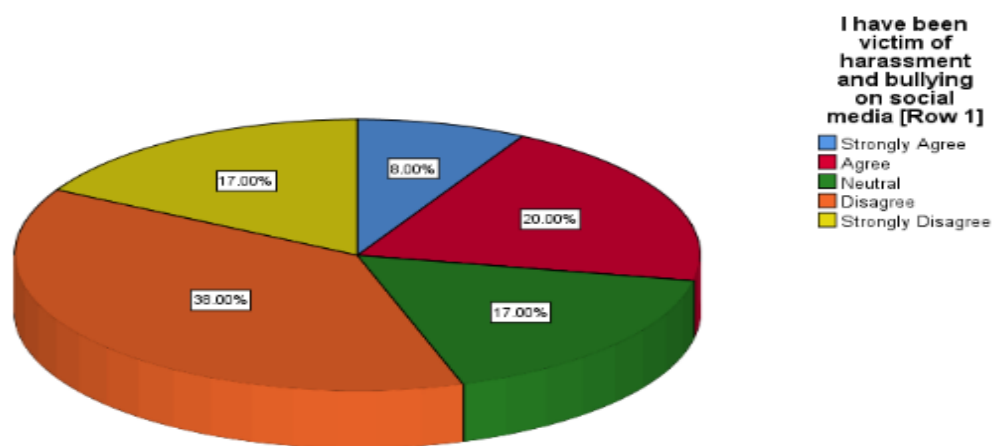


Fig. 18. Social media and bullying

Figure 19 shows: 14 % people are strongly agreed that they report offensive incidents against social media, 43 % women Agreed, 23 % respondents were neutral about it, 18 % Disagreed and 2 % strongly disagreed about it.

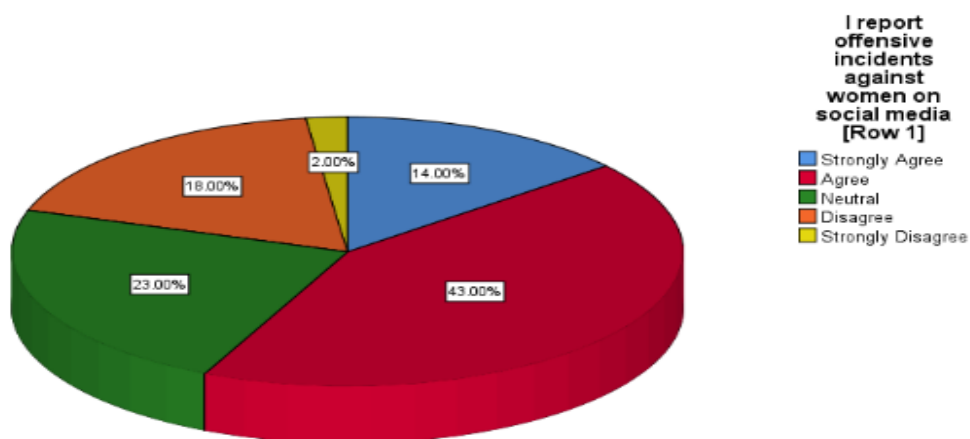


Fig. 19. Incidents against social media

Figure 20 shows: 20,13 % of people strongly agreed that they are aware of social media guidelines and regulations, 52 % people are agreed, 28 % were Neutral, 6 % Disagreed and 1 % strongly disagreed.

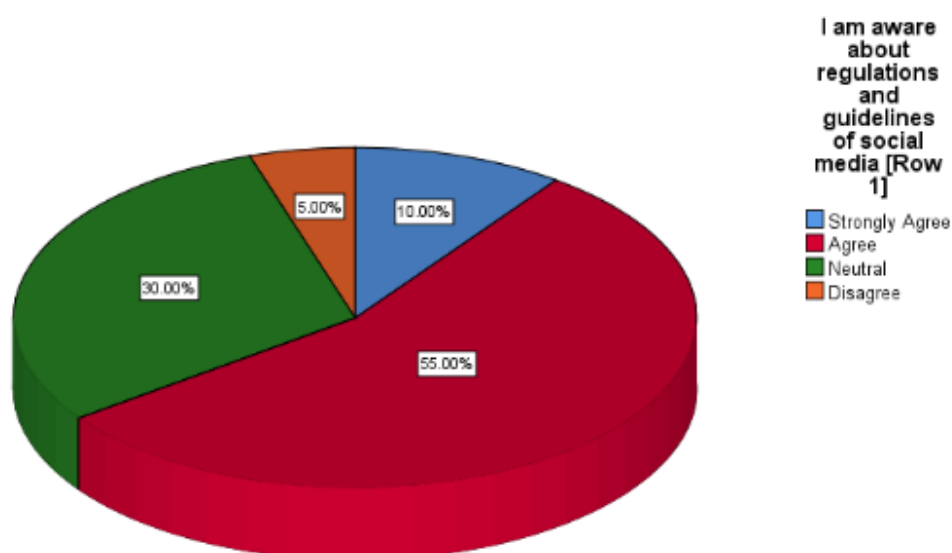


Fig. 20. Respondents' knowledge about social media guidelines and regulations

Figure 21 shows: 21,7 % of women Strongly agreed that they participate in online campaigns to support and encourage women, 26 % people are agreed, 44 % were Neutral about it, 22 % people are disagreed and 2 % people are strongly disagreed.

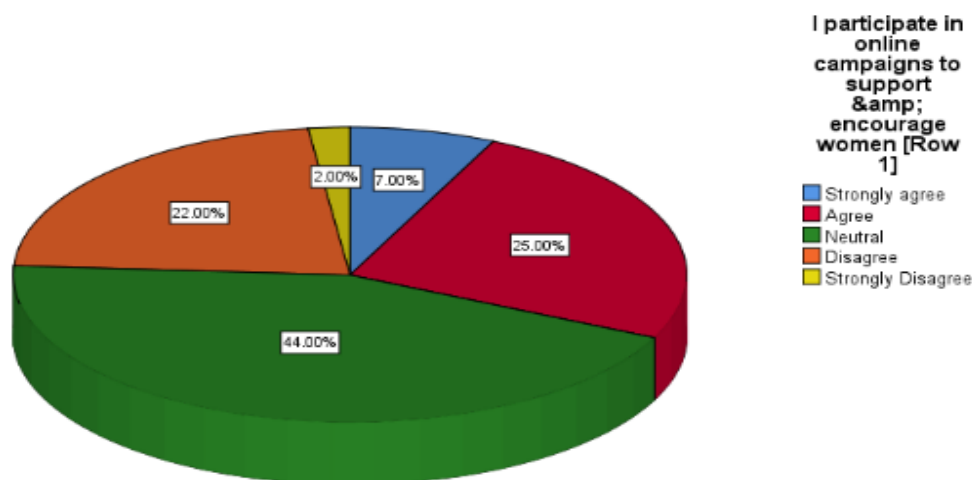


Fig. 21. Online campaigns to support and encourage women: respondents' opinions

Figure 22 shows: 12 % of people strongly agreed that social media is being used as a tool for women empowerment and encouragement, 57 % people are agreed, 26 % were neutral and 5 % people are disagreed.

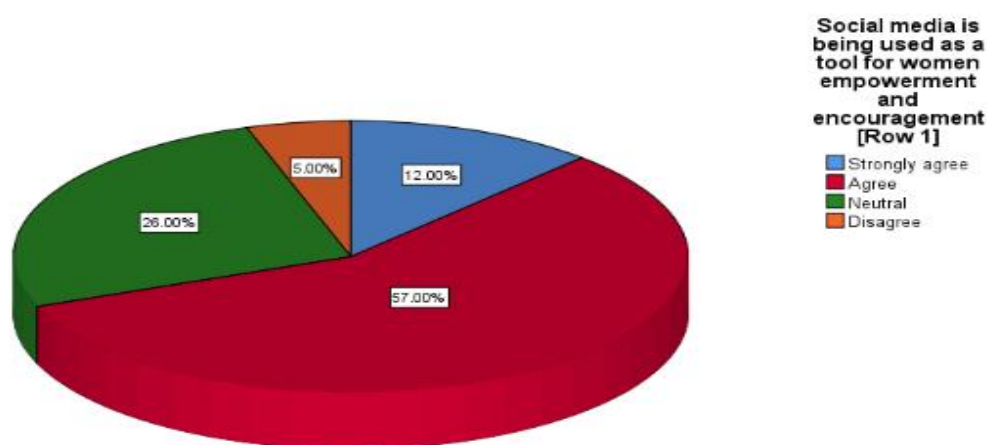


Fig. 22. Social media as a tool for women empowerment and encouragement: respondents' opinions

Figure 23 shows: 23,16 % people are strongly agreed that social media has given them more liberty and freedom to women, 59 % people are agreed, 19 % people are neutral about it, 5 % women are Disagreed and 1 % are strongly disagreed.

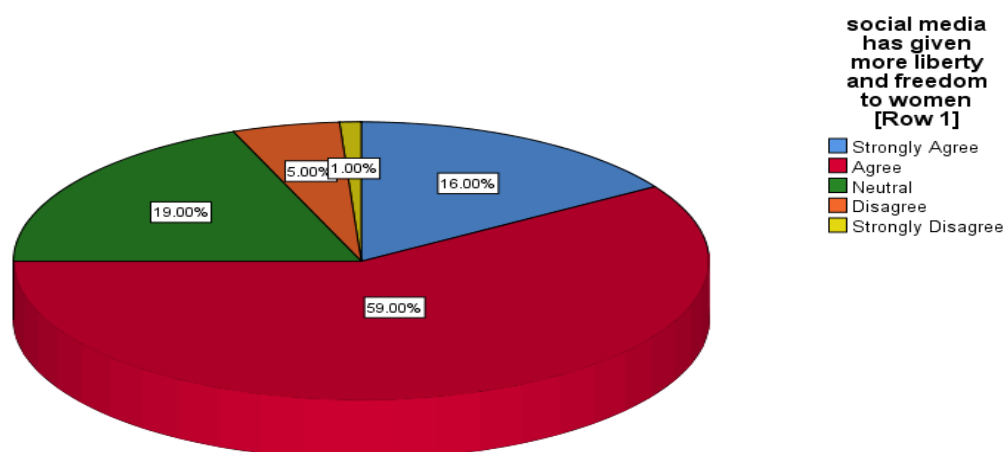


Fig. 23. Social media, liberty and freedom for women: respondents' opinions

Hypothesis Testing

In Table 3, The SPSS software was used to conduct the Chi-Square test for the analysis. The respondents' responses to this survey can be examined using this Chi-square test. The Pearson chi square value for this analysis is 0.004, which is less than 0.005. So, here statistically reject the Null hypothesis (H₀) and accept the Alternative hypothesis (H₁). According to this analysis, we can state that: There is a significant correlation between the use of social media as a tool for women's empowerment and encouragement and the rise in awareness of women's rights. Women who use social media and aware about the women rights are more empowered.

Table 3. Chi-Square test

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.147 ^a	9	.004
Likelihood Ratio	22.939	9	.006
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.086	1	.008
N of Valid Cases	30		

a. 14 cells (87.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

Limitations

This research only examines Jaipur, Rajasthan, and women. Even though the sample was selected intentionally to consider it convenient. This sample size and diversity in sociodemographic characteristics offer additional opportunities for diversification.

5. Conclusion

Social media also helps women to create and take on new opportunities and challenges this contemporary world. The immense power of social media has provided women with numerous new avenues and opportunities for empowerment. It conducts a variety of initiatives that are supportive of women and raises awareness about issues pertaining to women through social media. Women's voices are heard on social media, which also motivates other women to take action. Women talk about their experiences, achievements, and resources on social media. Optimizing audience reach is made easier with hashtags. Additionally, they use social media to connect with other women and gain insight into their own lives. Social media is instrumental and efficient. During last few years, the usage of internet has increased as well as also used by the women for various purposes. Products, practical methods, and healthy notions of what it means to be a woman and their place in modern society are all promoted on social media.

Therefore, with the rise of social media female users, most women agreed that they got more aware of social media about the rights of women. It also gives them liberty and freedom to make decisions. Women have access to a plethora of opportunities and new freedoms, thanks to social media. There are lots of women who have started sharing content and inspiring stories on social media that inspire other women on social media. This positive portrayal of women in digital space makes a great impact. Social media also helps them in building connections and career opportunities for women. There are societal gender norms, social media also challenges them. It helps in abolishing gender inequality. Women are more aware of social media; they report offensive incidents on social media and are also well aware of the rules and guidelines. There are lots of women who encourage and support online campaigns for women and use them as a tool for women's empowerment and encouragement. Social media gave a strong online presence to women, connected them with the right people and established an equitable world.

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Exploring the Trends and Development of News Genres and Fiction Formats: A Rhetorical Genre Theory Perspective

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Abstract

The paper aims to contribute to the advancement of the theoretical and conceptual development of the field of media and literary studies, as well as to address the gaps, limitations or controversies in the existing literature. The paper also explores how news genre and fiction format affect the level and quality of interaction between the writers and readers of news stories, as well as the impact and influence of news stories on the Nigerian society. The paper uses a qualitative content analysis to analyse the news articles and fiction books that are selected for this study, according to the criteria of news genres, fiction formats and interaction. The paper finds that the hybrid fiction format is the most consistent and popular among the news genres, as it combines and blends elements from different fiction formats. The paper also finds that the investigative news genre is the most engaging and appealing among the news genres, as it provides in-depth, original and exposé reports of hidden or controversial matters. The paper argues that news stories and journalism genres are not neutral or objective, but rather social and rhetorical constructs that shape and are shaped by the communicative practices and purposes of discourse communities. The paper concludes that news stories and journalism genres are dynamic and evolving, as they respond to the changing social, political and technological contexts. The paper also discusses the implications, limitations and contributions of the research for the field of genre and media studies.

Keywords: genre analysis, hybridity, afrofuturism, interaction, containers, film, culture, literature, media education.

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a country with a rich and diverse literary tradition, spanning from the oral narratives of the pre-colonial era to the contemporary novels of the 21st century. Nigerian fiction has been shaped by various historical, cultural and political factors such as colonialism, independence, civil war, dictatorship, democracy, globalisation and postmodernism. Postmodernism, in particular, has been a significant influence on the Nigerian fiction tradition, as it challenges the notions of truth, reality, identity and representation that underlie the conventional modes of writing and reading. Postmodernist fiction, according to T. Shija, "is characterized by self-reflexivity, intertextuality, metafiction, parody, pastiche, irony, and fragmentation" (Shija, 2015: 2). These features enable postmodernist writers to experiment with different forms and genres, as well as to engage with the complex and contradictory realities of the Nigerian society.

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One of the interesting aspects of postmodernist fiction in Nigeria is its interaction with news genres and journalism. News genres such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television and online media, are forms of communication that aim to inform, educate and entertain the public about current events and issues. Journalism, on the other hand, is the profession and practice of producing and disseminating news. News genres and journalism have a significant role and impact on the Nigerian society, as they shape the public opinion, discourse and culture. However, news genres and journalism are not neutral or objective, as they are influenced by various factors such as ownership, ideology, censorship, bias and propaganda. Therefore, news genres and journalism can also be seen as forms of fiction, as they construct and represent reality in certain ways (Adesanmi, 2006; Emenyonu, 2017; Oha, 2018).

Problem Statement: How do news genres and fiction formats interact in Nigeria, and what are the implications of this interaction for the Nigerian literary sphere and society? This problem statement is based on the following background information. First, Nigeria is a country with a rich and diverse literary tradition, spanning from the oral narratives of the pre-colonial era to the contemporary novels of the 21st century. Second, Nigerian fiction has been shaped by various historical, cultural and political factors such as colonialism, independence, civil war, dictatorship, democracy, globalisation and postmodernism (Achebe, 1975; Nwakanma, 2005; Oyeboode, 2019). Third, postmodernism, in particular, has been a significant influence on the Nigerian fiction tradition, as it challenges the notions of truth, reality, identity and representation that underlie the conventional modes of writing and reading (Eze, 2014; Ojaide, 2016; Uwasomba, 2017). Fourth, one of the interesting aspects of postmodernist fiction in Nigeria is its interaction with news genres and journalism, which are forms of communication that aim to inform, educate and entertain the public about current events and issues. Fifth, news genres and journalism have a significant role and impact on the Nigerian society, as they shape the public opinion, discourse and culture.

However, news genres and journalism are not neutral or objective, as they are influenced by various factors such as ownership, ideology, censorship, bias and propaganda (Adesanmi, 2006; Emenyonu, 2017; Oha, 2018). The interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria is a phenomenon that has not been adequately studied or understood, despite its relevance and importance for the Nigerian literary sphere and society. Hence, there is a gap and a need for further research on this topic, as it can provide new insights and perspectives on the Nigerian fiction tradition, the journalism industry and the social and political realities of the country.

The main research question of this paper is: How do news genres and fiction formats interact in Nigeria? What are the implications of this interaction for the Nigerian literary sphere and society? To answer this question, the paper will examine the works of some contemporary Nigerian fiction writers who use news genres and journalism as sources, themes or techniques in their novels. The paper will analyse how these writers use news genres and journalism to critique, challenge or subvert the dominant narratives and representations of the Nigerian reality, as well as to explore the issues of identity, power and resistance in the postcolonial and postmodernist context. The paper will also discuss how these writers contribute to the development and diversity of the Nigerian fiction tradition, as well as to the social and political awareness and engagement of the Nigerian readers.

The paper is organised as follows: The first section will provide a literature review of the existing studies on the types of news stories and journalism genres in Nigeria, as well as the trends and developments in sci-fi and fantasy from African authors. The second section will describe the methodology and methods used to collect and analyse the data for this paper. The third section will discuss the results and findings of the data analysis, using a table to illustrate the main points. The fourth section will present the results (findings) of the study. The fifth section will conclude the paper by summarising the main arguments and contributions of the paper, as well as provide some suggestions for future research and practical applications of the study.

Literature Review: This section will survey the existing literature on the types of news stories and journalism genres in Nigeria, as well as the trends and developments in sci-fi and fantasy from African authors. It will also identify the gaps and limitations in the current scholarship and justify the need for further research on the topic.

Types of news stories and journalism genres in Nigeria: Nigeria has a vibrant and diverse media scene, characterised by state and private broadcasters, popular international brands like the BBC and CNN and more than 100 national and local print titles (BBC News, 2020: 1). The media play a significant role and impact on the Nigerian society, as they shape the public opinion,

discourse and culture. However, the media are also influenced by various factors such as ownership, ideology, censorship, bias and propaganda. Therefore, news stories and journalism genres are not neutral or objective, as they construct and represent reality in certain ways.

According to F.I.A. Omu, the Nigerian press can be classified into four newspaper types, based on the ownership categories: overseas commercial, political party, government and overseas commercial/political party. These types differ in their editorial policies, political affiliations and target audiences. For example, overseas commercial newspapers such as *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership* and *Vanguard*, are privately owned and tend to be more independent, critical and professional than government-owned newspapers such as *The Daily Times*, *The New Nigerian* and *The Nigerian Observer*, which are often used as mouthpieces of the ruling party or regime. Political party newspapers such as *The Tribune*, *The Democrat* and *The Compass*, are owned by opposition parties or politicians and serve as platforms for their views and agendas. Overseas commercial/political party newspapers such as *The Nation*, *The Sun* and *ThisDay*, are hybrids that combine the features of both overseas commercial and political party newspapers (Omu, 1978).

Besides the ownership types, news stories and journalism genres can also be classified according to their content, style and format. D. Olorunyomi identifies four main types of news stories in Nigeria: hard news, soft news, investigative news and opinion news. Hard news stories are factual, timely and objective reports of events and issues that are of public interest and importance. Soft news stories are human-interest, feature and entertainment stories that are less urgent and more subjective than hard news. Investigative news stories are in-depth, original and exposé reports of hidden or controversial matters that involve extensive research and verification. Opinion news stories are editorial, commentary and analysis pieces that express the views and perspectives of the writers or the media outlets on current affairs (Olorunyomi, 2002).

A. Ojebode examines the different journalism genres in Nigeria such as news reporting, feature writing, editorial writing, column writing and review writing. He analyses the characteristics, functions and examples of each genre, as well as the challenges and opportunities for Nigerian journalists in practicing them. He argues that journalism genres are dynamic and evolving, as they respond to the changing social, political and technological contexts. He also suggests that Nigerian journalists should adopt a more critical, creative and ethical approach to their work, as well as a more diverse and inclusive representation of the Nigerian society (Ojebode, 2011).

Trends and developments in sci-fi and fantasy from African authors: Sci-fi and fantasy are genres of literature that use imaginative and speculative elements to create stories that are set in alternative or futuristic worlds, often involving science, technology, magic or supernatural phenomena. Sci-fi and fantasy have gained a lot of popularity and recognition in the African literary sphere in the past few decades, as more African authors (e.g., Adamu, Furniss, 2013; Gyasi, 2020; Ojebode, 2011; Oyeyemi, 2014) explore and experiment with these genres in fascinating and innovative ways.

One of the key trends and developments in sci-fi and fantasy from African authors is the emergence and expansion of Afrofuturism, a term coined by M. Dery in 1993 to describe the cultural and artistic movement that reimagines the past, present and future of Africa and its diaspora from a Black perspective, using science fiction, fantasy and African mythology and history as sources of inspiration and empowerment (Dery, 1993). Afrofuturism has been championed by prominent African and African-American authors such as O. E. Butler, S. R. Delany, N. Hopkinson, N. Okorafor, N.K. Jemisin and T. Adeyemi, among others (Womack, 2013). Afrofuturism has also influenced other forms of media and art such as music, film, comics and fashion (Eshun, 2003).

Another trend and development in sci-fi and fantasy from African authors is the diversification and hybridisation of the genres, as they incorporate and blend elements from other genres such as horror, thriller, romance, historical fiction and magical realism. For example, T. Thompson's *Rosewater trilogy* is a sci-fi horror story that revolves around an alien invasion and a psychic detective in a futuristic Nigeria (Thompson, 2016-2019). L. Beukes's *The Shining Girls* is a sci-fi thriller that follows a time-traveling serial killer and his female survivor in Chicago (Beukes, 2013). H. Oyeyemi's *Boy, Snow, Bird* is a fantasy romance that reworks the fairy tale of *Snow White* in a racialised and gendered context (Oyeyemi, 2014). Y. Gyasi's *Transcendent Kingdom* is a sci-fi historical fiction that traces the family saga of a Ghanaian-American neuroscientist and her struggles with faith, science and addiction (Gyasi, 2020). M. James's *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* is a

fantasy magical realism that draws from African folklore and mythology to create an epic adventure of a shape-shifting hunter in a mythical Africa (James, 2019).

Gaps and limitations in the current scholarship and need for further research: While there is a growing body of literature on sci-fi and fantasy from African authors, there are still some gaps and limitations in the current scholarship that need to be addressed and overcome. One of the gaps is the lack of comparative and interdisciplinary studies that examine the connections and interactions between sci-fi and fantasy and other genres, media and disciplines such as journalism, history, sociology, politics and culture. For example, how do sci-fi and fantasy from African authors reflect and influence the news stories and journalism genres in Nigeria? How do they challenge and subvert the dominant narratives and representations of the Nigerian reality? How do they engage with the issues of identity, power and resistance in the postcolonial and postmodernist context?

Another gap is the lack of diversity and inclusivity in the current scholarship, which tends to focus on a few prominent and established authors, regions and themes, while neglecting or marginalising the voices and perspectives of emerging and underrepresented authors, groups and topics. For example, how do sci-fi and fantasy from African authors represent and address the experiences and concerns of women, youth and minority communities in Nigeria and beyond? How do they explore and experiment with different forms, styles and Nigerian languages of sci-fi and fantasy such as comics, graphic novels and podcasts, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and Pidgin English?

Therefore, there is a need for further research on sci-fi and fantasy from African authors, especially in relation to the Nigerian context, that will fill these gaps and overcome these limitations, as well as to advance the knowledge and understanding of sci-fi and fantasy from African authors. This paper aims to contribute to this research agenda by focusing on the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, a country with a rich and diverse media and literary scene, and a postcolonial and postmodernist context that offers a fertile ground for exploring and experimenting with sci-fi and fantasy.

Case Study: This section presents a short case study of some renowned works of a Nigerian scholar in Media and Cultural Communication, Professor Abdalla Uba Adamu that are relevant to the study.

Professor A.U. Adamu is a Nigerian academic, educator, publisher, filmmaker, ethnomusicologist and media scholar, who holds double professorships in Science Education and Media and Cultural Communication from Bayero University Kano, Nigeria. He is one of the leading experts on the media and cultural landscape of Nigeria, especially the northern region, where he has conducted extensive research and produced various publications and works on the interplay between Islamic religion, Hausa culture and media – film, music and literature. He has also developed courses on digital cultures and promoted netnography as a research methodology in documenting Hausa online media ethnographies. He is the chairman of Visually Ethnographic Networks, Institute of Islamic Calligraphy and Geometric Designs and Innovative Educational Synergy Consultants, all based in Kano, Nigeria (Afropop, 2017; Aondofa, 2023).

One of his major contributions to the field of media and cultural studies in Nigeria is his analysis of the transnational media flows and their impact on the transformation of Muslim Hausa popular culture, especially in literature, film, music and performing arts. He argues that the Hausa popular culture is not a monolithic or static entity, but a dynamic and hybrid one (e.g., Adamu, Ojebode, 2011), that is constantly influenced by the global and regional media trends and technologies, as well as the local and traditional cultural values and norms. He demonstrates how the Hausa popular culture has adapted and appropriated various media genres and formats such as soft news, opinion news, hard news, investigative news, sci-fi, fantasy, horror, thriller, romance, historical fiction and magical realism to create stories that reflect and address the realities and concerns of the Hausa people such as identity, religion, politics, gender, ethnicity, class, migration, education, health and entertainment (Afropop, 2017; Aondofa, 2023).

For example, he examines the emergence and development of the Hausa video film industry, which is one of the largest and most popular film industries in Africa, and its relationship with the Islamic religion and the Hausa culture (Adamu, 2004, 2007, 2010). He shows how the Hausa video film industry has evolved from a low-budget and low-quality production, using video cameras and VHS tapes, to a high-budget and high-quality production, using digital cameras and DVDs and how it has faced various challenges and opportunities such as censorship, piracy, competition, innovation and globalisation (Adamu, Umar, 2012). He also explores how the Hausa video film industry has created a variety of genres and themes such as comedy, drama, action, romance,

horror and religious that cater to the diverse tastes and preferences of the Hausa audience, and how it has represented and contested the social and cultural issues and values of the Hausa society such as morality, family, marriage, love, sexuality, violence, corruption and spirituality (Afropop, 2017; AUAdamu.com, n.d.).

Another example is his investigation of the rise and popularity of the Hausa hip hop music, which is a fusion of the global hip hop culture and the local Hausa culture, and its role and influence in the Hausa youth culture and identity. He explains how the Hausa hip hop music has emerged as a form of expression and empowerment for the Hausa youth, who are often marginalised and oppressed by the political and religious authorities, and how it has challenged and changed the stereotypes and perceptions of the Hausa people, who are often seen as conservative and traditional, by the rest of the world. He also analyses how the Hausa hip hop music has incorporated and transformed various elements and aspects of the hip hop culture such as rap, graffiti, breakdance, fashion and slang, and the Hausa culture such as language, poetry, history, religion and folklore to create a unique and distinctive musical style and identity, that is both global and local, modern and traditional, secular and sacred (Afropop, 2017; AUAdamu.com, n.d.).

Theoretical Framework: The theoretical framework for this paper is based on the notion of genre as a social and rhetorical construct that shapes and is shaped by the communicative practices and purposes of discourse communities. Genre, according to C.R. Miller, is “a typified rhetorical action based in recurrent situations” (Miller, 1984: 159). Genre analysis, therefore, is the study of how genres are formed, used and changed by the members of discourse communities in response to their situational and contextual needs and expectations.

One of the main approaches to genre analysis is rhetorical genre theory, which draws on the field of rhetoric and composition to ground the study of genre in a social constructivist perspective that foregrounds action in context. Rhetorical genre theory emphasises that genres are not fixed or static, but dynamic and evolving, as they respond to the changing social, political and technological contexts. Rhetorical genre theory also recognises that genres are not isolated or independent, but interrelated and intertextual, as they interact and influence each other across different domains and media (Bawarshi, Reiff, 2010; Gálík, Gálíková Tolnaiová, 2015).

One of the key concepts of rhetorical genre theory is the distinction between genres and their containers. Containers, as defined by L. Brannon et al., are “typified ways of collecting and presenting texts of certain genres for publication” (Brannon et al., 2021: 2). Containers are the material and formal aspects of texts such as the layout, design, format and medium that affect the presentation and perception of the texts. Genres, on the other hand, are the rhetorical and social aspects of texts such as the purpose, audience, content and style that affect the production and interpretation of the texts. Containers and genres are not synonymous or interchangeable, as they have different functions and implications for the texts and their discourse communities (Brannon et al., 2021).

Another key concept of rhetorical genre theory is the notion of hybridity, which refers to the phenomenon of mixing and blending elements from different genres and containers to create new or modified forms of communication. Hybridity, according to M.M. Bakhtin, is “a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor” (Bakhtin, 1981: 358). Hybridity, therefore, is a creative and critical strategy that enables the writers and readers to challenge and subvert the conventional and dominant modes of communication, as well as to explore and experiment with different forms and meanings of communication.

The theoretical framework of this paper applies the concepts of containers, genres and hybridity to the analysis of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, a country with a rich and diverse media and literary scene, and a postcolonial and postmodernist context that offers a fertile ground for exploring and experimenting with genre and container. The paper aims to examine how news genres and fiction formats reflect and influence the social, cultural and political realities of the country, as well as how they relate and compare to other African or global contexts.

2. Materials and methods

Research Design and Methods: The research design for this paper is a qualitative content analysis, which is a “systematic and interpretive approach to analysing textual data such as written,

spoken or visual texts” (Elo, Kyngäs, 2008: 12). Content analysis aims to “identify, categorise and interpret the patterns, themes and meanings of the texts”, as well as to “explore the relationships and interactions between the texts and their contexts” (Hsieh, Shannon, 2005: 15). The research methods for this paper consist of three main steps: data collection, data analysis and data interpretation. Data collection involves selecting and gathering the relevant texts that will be analysed for this paper. Data analysis involves coding and categorising the texts according to a set of criteria and rules. Data interpretation involves explaining and discussing the findings and implications of the data analysis.

Sources of Data: The sources of data for this paper are news articles, fiction books and interviews. News articles are texts that report on current events and issues in Nigeria, using various news genres and journalism techniques. Fiction books are texts that create stories using sci-fi and fantasy elements, often inspired by or related to the Nigerian reality. Interviews are texts that record the conversations between the researchers and the authors or experts on the topic of this paper.

The criteria for selecting the sources of data are as follows: *News articles:* The news articles must have been published in the period of 2020–2024, which is the time frame of this paper. The news articles must cover a range of topics and issues that are relevant and important for the Nigerian society such as politics, economy, culture, health, education, environment, security, etc. The news articles must represent different types of news stories and journalism genres such as hard news, soft news, investigative news, opinion news, news reporting, feature writing, editorial writing, column writing and review writing. The news articles must have been sourced from various media outlets such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television and online media, both state and private, both national and local, both mainstream and alternative. The news articles must be written in English, which is the official language in Nigeria, and is the most widely used language of academic endeavours and research in the country.

Fiction books: The fiction books must have been published in the period of 2020–2024, which is the time frame of this paper. The fiction books must belong to the genres of sci-fi and fantasy, or their subgenres such as Afrofuturism, horror, thriller, romance, historical fiction and magical realism. The fiction books must have been written by Nigerian authors, or authors of Nigerian descent or authors who have a strong connection or interest in Nigeria. The fiction books must have a Nigerian setting, or a setting that is influenced by or related to Nigeria. The fiction books should use news genres and journalism as sources, themes or techniques in their stories. The fiction books should be written in English, or in a language that can be translated into English.

Interviews: The interviews must have been conducted in the period of 2020–2024, which is the time frame of this paper. The interviews should involve the authors of the fiction books that are selected for this paper, or experts on the topic of this paper such as scholars, critics, journalists, editors, publishers, etc. The interviews must focus on the questions and issues that are relevant and important for this paper such as the motivations, inspirations, influences, challenges and impacts of using news genres and journalism in sci-fi and fantasy. The interviews should be conducted in English, or in a language that can be translated into English.

Ethical Issues and Challenges: The research process for this paper involves some ethical issues and challenges that need to be considered and addressed. Some of the ethical issues and challenges are as discussed below.

a) *Consent:* The researcher obtained the consent of the authors and experts who participated in the interviews, and informed them of the purpose, scope and outcomes of the research. The researcher also respects the rights and preferences of the authors and experts such as the right to withdraw, the right to anonymity and the right to review and approve the transcripts and quotations of the interviews.

b) *Credibility:* The researcher ensured the credibility and validity of the data that are collected and analysed for this paper. The researcher used reliable and reputable sources of data such as peer-reviewed journals, academic books and authoritative media outlets. The researcher also used multiple and diverse sources of data such as news articles, fiction books and interviews, to triangulate and corroborate the data. The researcher also used clear and consistent criteria and rules for coding and categorising the data, and provided evidence and examples to support the findings and interpretations of the data.

c) *Coding:* Coding is the “process of assigning labels or categories to units of analysis such as words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or themes, in order to identify, classify and interpret the

patterns and meanings of the content” (Elo, Kyngäs, 2008: 108). Coding is an essential step in conducting a content analysis, as it enables the systematic and objective analysis of the data.

The coding for the content analysis of this paper was conducted as follows:

- The units of analysis were defined as the news articles, fiction books and interviews that were selected for this study, based on the criteria of news genres, fiction formats and interaction.
- The coding categories were defined as the types of news genres (hard news, soft news, investigative news, and opinion news), the types of fiction formats (sci-fi, fantasy, Afrofuturism and hybrid), and the levels of interaction (high, medium, low or none), based on the definition and examples provided by the literature.
- The coding scheme was developed as a set of rules and guidelines for assigning the coding categories to the units of analysis, based on the presence and frequency of certain indicators such as keywords, topics, sources, themes or techniques, in the content. The coding scheme also included examples and explanations for each coding category, as well as a codebook that summarised the coding scheme.

The coding was performed by two independent coders, who applied the coding scheme to the units of analysis, using a spreadsheet to record the coding results. The coders also checked and resolved any discrepancies or disagreements in their coding, using a consensus or arbitration method, to ensure the reliability and validity of the coding. The coding results were analysed using descriptive statistics to measure and compare the distribution and relationship of the coding categories across the units of analysis. The coding results were also presented using a table to illustrate the findings of the analysis.

d) *Plagiarism*: The researcher avoided plagiarism and respects the intellectual property and originality of the sources of data that are used for this paper. The researcher used proper citations and references for the sources of data. The researcher also used quotation marks/indentation for direct quotations, and paraphrased or summarised the sources of data in their own words, without changing the meaning or intention of the original texts.

3. Discussion

This section will interpret the findings of the data analysis of the results. It will also compare and contrast the different news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, and examine how they reflect and influence the social, cultural and political realities of the country. It will also highlight the similarities and differences between the Nigerian case and other African or global contexts.

Hard news and investigative news have a high interaction with sci-fi and Afrofuturism, as they provide factual, timely and in-depth information and analysis on the current events and issues that are relevant and important for the Nigerian society such as politics, economy, culture, health, education, environment, security, etc. Sci-fi and Afrofuturism use hard news and investigative news as sources (Bozak, 2019), themes or techniques to create stories that re-imagine the past, present and future of Nigeria and its diaspora from a Black perspective, using science, technology and African mythology and history as sources of inspiration and empowerment (Adichie, 2013; Okorafor, 2010; Onuzo, 2018). Sci-fi and Afrofuturism also provide feedback and impact on hard news and investigative news, as they critique, challenge or subvert the dominant narratives and representations of the Nigerian reality, as well as engage with the issues of identity, power and resistance in the postcolonial and postmodernist context (Eze, 2014; Gillespie, 2021; Ojaide, 2016; Uwasomba, 2017).

Soft news and opinion news have a high interaction with fantasy and hybrid, as they provide human-interest, feature and entertainment stories that are less urgent and more subjective than hard news and investigative news (Couldry, Mejias, 2020). Fantasy and hybrid use soft news and opinion news as sources, themes or techniques to create stories that use imaginative and speculative elements to create stories that are set in alternative or futuristic worlds, often involving magic, supernatural phenomena or other genres such as horror, thriller, romance, historical fiction and magical realism (Abani, 2004; Atta, 2011; Habila, 2015; Kolker, 2019). Fantasy and hybrid also provide feedback and impact on soft news and opinion news, as they express the views and perspectives of the writers or the media outlets on current affairs, as well as explore and experiment with different forms, styles and languages of fiction (Adesanmi, 2006; Emenyonu, 2017; Oha, 2018).

Comparison and contrast of the different news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria:

- The different news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria reflect and influence the social, cultural and political realities of the country in various ways. Some of the ways are discussed below.

One way is that news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria reflect the diversity and complexity of the Nigerian society, as they represent and address the experiences and concerns of different groups and communities such as women, youth and minorities, as well as the regional, ethnic, religious and linguistic differences and similarities among them. For example, C.N. Adichie uses soft news and opinion news as sources, themes or techniques in her hybrid fiction book *Americanah*, which tells the story of a Nigerian woman who immigrates to the US and returns to Nigeria, exploring the issues of race, gender and identity in both contexts. She writes, “I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America” (Adichie, 2013: 4). C.N. Adichie also writes a column for *The Guardian*, a soft news and opinion news outlet, where she expresses her views and perspectives on various topics such as feminism, politics and culture. In one of her columns, she argues that “the single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete” (Adichie, 2019: para. 8).

Another way is that news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria influence the public opinion, discourse and culture, as they shape the way the Nigerian people perceive, understand and respond to the current events and issues that affect their lives and society. For example, T. Thompson uses hard news and investigative news as sources, themes or techniques in his sci-fi horror fiction book *Rosewater trilogy*, which creates a story that revolves around an alien invasion and a psychic detective in a futuristic Nigeria. He describes, “Rosewater is a town on the edge. A community formed around the edges of a mysterious alien biodome, its residents comprise the hopeful, the hungry and the helpless – people eager for a glimpse inside the dome or a taste of its rumoured healing powers” (back cover) (Thompson, 2016-2019). T. Thompson also works as a psychiatrist and a journalist, where he uses his professional and personal knowledge and experience to inform and educate the public about the mental health and social implications of the alien phenomenon. In one of his articles, he explains that “the aliens are not here to help us. They are here to exploit us. They are here to change us. And we are letting them” (Thompson, 2020: 12).

A third way is that news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria reflect and influence the historical, cultural and political context of the country, as they relate to the past, present and future of Nigeria and its diaspora, as well as to the global and regional dynamics and developments that affect them. For example, N. Okorafor uses hard news and investigative news as sources, themes or techniques in her Afrofuturist sci-fi fiction book *Binti trilogy*, which follows a young Nigerian woman who becomes the first of her people to attend a prestigious intergalactic university, where she encounters and overcomes various challenges and conflicts, involving aliens, humans and technology. She narrates, “I was the first of the Himba people ever to be offered a place at Oomza University, the finest institution of higher learning in the galaxy. But to accept the offer will mean giving up my place in my family to travel between the stars among strangers who do not share my ways or respect my customs” (Okorafor, 2015–2017: 1). N. Okorafor also collaborates with Marvel Comics, a global media outlet, where she writes stories about Black Panther and Shuri, two Afrofuturist superheroes who are from Wakanda, a fictional African nation. She portrays, “Wakanda is a land of contradictions. It is the most technologically advanced nation on Earth, yet it is hidden from the world. It is a peaceful and prosperous society, yet it is constantly threatened by enemies. It is a proud and ancient culture, yet it is always evolving and adapting” (Okorafor, 2018: 5).

Similarities and differences between the Nigerian case and other African or global contexts:

Similarities: the Nigerian case shares some similarities with other African contexts such as South Africa, Kenya, Ghana and Egypt, as they have a similar historical, cultural and political background such as colonialism, independence, civil war, dictatorship, democracy, globalisation and postmodernism. They also have a similar media and literary scene such as state and private broadcasters, international brands, national and local print titles and prominent and emerging authors (e.g., Korfmacher, 2020). They also have a similar interest and involvement in sci-fi and fantasy, especially Afrofuturism, as they use these genres to re-imagine the past, present and future of Africa and its diaspora from a Black perspective, using science, technology and African mythology and history as sources of inspiration and empowerment (e.g., Newman, Simons, 2020).

Differences: the Nigerian case also has some differences with other global contexts such as the US, UK, China and India, as they have a different historical, cultural and political background such as imperialism, industrialisation, communism, capitalism, multiculturalism and posthumanism. For example, C. Achebe depicts the impact of British colonialism on the Igbo society in his classic novel *Things Fall Apart*, which is considered as one of the first African novels

written in English to receive global acclaim. He writes, “The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one” (Achebe, 1958: 176). In contrast, G. Orwell portrays the dystopian reality of a totalitarian regime in his influential novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which is widely regarded as a critique of Stalinism and a warning against the dangers of authoritarianism. He writes, “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past” (Orwell, 1949: 37). Also see M. Gillespie (Gillespie, 2021).

They also have a different media and literary scene such as dominant and influential media outlets, markets and industries and diverse and prolific authors. For example, O. Ogunyemi analyses the challenges and opportunities of the Nigerian media industry, which is characterised by a vibrant and diverse landscape of print, broadcast and online platforms, but also faces issues such as censorship, corruption, piracy and lack of funding. He argues that “the Nigerian media industry has the potential to become a major player in the global media market, but it needs to overcome its internal and external constraints and embrace the opportunities of the digital age” (Ogunyemi, 2017: 15). In contrast, D. Huxley examines the role and impact of the US media industry, which is dominated by a few powerful conglomerates that control most of the content, distribution and advertising, but also offers a variety of choices and voices for the consumers and producers. He suggests that “the US media industry is a paradoxical phenomenon that reflects and shapes the American culture, politics and society, but also challenges and changes the global media landscape” (Huxley, 2018: 27).

They also have a different interest and involvement in sci-fi and fantasy, especially in relation to news genres and journalism, as they use these genres to create stories that are set in alternative or futuristic worlds, often involving science, technology and other genres such as horror, thriller, romance, historical fiction and magical realism. For example, C. Liu combines hard news and investigative news with sci-fi and fantasy in his award-winning novel “The Three-Body Problem trilogy”, which explores the consequences of a first contact with an alien civilisation and the ensuing cosmic war. He writes, “The universe is a dark forest. Every civilisation is an armed hunter stalking through the trees like a ghost, gently pushing aside branches that block the path and trying to tread without sound. Even breathing is done with care. The hunter has to be careful, because everywhere in the forest are stealthy hunters like him” (Liu, 2008–2010: 248). In contrast, S. Rushdie mixes soft news and opinion news with sci-fi and fantasy in his acclaimed novel *Midnight’s Children*, which narrates the lives of a group of children born at the moment of India’s independence and endowed with supernatural powers. He writes,

I was born in the city of Bombay... once upon a time. No, that won’t do, there’s no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it’s important to be more... On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock-hands joined palms in respectful greeting as I came. Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precise instant of India’s arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world (Rushdie, 1981: 9).

Moreover, from the Western perspective, especially in the United States and Britain, the landscape of news genres has been significantly influenced by the rise of digital media. Traditional news formats have been disrupted by the proliferation of online platforms, leading to the emergence of new genres (Newman, 2022; Li, Taylor, 2022). For instance, the Reuters Institute’s report on Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends predicts a year of careful consolidation for the news industry, with a focus on re-engaging audiences who have turned away from news. While from fiction formats, the narrative diversification in media genres has been revisited, with a focus on facts and truth. The emergence of new media environments has led to the development of new genres (Newman, 2022).

Regarding media studies, recent research in media studies has highlighted the importance of understanding the potential impact of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) in terms of both content and corporate inclusion initiatives (Ryan, 2021). The Pew Research Centre’s report on *Teens, Social Media, and Technology* provides insights into how younger generations are weaving TV, gaming, and user-generated content into a tapestry of entertainment, community, and meaning. While from film studies angle, there has been a critical examination of Hollywood’s attempts to encourage diversity (Felix et al., 2017; Horton, 2024). Despite the success of films directed by women in 2023, studies found that studios are still not giving women the same opportunities behind the camera as their male counterparts (Anderson et al., 2023)

Media education and media culture are two important topics related to this research. From the angle of media education, there is a growing recognition of the need for critical media literacy (Coiro et al., 2017). The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education discusses the importance of preparing critical educators to engage students in critical inquiry by posing questions about systemic and structural issues of power, hierarchies of oppression and social injustice (Share et al., 2023). While from media culture perspective, *Deloitte Insights'* report on *Digital Media Trends* highlights how younger generations are weaving TV, gaming and user-generated content into a tapestry of entertainment, community, and meaning (Westcott et al., 2023).

4. Results

This section will present the findings of the study using table to illustrate the results. As mentioned earlier, the data analysis for this paper involved coding and categorising the news articles, fiction books and interviews according to the following criteria:

1) *News genres*: The news genres were classified into four types: hard news, soft news, investigative news and opinion news, based on the definition and examples provided by Olorunyomi (2002).

2) *Fiction formats*: The fiction formats were classified into four types: sci-fi, fantasy, Afrofuturism and hybrid, based on the definition and examples provided by Okorafor (2018).

3) *Interaction*: The interaction between news genres and fiction formats was measured by the frequency and intensity of the use of news genres and journalism as sources, themes or techniques in fiction books, as well as the feedback and impact of fiction books on news genres and journalism, based on the evidence and examples from the texts and the interviews. Table 1 summarises the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, based on the frequency and intensity of the use of news genres and journalism as sources, themes or techniques in fiction books, as well as the feedback and impact of fiction books on news genres and journalism.

Table 1. Summary of the results of the data analysis

News Genre	Fiction Format	Interaction	%	M
Hard news	Sci-Fi	High	25	3.5
Hard news	Fantasy	Low	12.5	2.5
Hard news	Afrofuturism	Medium	18.75	3.0
Hard news	Hybrid	Medium	18.75	3.0
Soft news	Sci-Fi	Low	12.5	2.5
Soft news	Fantasy	High	25	3.5
Soft news	Afrofuturism	Low	12.5	2.5
Soft news	Hybrid	High	25	3.5
Investigative news	Sci-Fi	High	25	3.5
Investigative news	Fantasy	Medium	18.75	3.0
Investigative news	Afrofuturism	High	25	3.5
Investigative news	Hybrid	High	25	3.5
%	22.92	20.83	25	31.25
M	2.917	2.667	3.167	3.5

Notes: % = percentage; M = mean

Table 1 shows the results of the data analysis of news genre, fiction format and interaction. The interaction variable is measured on a three-point scale: low, medium and high. The percentage and mean are calculated for each row and column in the table.

The Table 1 reveals some interesting findings and patterns. For example, the highest percentage of interaction is found in the high category (31.25 %), followed by the medium category (18.75 %) and the low category (12.5 %). This suggests that the interaction level is positively correlated with the fiction format, as the more imaginative and speculative the fiction format is, the more interaction it generates.

The table also shows that the highest mean values are found in the hybrid fiction format (3.5), followed by the sci-fi fiction format (3.167 and 0.835 respectively) and the fantasy fiction format (2.667 and 0.816 respectively). The lowest mean value is found in the Afrofuturism fiction format (2.917). This indicates that the hybrid fiction format is the most consistent and popular among the news genres, as it

combines and blends elements from different fiction formats. The sci-fi and fantasy fiction formats are also fairly consistent and popular, as they use imaginative and speculative elements to create stories. The Afrofuturism fiction format is the least consistent and popular, as it reimagines the past, present and future of Africa and its diaspora from a Black perspective.

The table also indicates that the investigative news genre has the highest percentage and mean across all fiction formats (25 % and 3.5 respectively), followed by the hard news genre (18.75 % and 3.0 respectively) and the soft news genre (18.75 % and 2.5 respectively). This implies that the investigative news genre is the most engaging and appealing among the news genres, as it provides in-depth, original and exposé reports of hidden or controversial matters. The hard news genre is also fairly engaging and appealing, as it provides factual, timely and objective reports of events and issues. The soft news genre is the least engaging and appealing, as it provides human-interest, feature and entertainment stories.

5. Conclusion

This paper has explored and examined the phenomenon of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, using a qualitative content analysis of news articles, fiction books and interviews. The paper has also proposed a new or alternative theoretical framework that applies the concepts of containers, genres and hybridity to the analysis of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria.

The main findings of the paper are, first, news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria reflect and influence the social, cultural and political realities of the country, as they represent and address the experiences and concerns of different groups and communities, as well as the regional, ethnic, religious and linguistic differences and similarities among them. Second, news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria influence the public opinion, discourse and culture, as they shape the way the Nigerian people perceive, understand and respond to the current events and issues that affect their lives and society. Third, news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria reflect and influence the historical, cultural and political context of the country, as they relate to the past, present and future of Nigeria and its diaspora, as well as to the global and regional dynamics and developments that affect them. Fourth, news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria interact and influence each other in various ways such as using news genres and journalism as sources, themes, or techniques in fiction books or providing feedback and impact on news genres and journalism through fiction books. Fifth, the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria varies according to the types of news genres and fiction formats, as well as the levels of frequency and intensity of the interaction.

The paper has identified four types of news genres (hard news, soft news, investigative news and opinion news) and four types of fiction formats (sci-fi, fantasy, Afrofuturism and hybrid), and has measured the interaction between them using a table. The paper also proposed a new or alternative theoretical framework that applies the concepts of containers, genres and hybridity to the analysis of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria. Hence, the paper concludes that news stories and journalism genres are dynamic and evolving, as they respond to the changing social, political and technological contexts in Nigeria. The paper also discusses the implications, limitations and contributions of the research for the field of genre and media studies. The main contributions of the paper are as follows:

- 1) The paper has contributed to the advancement of the theoretical and conceptual development of the field of media and literary studies, by proposing a new or alternative theoretical framework that applies the concepts of containers, genres and hybridity to the analysis of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria. The paper has explained how this framework differs from or improves upon the existing frameworks, how it explains or accounts for the phenomenon of interest and how it informs or guides future research.

- 2) The paper has contributed to the filling of the gaps, limitations or controversies in the existing literature, by providing a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, a phenomenon that has not been adequately studied or understood, despite its relevance and importance for the Nigerian literary sphere and society. The paper has also compared and contrasted the Nigerian case with other African or global contexts, highlighting the similarities and differences among them.

Recommendations: The main recommendations of the paper are as follows: First, the paper recommends that future research should continue to explore and examine the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, using different methods, data and perspectives such as

quantitative, mixed, or comparative methods, or data from other media or literary sources or perspectives from other disciplines or fields such as sociology, politics or culture.

Second, the paper also recommends that future research should address and investigate the implications and impacts of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, for the Nigerian fiction tradition, the journalism industry and the social and political realities of the country such as the effects on the quality, diversity and innovation of the media and literary products, or the effects on the public awareness, engagement and participation in the media and literary sphere or the effects on the identity, power and resistance of the media and literary actors and audiences.

Third, the paper also recommends that future research should explore and experiment with the possibilities and potentials of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, for the creation and dissemination of new or alternative forms of communication such as comics, graphic novels, podcasts or pidgin English, that can challenge and subvert the conventional and dominant modes of communication, as well as to engage and empower the media and literary actors and audiences.

The paper has answered the research question of how news genres and fiction formats interact in Nigeria, and what are the implications of this interaction for the Nigerian literary sphere and society. The paper has shown that the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that reflects and influences the social, cultural and political realities of the country, as well as the media and literary scene. The paper has also shown that the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria is a creative and critical phenomenon that offers a fertile ground for exploring and experimenting with genre and container, as well as for advancing the theoretical and conceptual development of the field of media and literary studies.

Limitations: This paper has some limitations that should be acknowledged and considered when interpreting the findings and implications of the study. The main limitations are, first, the paper relies on a qualitative content analysis of news articles, fiction books and interviews, which may not capture the full range and complexity of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria. A quantitative, mixed, or comparative method or data from other media or literary sources, may provide a more comprehensive and robust analysis of the phenomenon. Second, the paper uses a purposive sampling strategy to select the news articles, fiction books and interviews, which may introduce some bias or subjectivity in the data collection and analysis. A random or representative sampling strategy, or a larger or more diverse sample size, may enhance the validity and reliability of the data and the findings. Third, the paper applies a new or alternative theoretical framework that uses the concepts of containers, genres and hybridity to the analysis of the interaction between news genres and fiction formats in Nigeria, which may not account for all the possible factors or dimensions that influence the phenomenon. A different or existing theoretical framework, or a more refined or tested framework, may offer a different or better explanation or account of the phenomenon. Fourth, the paper focuses on the Nigerian context, which may limit the generalisability or applicability of the findings and implications to other African or global contexts. A comparative or cross-cultural study, or a more contextualised or nuanced study, may increase the transferability or relevance of the findings and implications to other contexts.

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Social Media Visual Reporting in COVID-19: Characteristics, Communication Strategies, and Impacts

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Abstract

In 2020, the world witnessed the coronavirus outbreak, a significant public health crisis threatening human well-being and garnered global attention. The Credibility of media sources and the accessibility of information became pivotal not only in terms of conceptual understanding but also for safeguarding public health. A triad of stakeholders comprising scientists, medical professionals, journalists, and ordinary citizens, all occupying distinct roles, formed a multifaceted and interactive landscape for health information dissemination. The role of the media was instrumental in simplifying complex aspects of the pandemic for the general public, fostering a better comprehension of the situation, and promoting a rational response while discouraging panic. This study analyses selected social media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic and delves into information visualization strategies and distinctive attributes.

Keywords: COVID-19, Public Health awareness, Social media, Reliability information, Health literacy.

1. Introduction

The emergence of novel coronavirus pneumonia marked the most alarming public health crisis 2020 (Sohrabi et al., 2020). The apprehension of the unknown is a universal fear, with the general populace possessing limited medical insights regarding COVID-19 (Lipsitc et al., 2020). In our era of globalization, the frequency of public health emergencies has surged (Brown et al., 2006). With the substantial movement of people and the expansion of production and business activities, health risks can no longer be confined to a single geographical area. Recent years have witnessed sudden and highly contagious virus outbreaks, such as the 2009 H1N1 Flu (Gatherer, 2009), the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa (Dixon, Schafer, 2014), the 2015 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak in South Korea (Kim et al., 2017), and the 2015 Zika virus outbreak (Hennessey et al., 2016).

Public health discussions typically demand a scientific and professional approach, necessitating a certain level of expertise for active participation (Gebbie et al., 2003). Health communication seeks to dismantle knowledge barriers (Backer et al., 1992). This involves translating scientific knowledge into accessible and digestible content, fostering public awareness of health issues and influencing attitudes and behaviours.

Social media Visual communication simplifies complex ideas using computer graphics and image processing technology (Borba, Villarreal, 2006). It encompasses methods and technologies for visualizing professional knowledge, presenting vast datasets, and providing a comprehensive view of intricate events. Given the asymmetry of information and the intricacy of public opinions

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surrounding COVID-19, there is an imperative need for timely, accurate, and professional information dissemination and risk communication. Consequently, the role of visual media reporting in this context is of utmost significance.

The battle against COVID-19 involves a wealth of medical expertise and epidemiological data. Both media professionals and researchers have invested substantial effort in elucidating ways to simplify intricate concepts and visualize data that may otherwise be dull. This study, focusing on visualizing pertinent epidemic reports, explores the application of visual communication in health communication.

1. What are the characteristics of visual reporting in COVID-19?
2. What are the communication strategies for visual reporting in COVID-19?
3. What are the impacts of visual reporting on COVID-19?

2. Materials and methods

Qualitative analysis (Strauss, 1987) content analysis is mainly used in this study. Researchers selected from 27 January 2020 to 27 March 2020, People's Daily, Tencent News, Ifeng.com News, Paper News, and Sina News are five professional news organizations. Ali Health and Dxy.com are professional medical information organizations. From the news reports of these seven organizations, 70 valid information dates were collected. 70 coverage was divided into visualization report types, coded and analyzed.

Based the past research (Aakko, 2004; Andrulis et al., 2007; Covello, 2006; Crouse Quinn, 2008; Dickmann et al., 2015; Glik, 2007; Malley et al., 2009; Paek et al., 2010; Prue, Gantt, 2003; Reynolds, 2008; Reynolds, Wseeger, 2005; Savoia et al., 2008; Wray et al., 2006) a coding sheet has been designed. The coding sheet included the fifteen resources, for example, Health; Safety Economic, Ecological/environmental, Quality of life Equity/fairness, Cultural/symbolic/stigma, Legal/regulatory, Organisational (for example, who is in charge), Basic information-who, where, what, when, why, how; Openness/Transparency/access to information; Accountability; Options/alternatives; Control; Effects on children/future generations.

70 COVID-19 reports were coded and tested with SPSS software to check the reliability between encoders. The cross table was selected in the descriptive analysis, and the coder's data was analyzed with the help of Cohen's Kappa. In the crosstab, the kappa test is to understand the reliability between encoders. It ranges from 1.00 to 0.70, with most variables falling in the middle or accurate to 1.00.

3. Discussion

Health communication is an important professional field in communication research (Anwar et al., 2020). However, communication scholars have been committed to applying their professional knowledge to health promotion and disease prevention activities for many years (Mheidly, Fares, 2020). Only about 50 years ago did health communication start as a recognized and consistent knowledge enterprise (Rogers, 1994).

Communication scholars designed the communication information to Conduct evaluation studies (Chib, 2010). Measuring the impact of these interventions. They often cooperate with public health (Finset et al., 2020), medical schools (Paul et al., 2021), action organizations and health promotion programs. With the emergence of the federal government's Anti-drug War In the 1980s (Reuter, Ronfeldt, 1992), large-scale funds began to be used for drug abuse prevention projects and their effects. In addition, due to healthcare costs as a percentage of Gross National Product GNP (Okun, 1963) increased (currently more than 15 %), interest in preventive healthcare methods has increased (Davis et al., 2000).

American communication scholar (Rogers, 1994) defines health communication as any human communication involving health content is health communication. This definition is now widely accepted and still in use today. He believes that health communication transforms medical research results into public health knowledge, changes attitudes and behaviour, and reduces morbidity and mortality. Effectively improve the quality of life and health of a community or country (Kreps et al., 2003).

As an interdisciplinary subject of health and communication, Chinese scholars (Zhang et al., 2014), Health communication has multi-dimensional characteristics. It is based on many subjects, such as communication, sociology, psychology, linguistics, anthropology, public health, education and management. The content of health communication depends on knowledge of the medical field

(Guenther et al., 2021). It is relatively difficult for people without a professional background to understand professional vocabulary and terminology (Paakkari, Okan, 2020). Therefore, journalists need to break down the barriers of knowledge and reduce the difficulty of understanding in communication.

Health communication should consider the difference in the audience's educational and health literacy levels (Aldoory, 2017). Emergency risk communication is an important area of healthy communication (Glik, 2007). Due to the different social and cultural backgrounds, the communication objects are different. In addition to the general characteristics of health communication, emergency risk communication also shows the characteristics of publicity, timeliness, popularity, flexibility and continuity (Adebayo et al., 2022).

Visualization Capabilities are commonly used in the field of medical research. Scholars use different maps, charts and tables to study medical information (Chittaro, 2006). It is used in many clinical settings, including outpatient, inpatient, emergency or intensive care units (Rajwan, Kim, 2010).

4. Results

When the COVID-19 outbreak was in China, the "Dxy.com" team, with a professional medical background, was the first to do the epidemic map. Later, Tencent News, Ifeng.com News, The Paper News, Sina News, Ali Health, etc, also followed the epidemic map. The epidemic map was originally based on the China map module. The colour depth reflects the severity of the epidemic in various regions. Click on any provincial region on a mobile phone or computer, and real-time epidemic data will appear. China was the first country to have a COVID-19 outbreak globally, and other countries gradually used the epidemic map.

In addition to maps, the cumulative trend of epidemic situation data is displayed through graphs and histograms. The epidemic figures cover the whole country, with a huge amount of data. Readers will be dazzled if traditional numerical tables are used to show them all. If it is partially displayed, it cannot accurately reflect the overall situation of the epidemic situation. The interactive design of epidemic maps can help users in different regions to locate the target data quickly. Initially, the epidemic map released only three pieces of data: confirmed, suspected and dead. As the epidemic progressed, the data increased to six: Existing confirmed, existing suspected, existing severe, cumulative confirmed, cumulative dead and cumulative cured.

With the development of the epidemic situation, COVID-19 infection cases have appeared in many countries in the world. The international epidemic situation has gradually become the focus of public attention, and the epidemic situation maps of various media have added international epidemic situation data. For example, the situation in South Korea, Italy, Iran, the United States and other countries with serious epidemic situations. It reflects the flexibility of public health emergencies. Regarding visualization design, the media mentioned above all adopt mobile-side adaptation design. From the beginning of the China epidemic to the later international epidemic, the data have been continuously updated, fully reflecting the characteristics of public health emergencies.

The pathological knowledge about COVID-19 belongs to the medical category and has a certain professionalism. Without a medical background, it is difficult to understand medical information. Spreading pathological knowledge helps the public understand the process and principle of virus occurrence and development, helps people treat coronavirus scientifically and rationally, to reduces public anxiety and panic. The tools used by Chinese media in visualization reporting are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The tools used by Chinese media

COVID-19 coverage theme	Tools
COVID-19 map	Kepler. Gl/ AE / PS
Covid-19 spread speed	QGIS/ Flourish/ Processing/ Ai
Health/ safety	QGIS/ Processing/ Ai
Cultural/ symbolic/ stigma; Legal/ regulatory	Processing/ Ai
Openness/ Transparency /access to information	PlotDB/ Processing/ Ai
Basic information, who, where, what, when, why, how	QGIS/Processing/ Ai
Quality of life; Equity/ fairness/ Control	Echarts/ Ai

Epidemic Historical Events

For thousands of years, human beings have been accompanied by infectious diseases. Comparing COVID-19 with large-scale infectious diseases that have occurred in history, it is helpful for people to know COVID-19 from the perspective of history. The paper. Cn written the illustrates the 2,000-year history of infectious diseases. Plague with complete historical information is sorted and visually presented according to its occurrence time, duration, epidemic scope and death toll.

The works have the advantages of detailed data and multi-dimensional analysis angles. Use a chart to illustrate the large-scale infectious disease data recorded worldwide over the past 2,000 years. The design is to consider the propagation of the mobile terminal. The information map is designed as a long bar, through a time axis, a brief description of infectious disease events and a circular area map of the death toll. The audience can see clearly with their mobile phones and get an intuitive reading experience.

However, this work uses a static scatter plot when comparing the fatality rate of COVID-19 with other infectious diseases. Although the design is beautiful, but it cannot show the changing trend of the epidemic. During the development of the epidemic, the mortality rate, basic infection number and other data have been changing dynamically. Static charts cannot show this change.

Health Education Information

Healthy education is important to healthy communication (Hornik, 2002). The government announced that the public should take protective measures against the epidemic. For example, wearing masks, washing hands frequently, keeping social distance etc. Take masks, for example; there are many types of masks. It is suitable for different environments and different groups of people, but the general public cannot distinguish it correctly. Guiding the public to choose the appropriate mask type can effectively reduce the supply pressure of masks. People's Daily Guidelines for Selecting Masks for Different People. A table form is used to correspond different types of masks to the users and scenes, which is very simple and practical. However, the characters and patterns in the form are less exciting and lack attraction for people of a young age.

5. Conclusion

Visual communication integrates (Rahman et al., 2020) a large amount of complicated data and information into charts, information maps, videos, comics etc, to help people obtain important information conveniently and quickly. Visualization works depend on the support of original data (Turoń et al., 2020). Health communication requires the government to disclose data information promptly to ensure the accuracy of data information (Brown, Mourão, 2021). The transparency, timeliness and format of the government's disclosure of data and information will directly affect the reuse value of information (Liu et al., 2009). For example, the Shenzhen government data open platform's COVID-19 project provides CSV, JSON, XML, XLSX and RDF in five formats (Blackall et al., 2012). Suppose government information is not disclosed well, the data is not provided, the data is provided slowly, or the data is incomplete. In that case, Products such as epidemic maps are difficult to complete.

The data information visualization method (Çöltekin et al., 2020) can visualize abstract things and reduce the difficulty of understanding medical knowledge. Building a bridge between scientific knowledge and the audience is helpful for the transmission of knowledge (Ji, Lin, 2022). However, it should be noted that in the transformation process, it is necessary to ensure that the core information is accurate and cannot be misread (Herdin et al., 2020). The visualization works of COVID-19 include plane information maps and situation maps, 3D animation videos, virtual simulation experiments, etc. There is no doubt that visualization in future health communication will continue to improve with the development of computer technology (Bennett, 2023). Also puts forward higher requirements for journalist workers in visualization communication.

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Understanding Music in the Digital Media Era

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Abstract

Digital systems change attitude to music as the sound dimension of cultural life, which can be transformed into a commodity. Despite the fact, that people increasingly interact with each other via digital media, attributes of music underlying the ability for communicational interaction, are often ignored. Even though even before music digital reproduction methods emerged, music was subject to assimilation in the exchange economic acts, now digital world has permanently altered ways of interaction with music as now it is based on datification of virtual actions and digital shades of random preferences. Music is simultaneously interactive and presentational and in the participatory mode, including its collective, non specific interactive creation in real time, it possesses significant individual and social implications. Music as part of real life is not really presented in the virtual reality and its potential social costs are still to be comprehended and evaluated. Everyday communicational interactions among people face to face are filled with musical models between interlocutors as they share features with music itself, but these constituents are absent in digital systems, designed to perform communicative functions. The article introduced the idea that digital technologies encompasses only a limited and specific cultural understanding of music, which at least distorts or even suppresses its abilities, which distinguishes it as flexible and quite functional environment for social interaction.

Keywords: music and social interaction, digital technologies, media space, media culture, immersive interaction, computer communication, music value, multimodality, joint music performance.

1. Introduction

The advent of microprocessors has permanently altered the attitude to music – computers revolutionized music production from the stage of creation to the performance of music. Digital technologies as well as economic and social opportunities, which accompanied their appearance, influence the attitude to music in modern societies at least the ways:

- accelerate the consolidation of music status as a commodity, attribute and change the ways music can be evaluated and interacted with as well as employ exchange value of music to turn it into action commodity to interact with;
- alien to developing and implementing systems that would let use music in computer interaction in real time, capable of enhancing sociality;
- developing systems of computer communication they do not consider attributes of music that are embodied in interactive options, underlying the ability to communicate (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2020)

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The *purpose* of the article is to consider the idea that digital technologies cover only a limited and specific cultural understanding of music, which at least distorts or even suppresses its abilities, which distinguishes it as flexible and quite functional environment for social interaction.

2. Materials and methods

Nowadays there is a considerable amount of sources on how technologies and Internet institutional structures influence the roles, whereby people interact with music (Blok, Tan', 2022; Chelysheva, 2021; Nizamutdinova, 2022). This influence changed the attitude to music as much as virtual world changed the economic reality of the majority of aspects of everyday life. Research dedicated to these issues, tends to acknowledge that music today is a commodity. In the digital context it is often viewed as the object of collective interaction in virtual communities, formed around interaction with particular genres as framework for forming and representing identity instead of viewpoint of systems of real-time music creation (with a few exceptions). Thus the discourse doesn't touch upon the capacity of digital technologies to express music in the form of real-time participation, the issue of lack of musical functions in computer communication systems which is part everyday human interactions, doesn't receive proper recognition (Brodova, 2021)

The basic cognitive methods such as problem chronological and historical-situation methods are employed. Author arguments are based on problem chronological approach, whereas using historical situational method which enables to recreate the evaluative approach to the research theme.

3. Discussion

Music is a wide-spread cultural practice, which has been present in ancient civilizations and preserves till modern days, though its evolutionary value is not yet uniquely determined. Tribal cultures not having modern musical instruments created music in the form of song and rhythm. The earliest preserved musical instruments are flutes. Thus, several flutes dating to approximately 43000-35000 were found in the Swabian Jura (Shilton, 2022). According to one opinion, evolution favoured music-related behavior as it was determined by sexual selection and reproduction (Oosh, 2021). More recent viewpoint, taking into account modern concept of evolutionary theory suggests that music is a cultural adaptation based on survival advantages, which it presents to its members, and thus it is a complex system of symbolic heritage or an advanced form of relational response, that requires cooperation for developing and promoting unity and intimacy between groups of people. The aggregate product of its cooperation later attributes meaning and it is selected due to the circumstances of a particular socio-cultural community (Shcherbakova, 2021). In fact, music is not necessarily biologically adaptive, but it certainly facilitates improving the quality of life.

Thanks to the philosophers Yuma and Kant, concepts of aesthetic value became the key to how music is understood today. Music has value that is inherent in the uniqueness of experience, which is considered to be disinterested, meaning it does not directly touch upon the promotion of personal interests of a person (Berleant, 2018). People can enjoy music but to have esthetical and thus cultural value the experience should go beyond the framework of sensual or hedonic pleasure that music delivers (Choi, 2022).

The idea that music should be valued first and foremost for its esthetics is still confirmed in the modern discourse of "cultural products". However in the recent half of the century this idea loses its topicality despite of numerous attempts to apply the concept of esthetics for the right distribution of music value (not considering if it is expressed in terms of its transcendence, originality, authenticity) differentiating it from other form of exchange or commodity value.

The state of modern society requires reconsidering the esthetics responsible for the changing nature of art, technology and education. Changing the ways of structuring music and its significance has altered the power and distribution of music in the society. It's supposed that the revised concept of modern esthetics in music education should act on two levels. Firstly, on a personal level the learners should have an opportunity to verbalize and reflect about their student experience. It requires understanding of esthetics focused on a person and his/her discovery of music. On another level, modern aesthetics permeates places and spaces beyond the study of music. This may include transdisciplinary and research trajectories, where the study of music is held together with other subjects of study. Different levels and routes of modern esthetic education may work together in a dialogue despite their inner differences. Art has the power and ability to question both in theory and in practice what seems so familiar and obvious. These are great challenges and breakthroughs that cross boundaries of music as well as music and art education, in

order to create new opportunities (especially in dialogic areas of learning and teaching processes) that have been hardly ever or never used before (Gruber, 2019).

Unfortunately, today the aesthetic value of music determines its monetary value as in modern societies music has become a commodity, its cultural value is reduced to its price (Molina, Santamarina-Campos, 2021). Any object can be viewed as a commodity if its exchange potential in the past, present or future is its socially significant feature. Turning music into a commodity can be considered as a state, dependant on contexts due to which music becomes realizable and playable first as a text and then as sound.

In pre-modern and early modern Europe scribes were instructed to create manuscripts that include note recording. The cost and value of such services and the potential mobility of the scribe can be viewed as a mechanism that enabled note recording to become a commodity. Though note recording and skills necessary for its creation were not full-fledged commodity, they let music take its place in the exchange economics rather than remaining a mere service or obligation. With the advent of printing in early modern times, music has acquired more than rudimentary status of a commodity due to reproducibility of printed sheet music, the production and distribution of which was controlled by right holders. Rights were usually monopolistic (at least in theory), as well as generally inalienable (non-transferable), allowing rights holders to profit from the sale and distribution of music in a musical form.

By the middle of the XVIII century sheet music has already become a mature note and text commodity enjoying property ownership rights, which were fully alienated now. Those rights usually belonged to the publisher rather than a composer. Thus existing music in the printed form in capitalist and exploitation context of Britain at the time, allowed the exchange potential of music to come affront. The publisher physically owned engraved print forms (a means of creating and reproducing sheet music) and practically controlled the sales and distribution, though it was increasingly disputed by composers.

Although there are no complete records of eighteenth-century British music vendors, we can still assess which music and which musicians were probably sold well, based on various sources, including newspaper ads, claims of copyright infringement and registration in the registries of stationery companies. No less valuable, but much more rare are the financial documents from the music sellers themselves. One important collection is the album, which mainly consists of copyright receipts, agreements and letters from musicians to music sellers John and Thomas Preston, as well as Coventry and Hollier, dated 1773-1843. These receipts not only contain new information about composers, genres and arrangements that music sellers considered most in demand in the market, but they also give some idea of the typical prices paid for writing and adapting music, as well as the conditions under which composers transferred their copyright (Mace, 2019).

Later at the turn of the XIX century the emerged concept of “artwork/piece of music” – an idea that music exists in the form of separate and identified essences, created by particular people, helped even more to strengthen the status of music as a commodity, simplifying its perception as a discreet and selling unit. This status was fully confirmed with the emerging technology of sound recording and reproducing. Music eludes its own ephemerality, as a music performance can be embodied in the endlessly reproduced footprint of its performance. In the XXI century transforming from physical to virtual form, music and its value are assimilated to meet the needs of market economy as first and for most a commodity with hedonic value (Chelysheva, Berezkina, 2020; Ukolova, 2021).

Music nowadays is a product of creative and cultural industry, the audio entertainment technology, somehow known to every society on Earth. Property rights largely belong not to artists or performers but to those who own means of music reproduction and distribution as it was in the XVIII century. Music contributes to the global economy as an essential component of TV programmes, computer games, films and advertising.

The production, playback and promotion of music has radically changed with the introduction of limited consumer file formats such as MP3 and Digital Rights Protected Streaming (DRM). Modern people interact with music with absolutely different ways – the advent of the Internet has brought with it new forms of music delivery and new types of music-related transactions that have allowed access to a wider range of music (Hesmondhol, Meyer, 2018). These changes also bring with them new concepts of “ownership” of music, which are limited by certain conditions (for example, time (Hesmondhol, 2022).

4. Results

Prior to the onset of the digital era, the most popular mass media types were those which are now called analog or traditional: radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, etc. Since then technological revolution has brought a number of new types of mass media, which now play an important role in the information and entertainment distribution among the public worldwide. In the digital age building a strong web presence plays a significant role for music promotion. Effective branding helps musicians to stand out in a crowded market. Releasing interesting content lets musicians communicate to fans and attract new audience. Social media platforms play a crucial role in forming an engaged fan base, providing direct channels for communication and fostering a sense of community.

Internet media, which is defined as a sum of all information resources available to Internet users, positions itself as liberation from one-way chain of communication as users can now become media producers, create own music or get certain level of control over corporate media content. Though such kind of liberation seems to be illusionary as even those who do not participate in creating content but just consumes music eventually generate data for improving content, delivery systems or recommendation mechanisms as well as increase popularity of the online media business.

New actors that can also be called new publishers are Internet platforms like Google or Yandex and their system partners, that contribute to the commercialization of interaction between consumers and music. For example YouTube collects preferences and associations, showing target advertisement and using customer data for their algorithms optimization and establishing bonds between other kinds of data with the user being the core of this information system. Thus music has become a random characteristic of co-modified data alongside with other media. Such data on its own is a form of valuable capital as it can be used for profiling and orientation of people, system optimization, modeling probabilities, enhancing the value of assets as well as management and control. In other words virtual life mining that is extracting useful knowledge from a combination of digital tracks, left by people who spend most of their life in the Internet, which enables companies that run the abovementioned social platforms to measure, manipulate and monetize behavior of people in their own interests. It's worth mentioning that such data analysis may not only bring one-sided benefits. It has become a vital tool for understanding audience preferences and optimizing music promotion strategies. Using data-based information, artists and labels can target niche markets, tailor their campaigns to specific demographics, and make informed decisions about their promotional efforts. There are many examples of successful companies based on data analysis, displaying the effectiveness of such approach.

However digital technologies are not reduced to the esthetic value of music to a simple entertainment – they just speed up the existing processes. Social and technological changes grant music a status of traded and reproduced commodity, existing in the form of a text, sound or song in the formats which can be owned and exchanged. The factor that supports music's constant commodity status is desirability, resulting from enjoyment it delivers, which is now used as a stimuli to gain a truly valuable asset such as demographic data.

In the non virtual world music as a digital commodity or a decoy for data collection is just one of the aspects. Music exists in all known cultures that expect the meaning of their music pieces to be understood. Music that is listened to, transferred or created is more than a sound that is consumed and valued from an esthetic perspective. It's a dynamic sample of an embodied mind, movement and social interactions, formed by biology and culture.

An area that tends to be privileged in a musical context is a presentation activity, which presupposes a distinct distribution of roles between those who create music (performers) and those whose aim is to consume music (audience). Performers usually have to receive a formal training or devote much time to acquiring musical skills whereas audience may also display different level of knowledge in the field. A typical example of music in the presentation mode is a concert. Although it may include interaction among performers or even between performers and the audience, the roles and ways of such interaction are likely to be relatively fixed. Recording and streaming takes music out of the concert ritual. Today there are many places you can listen to music, in addition to the concert hall such as a car ride or a jogging in the park. Some composers may still create progressions that determine movement over time from the beginning to the end, but listeners are no longer fans of the concert ritual that perpetuates completion – technology has freed them from the fullness of the musical form. Modern music is more like a mosaic of loosely related events rather than a constant movement through time. Such new approaches are consonant with

the listeners' ability to choose the limits of their listening time for themselves (composers who continue to ignore this fact to certain extent lag behind their time).

Cooperative music creation presupposes that roles of the participants can be open and mobile whereas their experience can be minimal, and interactions have a high degree of mutual adaptability. Music-sharing is always culturally specific. Almost any music is partly presentational and partly collective. In the context of the presentation, performers need an audience whose reactions can shape the mood, and sometimes determine the direction of the performance, actually becoming part of it. In collaborative creative contexts, music creation can demonstrate such presentation features as structure complexity or hierarchical differences among participants, with some playing more important roles than others. However, collective music almost always lacks the attributes of virtuosity, complexity, well-thought-out temporal structure and sound expressiveness, which reduces its attractiveness to the audience, which results in reducing the commercial value (Vyaznikov, 2022). Nevertheless, collective music (for example, choral lessons) actively promotes the formation of musical and aesthetic taste (Gribkova, Kazakova, 2021).

In general, collective music in its participatory forms in real time in the digital world is minimal. The economics and opportunities of digital networking do not provide the means and incentives for the implementation of collective music systems that would allow it to appear in a form similar to its existence in the analogue world, erasing the possibility of collective participation in music in the ways that are incompetent and transgressive. Thus, the ability of music to engage and shape relationships between interacting non-expert people is one of its core abilities in the real-time non-virtual social world but it is hardly reflected in its digital manifestations.

Another aspect of music that should be considered in the above-mentioned context is its manifestation in the set of interactive abilities that underpin everyday communication. While speech production and dialogue computer interaction have passed a long way, the coordination features that shape most everyday conversational interactions seem to be built on the same foundation, that music is now beyond the potential of computing systems. In a sense, this is not surprising, although intuitively music and language have a connection (songs constitute prevailing types of music), but people explore them as two completely different areas of human experience.

Music and language or rather music and speech, language in action can overlap significantly in what they are and what they do. Conversational interactions, especially those that can be characterized as affiliative or as forms of phatic communication (making contact to maintain communication), seem remarkably similar to collaborative music, in which the input of all participants is carefully coordinated over time and differentiated by function to form the overall structure of events and facilitate their continuation. The processes that provide this coordination are common to both speech and music, so it is likely that human real-time communication cannot be modeled as a process, explained solely in terms of individual generative and representative abilities. Any attempt to model such interactions must take into account underlying relational processes that are fundamentally musical and depend on the mutual dependence of the interacting persons (Pej, Kaznacheev, 2022).

When speech and music are considered in terms of participation, they clearly demonstrate the common ground. The aspects of human interaction that are considered musical such as common pulse, alignment of tones between participants and coordinated movements act together penetrating conversational interactions, strengthening the view on music as a human communication toolkit component. It can be argued that the nature of music as an interactive environment lies in the ability to communicate and manifests itself in all communicative efforts. From this perspective, music abilities are as universal as language abilities or to be more precise speech abilities. Languages have melodies that linguists call prosody. Such elements of music as pitch, rhythm and tempo convey emotions in speech. With their help, people without understanding other languages can still detect changing emotional states of the speakers. Moreover, compared to language, music has rules for ordering elements, including notes, chords and intervals, which turn them into complex structures that convey emotional meaning. Because of the similarities between music and language, many brain regions responsible for speech also process music. For example, it is not necessary to know the language in which the song is performed to understand the message or feeling that the performer is trying to express (Alyabieva, 2021; Korsakova, 2021). In addition, musical sounds can cause human color associations. It concerns certain connection of absolute sound pitch and/or tones with particular colors. Musical-color synesthesia as well as color hearing (synopsis) is a type of chromesthesia in which musical sounds cause certain color images in humans (Alyabieva, 2020).

The influence of music on emotional intelligence has been widely discussed recently and is an important indicator of how well a person can modulate and interact with emotions. Since early childhood, simple ways of playing music, such as singing, increase sensitivity to emotions and help to communicate. Listening to music and playing a musical instrument can improve the emotional intelligence of both teenagers and adults. It can be explained by the nervous processes in the cortical and subcortical networks of the brain, affected by music. People with higher emotional intelligence, on their part, can listen to music to regulate their emotional state ([Gribkova, Ivanovskaya, 2022](#)).

In general, the development of a scientific and educational field called media education is impossible without mass media and social media, and advanced analytical thinking is the main component of media competence. A person with a high level of media competence possesses the following characteristics: a wide range of genre, thematic, emotional, epistemic, hedonic, intellectual, psychological, creative, ethical, aesthetic motifs with media and media texts, including: selection of a diverse genre and thematic spectrum of media with mandatory inclusion of non-entertaining genres; desire for new information; desire for identification and empathy; aspiration to confirm their competence in various spheres of life and media culture ([Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2021](#)).

As mentioned above, music and its presentation have changed drastically. Some of these changes were the result of accelerating existing processes, such as music commercialization through eccentricity. Deliberate eccentricity in such case acts as a strategy to attract public and media attention. Eccentricity has become a recognizable brand, an identifier that should attract the interest of the audience, it plays a huge role in the popularization and commercialization of music culture products as a marketing tool that helps build up the image of the artist, recognize the uniqueness of the product and create different ways of interacting with the audience, though the music itself and its visual representation might be both not unique in terms of its authorship and be characterized by cultural-industrial approach to music.

Hence, modern commodification of music (absorbed by the sharing economy) began long before the idea of computational theory emerged, although the recent conversion into a random generator of demographic data brought a new twist. These accelerated changes abstracted music from the world of social life in real time, moving it into a presentation mode, tied to commodity status, limiting access to control as a means of participation. It can be concluded that computer interaction with music is distorted by corporate “thirst” for profit from data acquisition and music is rapidly losing its spiritual and moral influence ([Shcherbakova, 2022](#)). Yet music was an instrument of self-consciousness and self-knowledge, a powerful reflection of who a person is (what this person thinks or feels) – a secret language that can be studied, developed and perfected with which you can deeply penetrate the musical expressions of other people and find out what message they broadcast to the world ([Gribkova, Kvartal'nova, 2021](#); [Shcherbakova, 2020](#)).

Are any of above-mentioned trends really challenging? Nowadays mankind definitely has access to vast amounts of various kinds of music, which can be accessed instantly and for some time free. Any changes, including those in the music sphere, are in the nature of things, and while it is possible to regret the obvious losses, these changes also have advantages. Should music be more than clickbait, the price that Internet companies pay to have a large share of unincorporated users? The answer here is positive. In almost all known world cultures, music was considered to be a manifestation of values that could not be simply reduced to economics ([Shiyanova, 2022](#)). If the world is faced with the task of saving music from its commodity status, there are possible ways to do it. Some of them are already well established, such as the development of remix culture.

Systems that exist for real-time computer music interaction typically require a high level of knowledge and access to specialized resources. There is currently no financial incentive to develop systems for unskilled computer-assisted music production, although recognition of the need to address social justice issues through community music development may encourage the emergence of such systems ([Malaschenko, 2021](#)). The inclusion of interactive features in CMC, VUI and LLM systems, based on relational musical qualities of mutual adaptation, raises two different types of problems. First of all these are technical challenges. Adaptive dialogue systems must be logically flexible and largely accurate at many levels, from satisfactory interpretation of acoustic signals to correct interpretation of interactions. Assuming that these technical problems can be overcome, the ethical problem still remains. If an interactive system behaves in a way that reproduces human behavior making it almost indistinguishable from human performance, the reaction to it is likely to change as well. It should be recognized that robots are artificial artifacts. They should not be

designed to mislead vulnerable users. The mechanical nature of robots must be absolute transparent. The introduction of human-like responses to CMC and VUI based on the musicality of everyday human interactions directly violates this transparency and leads to an asymmetry of deontic commitment in interaction.

5. Conclusion

Technology has always been the backbone of the music industry, and digital technology has transformed the music industry not only in the manner it is consumed, but also fundamentally in how it is recorded and performed. The metauniverse is a virtual universe in which everything imaginable is possible. When the physical environment encounters virtual reality, including augmented reality and the Internet, the metauniverse becomes a collective and shared virtual space. In the coming decade, the metauniverse has the potential to build its own economy. Indeed, music studios are no longer an expensive and “sacred” sphere of small and exclusive audience of artists. Music consumers have discovered streaming. Streaming video is one of the industries where services like Netflix are constantly creating and releasing new content. The video game industry is also booming, overshadowing all other entertainment industries. Composers, sound engineers and audio programmers play an important role in these audio-visual industries, creating important revenue opportunities. The digital age has been a hard test for the music industry, but it has also opened doors to emerging artists, who otherwise would never have received the attention they deserve. Advances in music technology have stimulated growth and innovation in the creation of music, which is, after all, the essence of art ([Kochnova, 2021](#))

The advent of social media platforms such as TikTok has also had a profound impact on music consumption and production. The musicians adapt to the era of short-term concentration of attention, creating memorable fragments that evoke a response within seconds. These compressed formats challenged traditional song structures. Musicians are also exploring new ways to attract listeners to the fast-changing scrolling environment. This trend led to the development of special music production methods, including short tracks, higher BPM values, and innovative sound landscapes that meet the requirements of social media platforms ([Zhang, 2021](#)).

In the above-mentioned context, it's worth mentioning that within music marketing strategies one usually is unable just to sell music. When the material is released on digital music platforms, the game plan should be already created, otherwise one may not get the desired positive feedback. Much of the music release is an organizational factor of what is done long before and after the release. Another important factor is budgeting. Spending a lot of money on a song or video is no more important than bringing the song to the target audience. The released song may not gain momentum due to misinterpretation of marketing ([Bochkareva, Shafeeva, 2022](#)).

Unfortunately, music is irrevocably becoming a commodity in the digital sphere, and this situation is exacerbated by the monetization of online interactions with it. Though one may not be able to get music back from being a commodity, but it's possible to regain a certain degree of control over accessing it. In addition, it should be taken into consideration that the fullness of human emotional-sense and creative capabilities is not yet achievable for the technique of any level ([Novichkov, Potapov, 2022](#)). In order to present the shared relevance of music in the computing world, it is necessary to develop and distribute tools and systems that will allow the realization of the unequivocal but socially important ability for collaborative music creation in the digital world. Finally, it is necessary to reconsider the way society interacts with supposedly “autonomous” digital interactive systems based on modeling human communicative abilities. Otherwise, there is a risk of transferring digital social responsibilities control to corporate agents seeking to exploit it.

In the nearest future, efforts to create AI-music, which “sounds human”, are unlikely to bring any benefit to listeners and musicians, but will undeniably help to increase the profits of corporate participants, which have already largely demonstrated a lack of interest in a fair music economy, given their efforts in decoding music to make a commodity of unmusical elements such as user data, preferences, behavior, subscriptions, listeners' attention and advertising sites.

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Media Culture in Promoting Photo Services Companies in Social Media

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Abstract

The article examines the essence of media culture, the degree of its impact on public life and corporate activities in the market of photography services, describes the features of media culture and the activities of young people in social media. Furthermore, it focuses on the principles of media culture and its main trends within the information-oriented society. The results of the study present the main mistakes that photo services businesses make in promoting, as well as ways to avoid these mistakes, and offer recommendations on key social media platforms for companies that provide photography services. Based on theoretical knowledge about the essence of media culture and the specifics of social media promotion, the essential goal of media culture is to build an identifiable brand and create positive emotions in current and potential customers. The presence of media culture can be traced in almost all spheres of human activity. It has a significant impact on human consciousness through the use of information technology in sociocultural processes.

The modern information system of society in the context of media culture necessitates taking into account accumulated experience, as well as analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects of human activity, which is why social media are of particular importance.

Keywords: media culture, photo services, social media, promotion of services, young people, consumers, Internet, promotion.

1. Introduction

The companies that provide photo services as their main activity area, are currently showing active growth. In order to keep a competitive position, such companies are required to perform an efficient PR strategy to build and expand their customer base. Among the most popular and attractive marketing communication channels used for selling services is social media, such as VKontakte, Telegram, Ok and others. Advertising on several social media platforms helps companies to reach the largest possible target audience, giving a positive impact on the business. Popularization of photography services is impossible without media culture, since photography is an integral element of visual culture. Within the framework of media culture, photos already perform new functions and acquire new forms, as well as influence the changes in sociocultural reality (Krasikova, 2022). Photography services are a method of communication with society. Media culture is reflected in almost all areas that exist in the modern society, including mass media and social media, and has an impact on personality formation and public mind. Besides, media culture socializes a person, promotes self-esteem, and creates a value system. Photographs play a special role in this process, since they form the core of many communications and are capable of influencing people's feelings and their emotional state. Any company operating in the photo services market, through the use of a special type of culture - media culture, can track and analyze

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trends in public minds and moods and, through the new product created, influence the level of demand for its products. Thus, media culture has a significant impact on companies operating in the photography services market.

2. Materials and methods

This study applies such methods as analysis and synthesis. The classification method is used to formulate the conclusion for the research performed. The theoretical and methodological basis of the study comprises of scientific articles on researched topics, as well as teaching guides and statistical studies. A detailed approach to photo services promotion in social media is possible through the concept of media culture and research of its coverage. Media culture acts as a reflection of culture as a whole and is a symbol of the accessibility of culture to society via mass media. Media culture is the complex of material and intellectual values in the media field, as well as the composite of implementation and functioning of these values in society, built over time. Media culture is reflected in a system of levels of personal improvement that can analyze, evaluate, perceive media information, and gain new knowledge in the field of media (Osmolovskaya, 2021).

The presence of media culture can be traced in almost all areas of human life. It has a significant impact on human minds through the use of information technology in sociocultural processes. Media culture is a set of cultural practices and patterns formed under the influence of mass communications, including the study and analysis of media products, as well as the impact of media technologies on society. For photo services companies, it is important to consider the basic principles of media culture when creating social media content.

In modern society, it is impossible to deny the objective impact of media culture on human social life. The most essential features of media culture are its systematicity and integrity, that is, media culture has unity within the media space. However, there are reasons that can undermine the integrity of media culture. For example, lack of access to media culture for some individuals, leading to limited participation of people in the media-cultural process. With the loss of common media-cultural relations, the components of media culture do not contribute to the consolidation of society and do not ensure social development. It turns out that the unity of media culture, achieved through information interaction, is the main condition for personal and social development. Another problem is overloading of media culture, its excess, which contributes to a strong distortion of the real picture of the world: mass media and social media can act as a tool for manipulating public opinion (Sokolova, 2018), which is why companies at the photo services market need to efficiently build promotion of their products, in order not to actively impose your services, but to create desire and natural demand among buyers.

It cannot be denied that current information technologies allow people to perform individual real-time interactions with a screen to meet their needs and purchase necessary services. Modern information and communication technologies, social media included, have an influence on public mind, on types of culture and on the nature of company activities. We can say that real communication is being replaced by online communication: now it is easier to order a service online than to visit a physical office. Social media expand our communication capabilities, providing consumers, educators, or ordinary people interested in any information with access to necessary sources (Ivanchenko, 2022).

The active use of the Internet implies that everyone has access to the network (Kryukova, 2013), providing anyone with the opportunity to find available information and enrich their knowledge on any aspect. Insufficient information can have a significant impact on the number of clients seeking photography services. Social media can solve this problem or reduce it to a minimum and provide cultural opportunities to have an unlimited amount of information about goods and services in the photography market. It turns out that all it needs is to come up with a request and find time to sort the information provided. It is also necessary to acknowledge that social media and the Internet in general are a reflection of the real world and provide opportunities for improving media culture (Nebrat, 2019). It becomes much easier to find photo service companies on social media than to look for banners on the streets or distribute leaflets about photo services.

The basic principles of media culture that can be applied when promoting a company in the photo services market via social media include several components.

- First, quality content: Creating high-quality and attractive content, such as photos, reels and long videos, podcasts, blogs, stories or articles will help attract the attention of the audience. The content should be unique, interesting and relevant to the interests of the target audience.

- Second, audience engagement: Engaging with the audience through comments, likes, shares, polls, contests, and other forms of interaction will help strengthen the connection with customers and create a community around your company.

- Third, maintaining long-term relationships: Social media allow to stay in touch with customers throughout their whole life cycle. Constantly updating content, answering questions, and providing feedback will help build long-term relationships with the customers.

- Fourth, use of analytics tools: monitoring and analyzing the results of social media promotions will help the company understand what content is efficient, what strategies work best and how the business can be improved.

The largest share of social media users are young people, so they are most likely to find information about photo services and use it. In this regard, it is necessary to pay special attention to the specifics of media consumption among youth (Amirova, 2019). Young people typically use media devices and information on social media depending on the specific situation and their needs, that is, through regular (daily) interaction with other users, young people develop communication skills, that is why it is easier for them to contact a company and choose the service they are interested in. Besides, young people perceive media culture as a personalized means of obtaining information (Gorbat, 2022): any person can become a key link in the information flow, a filter of opinions, and an authority for a group of people, that is, there is the possibility of influence within social media. This has a positive impact on photo services companies, since young people (and Internet users in general) can spread the services offered by the company. Moreover, young people are actively involved in influencer marketing, creating publications on online platforms, and can also be used for advertising photo services. In addition, young people consume content in fragments, meaning that they are able to sort information and connect information received from various sources.

Applying the principles of media culture in promoting a photo services company in social media will help increase brand awareness, attract new customers and strengthen relationships with the existing audience. It is important to constantly analyze the results and improve promotion strategies in order to be successful in the photo services market.

3. Results

Media culture, as well as social media, allows to acquire new business contacts, distribute goods and services, create promo websites and present portfolios. Besides, social media make it possible to implement active exchange of information. For a company in the photo services market, media culture presents the following opportunities: distribute information about the services, build the image of the company for consumers, analyze potential customers, attract future clients, collect customer feedback through reviews, promotions and bonus programs, as well as statistics and analytics of business activities (Skomorokhova, 2018).

Based on the analysis of the sources used in the study (scientific literature), as well as their practical use in social media, we can identify the key ways to promote a photo services company in social media:

- Create a group, a business account on several social media platforms. This can be done by either one person or a group of specialists (depending solely on the size of the company). To maximize the efficiency, it is necessary to have a group administrator and assistants (Grigoriev, Chvyakin, 2019).

- Implement activities aimed at promoting services, namely participate in online conferences, conduct live streams, organize corporate conferences. These streams can show the process of photographing, creating a photo, the team itself, and so on.

- Offer promotions and giveaways, activities much appreciated by consumers, adding to customer base increase, media culture growth and increased corporate activity in social media (Kurcheeva, Saprykin, 2015).

- With the increase of advertising activities in social media, general advertising activities are actively growing, so a photo services company can place its products in other groups or accounts. Moreover, this offer allows to establish professional connections with other representatives in this field.

Based on theoretical knowledge about the essence of media culture and the specifics of social media promotions, we can say that the most significant objective of media culture is to build an identifiable brand and to create positive emotions in current and potential customers. Besides, there is a high probability of mistakes while promoting services in social media, which is why it is

necessary to identify these mistakes and find ways to overcome them. The occurrence of these mistakes can lead to a decrease in the popularity of the company in social media and to the loss of its customer base (Nigmatzyanova, 2018).

The first mistake is impatience. While advertising photography services, one should not hope for immediate new customers; it may take several months. Moreover, not all group members can be true customers, but only a small part of them. As a recommendation, one can focus on only a few social media platforms, and not cover all available ones, mastering one or two platforms well and actively developing them.

The second mistake is underestimating activity in social media. Many companies, especially start-ups, think it's easy. A company that provides photo services needs to create a consistent page design, determine its target audience, find content, design a portfolio, and much more. It is very important not only to attract the audience, but also to retain it.

The third mistake is copying the ideas of other companies without analyzing them and adding something new and unique (Wertime, 2018). It is not at all necessary that the ideas of one company will have the same effect for the other, so the solution to this problem is in creating one's own company style, thoughtful content design and action plan. Having a system of actions to ensure consistent development.

The fourth mistake is refusing to analyze business activities. Companies in the photo services market need to analyze both positive and negative experiences of competitors, evaluate the other photo service content, determining the competitors' strengths and weaknesses and creating an improved work system. Thus, eliminating the mentioned errors will allow the company in the photo services market to use media culture for promoting its products in social media.

4. Discussion

Social media as an online construct drastically changed the way information is spread. Indeed, information exchange became increasingly easier and more relaxed. Several companies wanted to capitalize on this phenomenon by creating "fan pages" on social media (Akrimi, Khemakhem, 2012).

Each historical period has its own methods of expanding cultural space. Changes in both social relations, lifestyle, and culture as a whole, that will occur due to scientific and technological discoveries and related technological changes, namely the expansion of telecommunications and the widespread introduction of computer technology (Mussayeva et al., 2019).

In modern society, it is impossible to deny the objective impact of media culture on the social life of a person (Manovich, 2016). It is important to note that online media freedom must also be protected offline, as "traditional" forms of censorship, such as harassment or imprisonment of online journalists or physical raids on newsrooms, apply to online media as well (Stevenson, 2016). Despite technological innovations, Web 2.0 and social media, it should not be forgotten that this traditional censorship also "works" on the Internet (Mottler, 2019).

The presence of media culture can be traced in almost all areas of human life. It has a significant impact on people minds through the use of information technology in sociocultural processes (Reed, 2014). It is important for photo services companies to consider the basic principles of media culture when creating content for social media. (Jakic et al., 2017)

Media culture is a set of cultural practices and patterns formed as a result of the influence of mass communications, including the study and analysis of media products, as well as the impact of media technologies on society. Media culture also deals with the analysis of the role and functions of the media in the modern world, their impact on public opinion and the formation of public opinion (Shirky, 2010).

Users can express sentiments by publishing online opinions. Online opinions can directly or indirectly affect the future sales of e-commerce, restaurants, hotels, and other products. Sentiment analysis in social networks mines user opinions, emotions, and attitudes to derive useful insights into community opinions (Jie Chen, 2022).

Social networks were developed after electronics information sharing systems coming out, and social networks are modeled by using graphs. Due to the interests of users and capabilities of social networks, this area is an important emerging area, so, there are many studies of social networks (Karadogan, Karci, 2022).

Recent research across various disciplines suggests that social capital, as captured by social norms and the density of social networks, can reduce financing constraints, and facilitate economic exchanges by encouraging cooperative behavior (Hongying, 2022).

The importance of social connections – our social networks – is the focus of a burgeoning literature which has found that they influence a wide variety of economic decisions such as whether to utilize financial services (Chowdhury, 2022).

Social network refers to the relationship formed by interaction between individual members of the society. With the increasingly popularity of social media, individuals are closely related to each other and form a variety of social networks. Based on the relationship of individuals (friendship, cooperation, trust relation and conflict relation, etc.), social network can be divided into friend social network, cooperative social network, trust network, interest network, conflict network and so on (Qingxian, 2022).

Exponential growth in the number of internet users has led businesses to explore efficient ways of managing their presence in electronic space. Businesses have adapted new business models that allow them to utilize the opportunities that the internet has to offer (Chawla, Chodak, 2021).

Different conclusions are withdrawn when comparing Facebook to Instagram, proving empirically that different social networking sites have distinct influence on customer engagement. This chapter is relevant for content and social media strategies and helps brands increase their customer engagement (Balio, Casais, 2020).

The experiment results show that different effects were obtained depending on the content of posts (picture, video, album) related to the same products. In the case of video, the highest level of reach, while in the case of pictures, the highest level of engagement was achieved. The analysis of social media engagement metrics in relation to the published content type, dissemination process and time were proposed (Chodak, 2019).

Digital marketing is leading the way in offering new features to reach, inform, engage, offer, and sell products and services to customers, and is expected to continue to be at the forefront of the technological revolution (Kim, 2019).

5. Conclusion

Media culture is of great importance in promoting photo services companies in social media. The modern society information system in the context of media culture requires taking into account accumulated experience, as well as analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects of human activity, which is why social media in this case are of particular importance. Companies must consider the basic principles of media culture when creating content and interacting with audiences. Effective use of social media will allow companies to attract new customers, strengthen their brand and remain competitive in the photography services market. Media culture is the basis for distributing media content and attracting consumers to promote the product.

Using the principles of media culture in promoting the company in the market of photo services through social networks will increase brand awareness, attract new customers and strengthen relationships with the current audience. It is necessary to regularly analyze the results and develop promotion strategies in order to be successful in the photo services market. For the development of photo services within the framework of social networks, it is important to use creative technologies, actively interact with the audience, regularly update the company's profile on social networks, cooperate with bloggers or other popular personalities. Following these recommendations will help you successfully promote your company in the photo services market through social networks and attract new customers.

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Exploring Mutated Depictions of Rapes and Justice Distrust in Contemporary Indian Cinema

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Abstract

Media consumption includes a lot of movies. Film and culture interact in complex ways. Although art is meant to challenge established structures, mainstream Bollywood's profit-driven objective sometimes requires it to fulfil specific promises to a wide audience, minimizing disruption of traditional conceptions. A recent Indian film offers promise, though not much. They dare to raise social taboos to challenge normative beliefs. Sameer Sanjay Vidwans' *Satyaprem Ki Katha* and Behzad Khambata's *A Thursday* offer a fresh take on the topics of date rape and the failures of the system in addressing the pleas of survivors, highlighting concerns of neglect and conspiracy. This study analysed films about rape and related issues and compared them to real-life data. The study also involves an examination of how society attributes rape instances and the experiences of survivors. It asserts that the Bollywood business has just started undertaking initiatives to create a platform for discussing taboo issues that have previously been devoid of free discussion. The observation suggests that contemporary films focusing on taboo issues are grabbing larger audiences and thus achieving commercial success, in contrast to their predecessors. This also signifies a shift in contemporary culture and attitude towards rapes and related occurrences.

Keywords: date rape, sexual violence, justice distrust, assault, stigma, Indian films.

1. Introduction

An estimated one in four American women may experience sexual assault sometime throughout her lifetime, making this a serious and widespread social problem. 47.3 % of sexual assault victims were victimized by someone they knew intimately (Leemis et al., 2022). Due to the widespread stigma around reporting sexual assaults, these estimates are likely low. The Indian scenario for the aforementioned statistics is not distinctive. As per the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) 'Crime in India 2021' report, among all the reported rape cases, the culprit was known to the victim in 96.5 % of rape cases. Out of 31,677 rape cases, in around 28,147 (89 %) cases, the offender was either a friend (including online friendships), a love interest (live-in partners on the pretext of marriage), an ex-husband or ex-boyfriend, family friends, an employer, or just acquaintances (National Crime Records Bureau, 2022).

An American philosopher and author, Kelly Oliver, wrote an opinion column in the New York Times in November 2016 titled "There is no such thing as non-consensual sex, its violence" (Oliver, 2016), discussing the concerns about the rise of these issues among college-going young adults in

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the US and about the role of society in not pertaining 'date rapes' or 'acquaintance rapes' as seriously as forceful rapes. It is essential to have a solid understanding of the fact that films, just like any other form of artistic expression, are a reflection of society. The depiction of touchy subjects shifts along with the development of society as a whole. When it comes to encouraging ethical storytelling and campaigning for positive change in the film industry as well as society as a whole, advocacy, awareness, and constructive conversations all play an essential part. It is imperative to recognize that certain Hindi films, particularly those of earlier times, like *Zakhmi Aurat* (Bhagal, 1988), *Mera Faisla* (Babu, 1984), *Gunda* (Shah, 1998), and *Bhagyawan* (Subash, 1993) have faced criticism for portraying attitudes that blame victims of sexual assault. The aforementioned film depictions are indicative of the retrogressive and detrimental societal conventions that were prevalent during specific time periods (Chuggera, 2023).

The recent Bollywood release *Satyaprem Ki Katha* (Vidwans, 2023) has picked up the very same issue of 'Date Rape' or 'Acquaintance Rape' as the main drive of the story line. Director Sameer Vidwans and writer Karan Shrikant Sharma bring out the important point that a woman's "no" is still a "no," regardless of how many times or to what extent one has been physically intimate with the person before. The above mentioned-statistics are out of the reported sexual crimes against women, but in many such cases, as pulled up in the movie *Satyaprem Ki Katha*, the incident goes unreported, and the victim is forced to keep mum and is blamed for her own sufferings. Earlier in 2016, the Bollywood movie *Pink*, starring Tapsi Pannu and Amitabh Bachchan, also voiced a similar kind of issue, sensitizing the importance of women's consent for physical intimacy. This was well conveyed through the film's renowned dialogue, *No! means No* (Chowdhury, 2016). Mainstream cinema is a form of commercial art that is made, distributed, and shown with the intention of making profit (Kumar, Sharma 2023). But the movie *Satyaprem Ki Katha* has given enough food to the mind to think about a serious but less talked-about issue of acquaintance rape or incidents of dates ending up in sexual assaults. Although the film's director Sameer S. Vidwans has shown his faithfulness more towards the entertainment quotient of the film, he has failed to give the required importance and limelight to the real issue driving the storyline. The objective of the present study to know the depictions of rapes and justice distrust in contemporary Bollywood films.

2. Materials and methods

The broad objective of the study is to explore the depictions of rape and justice distrust in contemporary Indian Hindi cinema. The study is analytical in nature. We adopted a qualitative approach to conduct this research study. We used textual analysis to meet the objectives. The film has been selected on the basis of the purposive sampling method.

3. Discussion

The majority of scholarly investigations differentiate between instances of sexual assault perpetrated by individuals known to the victim and those perpetrated by unfamiliar individuals, with the latter referring to acts of rape performed by those with no prior acquaintance with the victim. The term 'acquaintance rape' refers to a form of sexual assault that can be committed by a wide variety of individuals; it could be someone the victim has only recently met (Grubb, Turner 2012).

An influential American feminist journalist, novelist, and activist, Susan Brownmiller introduced the phrase 'date rape' in her seminal publication titled *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. She is one of the pioneering individuals who originated this terminology (Brownmiller, 1975). The concept of 'date rape' gained visibility through the efforts of Ann Olivarius, a notable American-British lawyer and feminist. During her time as an undergraduate at Yale University, Olivarius delivered a series of public lectures where she discussed a specific incident involving the assault (Goldhill, 2015). The aforementioned phrase has been documented in a handful of newspapers and scholarly articles in the past; however, it is worth noting that these sources had a narrower audience reach. The term 'date rape' was first documented in 1980 when it appeared in *Mademoiselle Magazine*. Subsequently, in 1982, the magazine featured an article titled *Date Rape: A Campus Epidemic?* Furthermore, English novelist Martin Amis, in his novel *Money: A Suicide Note* (1984) also used this term (Gold, Villari, 2000; Simpson et al., 1993). Mary Koss, a renowned researcher in the field of sexual assault, conducted a pioneering study in 1987 that examined the prevalence of rape in the United States. This

nationwide study involved a substantial sample size of 7,000 students from 25 educational institutions. Koss is often acknowledged for coining the term 'date rape', which has since become widely recognized (Kuersten, 2003).

A sexual activity enforced on someone without assertive consent is considered sexual violence. Sexual assault affects all communities, genders, sexualities, and ages. Sexual assault can happen to anyone. Sexual assault, if committed by a friend, spouse, co-worker, neighbour, or family member, falls into the category of acquaintance crime. Acquaintance rape is perpetrated by someone who knows the victim. As a form of sexual assault, acquaintance rape encompasses sexual contact that is forced, manipulated, or coerced. Having intercourse against one's will is a form of rape, even if they know the perpetrator (Chatterjee, 2019). Sexual assault can happen in person, online, or through technology, such as non-consensual sexting. According to American researcher Mary Koss, 'date rape' is a kind of 'acquaintance rape' that occurs when there is at least a little bit of love attraction between the offender and the victim, and when sexual activity would have been usually considered suitable if it had been consensual (Koss, 2011).

In her scholarly article, Sarah E.H. Moore examines the evolving connotations associated with the term 'date rape' as depicted in American newspapers over a span of fourteen years. This article examines potential factors contributing to the evolving interpretation of the term 'date rape', specifically exploring the relevance of the risk thesis and criminological theories. Ultimately, she proposes that adopting a feminist standpoint enables us to acknowledge that the concept of 'date rape' has evolved from being solely about the disempowerment of women to becoming a vague and relatively insignificant ideological concern (Moore, 2011).

Approximately 40 % of rape incidents in India are officially recorded, primarily due to the deeply entrenched conservative mentality within the cultural framework (Bhalla, 2013). The socioeconomic and demographic markers of the victim are taken into consideration by the media in India when determining whether or not a rape case is worthy of being reported on (Fadnis, 2023). This prevailing mind-set discourages numerous victims from disclosing their experiences. They fear the potential consequences of social stigma, degradation, and isolation from their families and communities. The percentage of sexual attacks that are recorded varies greatly from country to country; just 11 % of all sexual assaults are said to be registered internationally, according to a survey by UN Women. This estimate pertains to only 2 % of India's population (Hill, Marshall, 2018).

Due to the widespread stigma around reporting sexual assaults, the rate of reported rape cases is low. People or society usually does not approve of a term like 'date rape' because of the relationship the victims and perpetrators have shared for the time being. The pervasive culture of shame surrounding sexual assault is also a considerable factor in the non-reporting of acquaintance sexual assaults. Films have the potential to impact persons' perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes, especially about relevant societal issues. Film, as an expression of culture and medium, has a crucial role in creating and interpreting meaning (Karmakar, Pal, 2023). The movie *Satyaprem Ki Katha* has not only highlighted the issue of date rape but has also emphasized the issue of victim blame. In the movie, the rape survivor *Katha* (played by Kiara Advani) is blamed by her father herself for the miseries because the perpetrator was her love interest. The father of the rape survivor underlines the freedom given to the girl as the root cause of the sexual assault committed by her boyfriend. The burden of social standing is of such magnitude that the father, filled with anger and disappointment, expressed dissatisfaction with his daughter's survival following her suicide attempt. Instead, he desired her demise just to evade the potential slander from society. Not only the rape survivor's father but her father-in-law also states that nobody is going to believe the story of her rape by her boyfriend, as she went with him willingly. It has been seen that films shape people's thoughts, stereotypes, and attitudes. Movies can affect gender and ethnic stereotypes, attitudes toward particular groups, and opinions on certain problems (Kubrak, 2020).

In another Indian films, the issue of victim blame has also been raised. The movie *Humara Dil Aapke Pass Hai* was a story about how people in India feel about women who have been raped. In the movie, it was clear that a woman who has been raped will be shunned by her own family and by the rest of society. She would never get married because her father would be too ashamed to think of her as 'spoiled goods' (Kaushik, 2000). In this context, Film narratives serve as epistemic objects, drawing viewers' attention to the need to learn new things, abandon old ideas, and relearn certain themes (Pal, Karmakar, 2023).

According to the study by Hockett and Saucier (Hockett, Saucier, 2015) rape survivors experience only negative physical and psychological effects, whereas the literature on rape survivors indicates that they experience both positive and negative effects. Much of the research on rape victims has focused on the potential short- and long-term negative physical and psychological health effects. The film has also represented the same thing by depicting the psychological dilemma and difficulty of the rape survivor, *Katha*, in starting a normal married life with her husband. The film has clearly shown that despite all the love, care, and support of her newlywed husband, she is not able to forget the unfortunate incidence. Consequently, the victim is failing to return normalcy.

It is worth mentioning that two scholarly reviews have significantly contributed to the systematic expansion of knowledge regarding attributions in rape cases. One study investigated the influence of rape myth consistency and gender on the assignment of blame in rape cases (Hockett et al., 2016). Another review provided an overview of the various individual, situational, and societal elements that contribute to the attribution of blame towards victims in cases of acquaintance rape. Both reviews have made substantial contributions to the systematic advancement of knowledge on attributions in cases of rape. Based on the findings of these researches, it can be observed that victims who possess some level of familiarity with their attacker are more prone to experiencing blame compared to victims of rape perpetrated by strangers. The prevailing belief that women who voluntarily spend time alone with men should anticipate receiving sexual attention, along with conventional understandings that downplay the possibility or severity of rape (Gravelin et al., 2019). The same kind of situation is highlighted in the film, which clearly reflects the societal factors influencing victim stigmatization, where the victim *Katha* is blamed by her own family members for being wrong in making choices and decisions about her boyfriend, resulting in the unfortunate date rape and even worsening the situation with the unwanted pregnancy.

Anneke Meyer (Meyer, 2010) conducted a critical analysis of the prevailing discourse surrounding rape cases involving drinking dates in an active daily newspaper in the UK. The study revealed that the newspaper framed instances of rape involving alcohol as a consequence of female drinking rather than acknowledging the underlying issue of male sexual violence. Furthermore, the newspaper obscured women's responsibilities and risks by presenting them as rights. This situation is defended by the previous studies as well. They have shown that victims who are acquainted with their abuser are more likely to be held responsible for the crime (Begum, Barn, 2019). This is not the case with those who were sexually assaulted by a complete stranger. The delayed criminalization of marital rape may have contributed to the perception that rape is not possible or severe within heterosexual relationships. Along with this is the traditional notion that women who voluntarily spend time alone with men should expect sexual attention (Grubb, Harrower, 2009).

Rape myths are a collection of persistent and prevalent beliefs and attitudes that serve to clear up the offender while blaming the victim (Burt, 1980). Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) is the extent to which certain attitudes are held. Rape myths include beliefs about the victim's personality, looks, and conduct; the offender's drives and behaviour; and the situational factors surrounding the offense, for example, area and time (Sleath, Bull, 2012). It can be classified broadly into four distinct groups: accusing the victim; acquitting the perpetrator; the notion that rape is not very common or grave; and the conviction that only certain types of women are raped. It was discovered that rape myths are prevalent throughout both community and professional groups, and men consistently demonstrate higher levels of rape myth acceptance than do women (Hine, Murphy, 2019; Persson et al., 2018). Importantly, a significant body of literature suggests that RMA correlates with victim blame in rape cases by framing women as the perpetrators, and it appears to play an especially crucial role in assigning blame in acquaintance rape cases (RAINN, 2020). The same pattern was observed in the subsets of the rape victim and rape survivor literatures with a perceiver emphasis, or studies that looked at people's thoughts, feelings, and actions in relation to rape victims and survivors. When compared to the literature written by rape survivors, which acknowledges oppression but focuses on the potential, short- and long-term negative physical and psychological health consequences (Hockett, Saucier 2015b).

Patriarchy has long dominated power and gender interactions worldwide. Patriarchal ideology affects many facets of life, including families and beyond (Hazarika, Dowerah, 2023). A rape victim in India faces not only social stigma but also the difficulty of seeking justice in a

system that typically assigns blame to the victim. Rape survivors, who demonstrate courage by reporting the crime to law enforcement, encounter a multitude of obstacles in their pursuit of justice. When powerful people give marginalized groups a lesser epistemic position or credibility, they perpetuate structural hermeneutical injustice. Thus, their contributions to public debate on specific practices and experiences are ignored (Altanian, El Kassar, 2021). Snags include encountering unsupportive police officers, undergoing insensitive forensic exams, experiencing a dearth of counselling services, encountering substandard police investigations, and facing inadequate prosecutions within the judicial system. Insufficient allocation of resources towards the establishment of courts, the appointment of judges, and recruitment of prosecutors has resulted in a significant deficiency. Consequently, legal proceedings endure for prolonged periods, victims and witnesses face intimidation, and a considerable proportion of cases are dismissed prior to reaching a verdict (Bhalla, 2013). There have been reports of victims being harassed and coerced at police stations, leading them to drop their complaints. However, once a case reaches trial, resolution may not come for years. All those years of delayed justice are not less than any trauma to the assault victims. Along with this, in the due course of getting justice, not only by the prosecution but also by the society itself, the victim is convicted several times. According to the NCRB's report for 2021, heinous crime, like rape has a very low conviction rate of 39 percent. In rape cases, over 43,000 investigations were initiated during the year 2020, and only in 3814 rape cases was the accuser convicted by the court (Times News Network, 2021).

Sexual assault, domestic violence, rape (including date or acquaintance rapes), acid attacks, etc. are only some of the various forms of violence against women that we see every day. The societal institutions of sexism and patriarchy are to blame, as they maintain the status quo of gender inequality and subjugate women. Because of ubiquitous and normalized gender-based violence in society, this 'rape culture' continues to thrive. In April 2010, Tehelka magazine, in conjunction with the NDTV news channel (India), conducted an inquiry that revealed that a majority of the interviewed police officers harboured biases. These biases were manifested in their tendency to attribute blame to the victim's attire or her decision to be outside after night-time, insinuating that she bore responsibility for the incident in question (Bhalla, 2013).

The film has also voiced another sensitive issue related to acquaintance rape or date rape, i.e., hindrances in the reporting of such crime cases, especially within a bourgeois family setup. This ultimately leads to distrust in justice among the victims. The disappointment in India's judicial system has led to the problem of less reporting of case related to date or acquaintance rapes. This is not the first time that the film *Satyaprem Ki Katha* has voiced the issue of justice distrust by showing that the date rape survivor *Katha* didn't want to lodge a complaint against her perpetrator as distrust in the system that nobody will believe her story of being raped by her own boyfriend. The movie *Pink* also shifted the audience's attention towards this issue of how difficult it is for girls to report and get justice against an acquaintance's sexual assault. In the movie, a molestation charge against *Rajvir* (played by Angad Singh Bedi) is dismissed as harassment, and *Minal* (played by Tapsi Pannu) and her pals are accused of attempted murder and prostitution. Due to the fact that *Rajvir* is the nephew of a powerful politician, he employs the legal system in his battle against *Minal* and her roommates *Falak* (played by Kriti Kulhari) and *Andrea* (played by Andrea Tariang). Another film *A Thursday* also revolves around the story of a rape victim who is eventually failed by the system. In the movie, parents of the victim protagonist *Naina* (played by Yami Gautam), made extensive efforts to seek justice for their daughter, a raped survivor. *Naina* was raped in her teens, while returning from school in her school bus. The father succumbed to emotional distress and his failure to get justice for his daughter. Her justice gets delayed by 15 years. In one of the dialogues, the victim says, 'Unless she screams in their faces, no one will pay heed to what she has to say' (Khambata, 2022).

Although gender depictions are nuanced, major cinema producing countries like the U.S., India, and China continue to produce mass entertainment films with heteronormative roles that serve patriarchal societies (Divya, 2023). But in contrast to that the reel situations in these Bollywood movies are so much in sync with the real situations of rape victims when it comes to getting justice. The film *Damini* (Santoshi, 1993) is entirely based on the issue of failing to get fair and easy justice for a rape victim. The film examines witness intimidation, mistrust in the legal system, and the struggle for justice against powerful offenders in the judiciary battle. It's mandatory to mention the movie *Maatr* (Sayed, 2017), in which Raveena Tandon plays a mother who wants justice after her daughter is raped by a gang. The film shows the difficulties the mother

encounters in her pursuit of justice and the widespread distrust of the judicial system. Another Indian film in this row is *Mom* (Udyawar, 2017), the plot hinges on a mother's pursuit of justice after her stepdaughter is raped by her boyfriend and his gang after a date night. The film shows how the family of a sexual assault victim struggles to get answers and finds that the court system and society as a whole do not treat them with the respect they deserve.

There are incidents and allegations in which the rape survivors and their families themselves were humiliated, marginalized, and prevented from receiving justice. A civil court in the Araria region of Bihar placed a 22-year-old woman who had survived gang rape under arrest and sentenced her to jail for causing unrest. The Hathras gang rape case is not an old tale to add in this regard to how police incinerated the body of a rape victim in the hurry of diffusing the nation's interest in the case without letting her family offer her a dignified cremation (Shikha, 2023).

According to a report published in 2022 by the Public Health Foundation of India, there has been a 70.7 % increase in India's rate of rape-related crimes over the past two decades. Based on the findings of the report, it can be observed that in the majority of instances, the perpetrator had a pre-existing relationship with the victim (cases of date or acquaintance rapes). Nevertheless, the completion rate of trials for cases by the year 2018 stood at a mere 10 %, and a significant majority of these cases, approximately 73 %, resulted in acquittals (Sharma, 2022). It makes it very clear that the issues films have chosen to produce for society are in line with the actual scenarios of mistrust in the justice system by sexual crime's victims. For social progress, films' role in moulding and spreading information through different narratives is crucial. Although disappointing, but the global film industry itself is shaped by gender disparity. Women are systemically underrepresented in creative and economic decision-making jobs (Ehrich et al., 2022). Society promotes the performance of gender roles that accentuate femininity and sexuality in girls, while also penalizing them for conforming to these norms (Ramirez et al., 2022).

If we talk about the psychological bearings of date rape survivors, rape is not solely an isolated act perpetrated by an individual but rather a persistent social stigma that feeds on an on-going cycle of silence. According to a comprehensive survey encompassing 185 countries; it was found that just 77 out of these nations have enacted legislation specifically criminalizing marital rape. This data was collected in the year 2018 (UN Women, 2019).

The majority of individuals who have experienced rape encounter a more pronounced psychological impact during the immediate aftermath of the assault (Tripathi, 2023). Nevertheless, it is important to note that a significant number of survivors may endure lingering psychological consequences. The extent of psychological trauma experienced by survivors is directly correlated with the quality of the healing conditions they receive (Gravelin et al., 2019). The psychological impact on the victim is significantly influenced by the identity of the perpetrator involved in the crime as well as the nature of the relationship shared between the victim and the perpetrator (intimate or acquaintanceship). The psychological consequences experienced by survivors of sexual assault encompass a range of distressing outcomes, such as dread and anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, diminished self-esteem, challenges in social adjustment, and sexual dysfunctions (Resick, 1993).

Based on the study of 185 countries in 2019, women have a decreased propensity to disclose incidents of sexual abuse due to concerns regarding potential reprisals, social exclusion, the assignment of blame onto the victim, and the associated social humiliation (UN Women, 2019). Many a time media reporting reinforce narrow and stereotypical ideas about gender roles. Women were seen as mainly responsible for controlling sexual situations, while men were seen as "naturally" aggressive people (Hindes, Fileborn, 2020).

The number of new rape cases filed each year far exceeds the number of cases that are resolved. Because of the difficulty of the process and the potential for more traumas for victim, they may give in to pressure from their own or the offender's family. Despite the fact that there is at least one special Fast Track Court (FTC) in every district and trials are to be completed within the year, the pendency of POSCO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) cases has gone up by over 170 % since 2016—from 90,205 cases till December 2016 to 2,43,237 cases till January 2023 (Thakur, 2023). The aforementioned statistics show a clear picture of the scenario faced by sexual assault victims when it comes to the timely disposal of the cases and the conviction of their assaulters. The findings of the study on attribution of blame revealed that male participants exhibited a higher tendency to assign blame to the victim compared to their female counterparts (Shelby, 2020). Furthermore, the participants consistently assigned the highest level of culpability to the victim in

the context of the seduction rape scenario, with the date rape scenario following closely behind (Grubb, Harrower, 2009).

In a similar kind of incident that also appears in the film *Satyaprem Ki Katha*, the father of the rape victim blames and condemns her victim daughter *Katha* only for the unfortunate incident and to bring shame to his reputation in society. Consequently, the victim decides to take her life and attempts suicide. The mental trauma of the date rape survivor *Katha* not only ends with this incidence, but later she was forced to get married against her will. The film has elaborately shown the difficulty a survivor faces in forgetting her unfortunate past experience and returning to a normal life. The date rape survivor *Katha* also deals with the pressure and fear of indulging herself again in another intimate relationship (Vidwans, 2023).

The film *A Thursday* (Khambata, 2022) subsequently gives more profound illustrations of psychological bearings of the rape survivors. The rape survivor, *Naina*, later in her life underwent therapeutic intervention to address the psychological distress resulting from the abusive experience of her teens. A dialogue in the film by the victim's mother, who says that she won't shed a tear for her daughter because her eyes have dried up, shows the level of distress and trauma a victim's family faces in order to seek justice for a heinous crime like rape.

The movie *Pink* is a courtroom drama that revolves around the aftermath of a sexual assault involving three women. However, the film is more focused on the legal complexities of fighting against influential assaulters but it also delves into societal attitudes, victim-blaming, and the psychological impact on sexual assault survivors (Chowdhury, 2016).

The film *Bhoomi* demonstrates the presence of patriarchal prejudice within the court system, shedding light on the societal shaming of rape survivors. This stigmatization worsens the challenges faced by survivors in their journey towards healing, ultimately compelling them to resort to illicit means of seeking justice. The film highlights that the perpetrators of the key character *Bhoomi*, who is a victim of rape, were her acquaintances (Kumar, 2017). Although *Astitva* is a film that examines how a victim of intimate partner assault perceives herself and her place in the world. Yet it does discuss the psychological repercussions of sexual assault, especially when perpetrated by a trusted companion (Manjrekar, 2000). The prestigious Kim Jiseok award winning film *The Rapist* depicts *Naina's* (played by Konkana Sen Sharma) struggle with the ingrained stigma associated with rape in India, as well as the societal and psychological sufferings she experiences as a result of the unfortunate incident (Sen, 2021).

4. Results

All the above-mentioned Bollywood films have done a fair job of bringing out the psychological repercussions a rape survivor has to face along with her loved ones. These films have successfully encroached within the dark walls of the unfortunate incidents of date or acquaintance rapes, incest and domestic sexual violence against women to give those taboo subjects an open debate.

According to the *Indian Express*, 31.8 % of crimes against women were cases registered under 'cruelty by husband or his relatives', 20.8 % of cases were under 'assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty', while kidnapping and abduction accounted for 17.6 % of cases and rape cases for 7.4 %. The crime rate (10 cases registered per one million female population) was 64.5 % in 2021, compared to 56.5 % in 2020 (Roy, 2022). The scenario of acquaintance rape is nothing different than this around the globe, too. Specifically talking about Asia-Pacific region, Pakistan exhibited the greatest incidence of domestic violence against women as of 2019. An overwhelming majority of 85 % of women in Pakistan reported experiencing physical or sexual violence perpetrated by their intimate partners. Afghanistan ranks second on the list, with a prevalence rate of 60.8 %. Contrary to popular belief, despite having one of the lowest crime rates globally, Singapore has reported that roughly 6 % of women had encountered incidents of sexual violence as of the year 2019 (Kameke, 2022).

The bio-psychosocial consequences of rape might manifest in the survivor, who may experience both physical and psychological effects of trauma and post-traumatic stress. It is an unfortunate truth that female survivors of rape in India frequently encounter significant barriers when seeking justice and help, including limited access to healthcare, counselling services, and legal aid (Karmakar, 2023). With the increasing number of sexual crimes against women, the government has also tightened their seat belts to help and support rape survivors. The women and child development ministry has just unveiled a new initiative aimed at offering assistance to underage victims of rape who have been forsaken by their families or lack the

necessary resources to sustain themselves. This program aims to offer legal assistance to minor victims, ensuring their access to justice as well as providing essential care. A budgetary allocation of INR 740 million has been designated for the implementation of the scheme (Iftikhar, 2023).

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Nirbhaya Fund program has been in existence since 2013. This initiative aims to establish a non-lapsable corpus fund dedicated to enhancing the protection and security of women. The administration of this fund is entrusted to the Department of Economic Affairs. The Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF) is also a government aid that offers monetary support to individuals who have been victimized by a range of criminal offenses, including rapes, as outlined in Section 357A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). As to the Usha Mehra Commission's recommendations, One Stop Centres (OSCs) offer a range of integrated services to women impacted by violence, in addition to offering financial assistance. The range of services provided included medical assistance, police support, legal aid, counselling services, and temporary housing. The Mahila Police Volunteer (MPV) is also a similar kind of program that aims to establish a direct connection between the police and the community at the grassroots level. This is achieved through the involvement of female volunteers who serve as intermediaries, providing assistance to women in need, and fostering a stronger relationship between the police and the public (Indian Government Schemes, 2023). Apart from government initiatives, many non-profit organizations are also rendering great service to rape survivors.

PARI is an organization in India run by young individuals as a non-profit institution. The organization strives to combat rape and the phenomenon of victim-blaming. It takes initiative to implementing education and awareness-raising campaigns across multiple platforms, including social media. Additionally, the organization offers psychosocial treatment and support to individuals who have experienced sexual assault. Majlis, an NGO founded in Mumbai, collaborates with individuals affected by sexual violence to offer legal assistance and counselling services. The team assembled by Majlis, consisting of female lawyers and social workers, has rendered social and legal assistance to around 50,000 women and children who have encountered instances of violence, thereby facilitating their access to the judicial system.

The establishment of the International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care (PCVC) took place in 2001 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The organization creates and implements programs aimed at providing assistance to women who have experienced sexual or any kind of violence (Azim Premji Foundation, 2022). In 2012, Elca Grobler founded the 'My Choices Foundation' in Hyderabad, India. The primary objective of the organization is to eradicate instances of domestic violence and combat the issue of sex trafficking within the context of India (Medvedkina, 2023).

Violence (physical, sexual, or psychological) perpetrated by a husband or male intimate partner is the most prevalent form of violence against women worldwide (World Health Organisation, 2021). According to the 'Women, Business, and the Law 2020 report', 50 nations lack sexual harassment laws. Those countries have laws to criminalize such acts, but most women are unaware of these regulations, making implementation difficult (World Bank, 2020). The aforementioned condition of women and legislation protecting her rights to get justice against sexual violence profoundly emphasize the need of organized support for victims. Apart from non-profit organizations putting in efforts for the support and welfare of sexual assault victims, all the developed and developing countries have introduced rape crisis centres, also known as sexual assault referral centres (SARCs), which helps victims of rape and other sexual assault in the immediate aftermath and for months or years afterward. They offer medical, psychological, and practical care to victims in a safe setting with a multidisciplinary staff.

Australia has several state and territory based rape crisis centres, including Full Stop Australia (established in 1971 as the Sydney Rape Crisis Collective). The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, a nationally recognized organization in Ireland, offers a comprehensive array of services, including training and advocacy initiatives. Rape crisis centres in Canada are state-based; however the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres is an umbrella group (Stacey, 2016).

During the 1970s, support groups aimed at assisting those who have experienced rape and sexual abuse were created in New Zealand. Subsequently, in 1986, an organization known as 'Rape Crisis and Related Groups' (RCRG) was formed. Thuthuzela Care Centres in South Africa have emerged as a renowned model of optimal care provision following incidents of sexual

assault. The term 'thuthuzela' originates from the Xhosa language, specifically indicating a sense of 'comfort' (Dlamini, 2023).

Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) are present throughout the United Kingdom, and they are established, financed, and operated by the National Health Service (NHS). In addition, there exist crisis centres that operate as charitable entities, under the supervision of Rape Crisis England & Wales and Rape Crisis Scotland. As of 2023, they function as a collective entity, incorporating 39 member rape crisis centres (Livingston, 2023).

America has established numerous Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) since the 1970s, primarily initiated by women affiliated with the second-wave feminist movement. Similar kinds of rape crisis centres and sexual assault responses services are developed around the globe to extend a helping hand to distressed sexual assault victims and survivors in need.

In numerous nations throughout Asia and the Pacific region, the prevalence of women who reveal instances of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner during their lifetime exceeds the worldwide average of 27 %. Specifically, the rates stand at 35 % in India, 38 % in Timor Leste, and surpass 50 % in Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Bangladesh (WHO, 2021).

5. Conclusion

The role of cinema in the development of culture is characterized by a complex and mutually beneficial relationship. Cinema (especially in India), in the broader cultural context in which film holds a disproportionately significant position, should entail more responsibility in choosing and presenting stereotypical gender representations. It is relieving that women are no longer viewed solely as decorative accessories or helpless victims in Indian films. Bollywood has started to make up stories about them – depth narratives that don't stop at the surface. Films discussed above have indeed done a decent job in bringing up a women-related issue for which society is split over its existence and severity. The film has adeptly addressed the social issues of date and acquaintance rape with sensitivity, thereby conveying a poignant message that resonates deeply with the audience. Although the film has been criticized for telling the story of a woman from a man's perspective, the filmmakers assert that their conscious choice to present the narrative from a male perspective is based on their belief that feminism may effectively accomplish its objectives by influencing the transformation of men within society.

The movie does a good job of portraying the psychological and emotional suffering that a date rape victim goes through. However, it falls short of depicting the resilience and determination exhibited by the survivor as she confronts the challenges posed by her family and society. However, the film *A Thursday* endeavours to depict the resilience of a survivor of sexual assault as she fights for justice, where her quest for justice takes unsavoury turns. Both films have emphasized the issue that many scholars specializing in gender and media studies have also consistently highlighted that women's freedoms are constrained under the guise of tradition and cultural identity. The fundamental premise posits that women serve as custodians of traditional and cultural values. The film industry, which has a significant duty to spread ideas among the general public, has consistently been motivated to increase awareness regarding gender-based violence and bias, as well as to challenge deeply ingrained societal prejudices. Bollywood has previously endeavoured to use societal taboos as narrative themes in its films; however, their appeal has been primarily confined to aficionados of art cinema and unconventional narratives. The industry has consistently expressed scepticism regarding the potential commercial success of these thematic elements in films. However, these two recently released films have challenged this premise by achieving both commercial success and critical acclaim from audiences. Nevertheless, the Indian film industry still has a significant distance to cover in terms of consistently and convincingly conveying messages that empower women and challenge their marginalized status within society.

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The Impact of Cultural Factors on Chinese Teenagers' Self-presentation in Douyin's Videos

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Abstract

Modern mobile technologies that allow the quick creation of short videos provide users with ample opportunities to present their information in public space. Teenagers have become the most active users of new forms of creativity, so their self-presentations on video platforms deserve attention. This study uses content analysis to examine the features of Chinese adolescents' self-presentation on Douyin, the Chinese TikTok counterpart, and the cultural factors that determine these features. We discovered that teenagers' self-presentation is characterized, firstly, by the creation of a virtual identity based on the real one, secondly, by freedom in the choice of role behavior, and thirdly, by the idealization of their image and various means of its formation. In addition to the impact of social, commercial, and network values, we also found the influence of traditional Chinese culture. Cultural stereotypes formed by upbringing are reflected in the forms of self-presentation (from external style to way of thinking) by the modern younger generation on social networks. We noted the role of celebrity culture in the daily lives of teenagers. In the future, studying the role of Chinese adolescents in the social information system, especially at the stage of changes in their self-perception and self-presentation, seems relevant.

Keywords: self-presentation, cultural factors, short video, TikTok, Douyin.

1. Introduction

Self-presentation, as Erwin Goffman rightly observed, is nothing but the management or regulation of impression and refers to the effort to present oneself to others to make them see one's personality the way one wants them to see it. This phenomenon is characteristic of interpersonal communication in which an individual "brings into play information about him" (Goffman, 1956: 10) to others using various symbols to give them a precise impression. For successful interaction, individuals try to idealize their image mainly through facial expressions, appearance, and actual behavior.

A permanent image is maintained through behavioral patterns (Goffman, 1956).

Today, online video clips can be presented and stored in cyberspace, allowing us to study people's self-presentation characteristics, strategies, and motives. In the Internet era, the daily management of human impressions inevitably extends to online interactions. Compared to face-to-face communication, people can eliminate as much as possible undesirable forms of their image and behaviors that do not fit their "role" in social media by embellishing their appearance and reactions as much as possible. Short video, as a new form of communication, has made the mode of self-presentation infinitely diverse.

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According to Sensor Tower, TikTok has become the world's most in-demand and fastest-growing app for watching and downloading short videos, and its audience is considerably young people (Sensor Tower, 2022). According to IiMedia Data Center, 49.42 % of Douyin's users – the Chinese version of Tik-Tok – are under 24 years old. And 65.6 % of minors are users of video platforms, and the length of time they watch short videos is increasing.

In general, the popularity of mobile devices and the Internet among minors has become a global phenomenon. Internet usage among Chinese adolescents aged 7 and above has reached 99.3 %, and watching short videos is the third most popular type of online entertainment among minors after listening to music and playing computer games (CNNIC, 2021). Therefore, analyzing Chinese adolescents' self-presentation in short videos is undeniably relevant.

According to Goffman's dramaturgical theory, in everyday life and relationships, each person is a performer, recognizing other people's expectations of his/her behavior and assuming their thoughts, feelings, and actions in specific situations, constantly adjusting his/her interaction with them depending on the depth of what is happening and the character of people. With the advent of cyberspace and social media, the "stage" for personal self-presentation has expanded. In computer-mediated communication, people can spend more time selecting or creating the information they present (Goffman, 1956). Online self-presentation and image management strategies are defined by factors such as personality characteristics, the purpose of the social media user, gender, age, country, and culture (Hart et al., 2017; Herring, Kapidzic, 2015; Schlosser, 2020; Vogel, Rose, 2016; Zhang et al., 2018).

While the Internet has turned the world into a global village by allowing information to circulate and change rapidly, related research shows that people from different countries and cultures provide different content and use different ways of presenting themselves online. Researchers examined 98 Korean and American personal Internet pages and found that American virtual "actors" were more likely to present themselves as static images, while Korean virtual actors presented themselves as images in motion (Kim, Papacharissi, 2003).

Also, due to socio-cultural factors, there are differences in how men and women from the same country present themselves on social media. For example, most Indian men use photos in casual clothing on Facebook and Orkut, whereas most Indian women use personal photos in "traditional" outfits on Orkut and in "formal" or "casual" clothing on Facebook (Nemer, Freeman, 2015).

A recent cross-cultural study has demonstrated that cultural factors influence the motivation to create precise images for self-presentation on social media in Asian and European users (Sariyska et al, 2019). Therefore, this study examined the characteristics of Chinese adolescents' self-presentation in short videos from a cultural perspective.

The Adolescent Age Range was chosen for several reasons. First of all, adolescence is defined as a transitional period of life that follows childhood and precedes adulthood. Second, it represents a pivotal phase for identity formation, embracing societal values and conventions of conduct, and acquiring social expertise and life competencies. Third, the expansive nature of the Internet results in adolescents inhabiting a milieu molded by numerous cultural determinants. Adolescence, as defined in developmental psychology, is the period between the ages of 10 and 19. During this time, individuals tend to focus on the opinions of others, which then shape their understanding of their own roles. It is based on the belief that others are concerned with both the appearance and behavior of the adolescent (Berk, 2007: 363-386). The traits exhibited by adolescents in their short video self-presentations offer insight into how new media transfers social culture, social values, and behavioral norms.

2. Materials and methods

This study analyzes the characteristic features of Chinese teenagers' self-presentation on Douyin, the original version of the TikTok app. The presence of the keywords "secondary school student" and "high school student" in users' profiles was chosen as the primary selection criterion for samples of age groups. The number of subscribers of more than 100,000 was used as a secondary selection requirement. Eventually, we selected 12 users with a ratio of male and female samples: 6 junior high school students (3 boys and 3 girls) and 6 high school students (3 boys and 3 girls). Table 1 presents the data from the research sample.

Table 1. Research sample

Nº	Nickname	Gender	Age group	Number of fans
1	苏璇儿	girl	secondary school student	5.800.000
2	豪豪oso	boy	secondary school student	273.000
3	Ameng	girl	secondary school student	182.000
4	杨阳洋	boy	secondary school student	163.000
5	果果子ໂᄫᆯᆯᆯ	girl	secondary school student	155.000
6	-阿猪的日常	boy	secondary school student	141.000
7	拉笔小新	boy	high school student	2.300.000
8	谦之之_	girl	high school student	620.000
9	祝嘉泽	boy	high school student	260.000
10	我不叫媛媛.	girl	high school student	213.000
11	阮梦没睡醒	girl	high school student	135.000
12	花花花菜	boy	high school student	130.000

Filtering short videos posted over a six-month period in their accounts we selected all 12 profile photos representing 12 teenagers, and 478 videos as the samples for our study.

While keeping up the image of a "character" in everyday life requires a precise appearance and behavior, online short video apps offer several technical features to manage the impression. For example, editing features, video effects, controlling access to content, and more. Considering these factors, this study integrates previous approaches to examine the subject (see: [Algavi et al., 2021](#); [Banczyk et al., 2008](#); [Camarero et al., 2019](#); [Gálik, Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2015](#); [Okushova, 2020](#); [Volkova, 2018](#); [Wang, Wu, 2022](#)).

For analysis, we used user pictures, nicknames, and profiles. Video content and graphic effects, "behind-the-scenes" and virtual actors' looks, and musical, and vocal components were selected as samples for the study. MAXQDA software was used to code the samples to identify the characteristics of adolescents' self-presentation and to analyze the influence of cultural factors.

3. Discussion

Personal settings comprise nickname, user pictures, and profile, serving as a tool for self-presentation. Teens can employ avatars to express their individual self-perception. This research examined photo types and the emotional level of color treatments chosen for personal avatars ([Table 2](#)).

Table 2. Types of photos for adolescents' personal avatars

Types of avatars		Quantity
Personal photos	Casual photo	2
	Selfies	1
	Artistic photo	1
Non-personal photos	Images of cartoon and anime characters	5
	Celebrity photos	3

As a result, we discovered that Chinese teenagers prefer impersonal photos such as cartoon characters and celebrity images for their user profiles. The color tint of the avatars is mainly neutral, indicating that teenagers employ images of other people or things to portray self-perception constructs.

A nickname is the first step in creating a virtual persona that emphasizes an individual's distinctiveness or uniqueness. It is a textual symbol that portrays one's reflections about themselves. Analyzing the meanings of personal nicknames (Table 1) in this study revealed intriguing characteristics.

- The structure of nicknames is complex and includes words, symbols, cartoon icons, and other elements. The choice of symbols and graphic images reflect an individual's traits rooted in reality.

- About 42 % of teens use nicknames in Chinese, and 33 % use a combination of words and symbols.

- Teenagers very rarely choose their real names as a nickname.

Previous studies confirm our observation that. According to one of them, 65 % of the Chinese believe that one should not use one's real name as an Internet alias (Wu, 2006), and this social attitude influences today's younger generation. Chinese people value anonymity and privacy (He, 1996) and are guided by the judgments and views of others. They fear a too-personal image may invite scrutiny and biased discussion (Lin et al, 2021). In addition, it is in the tradition of Chinese culture to choose subtle images and use graceful objects to express emotions and thoughts, expectations, and aspirations. Chinese teens choose avatars and nicknames in response to these cultural factors.

Profiles generally contain details including gender, age, hobbies, personal beliefs, and other personal characteristics. The studied profiles are filled with descriptive information about their activities, communication with fans, business collaborations, and links to other social platforms. Adolescents' self-descriptions may reflect their personal qualities and attitudes, attitudes and hobbies, which are often affected by sociocultural factors.

4. Results

The study revealed that ticktockers only partially disclosed personal data. For example, #4 "杨阳洋" wrote that he is a 3rd grade student, and #5 "果果子ღ) ~" reported that she is in 2nd grade and lives in Shanghai. Ticktockers who did not provide real information about themselves outlined their virtual identities. For example, #1 "苏璇儿>" stated that she is a blogger who likes to describe her life. In terms of hobbies, 6 users posted lists of songs in their profiles. 9 out of 12 expressed their mood in a positive way: their states reflected cordiality and good expectations. For example, "The coming day is promising" (#6), "The cure for life is to save" (#8), "Remember to be happy every day" (#12). As for the profiles, their content is presented in self-presentations, which primarily concern the daily life of the authors themselves.

The majority of posts relate to fan interaction. All bloggers thank for the support and attention to their pages and mention their accounts on other social media platforms that they suggest following too, including QQ (41.7 %), WeChat (41.7 %), Weibo (25 %), and Xiaohongshu (16.7 %). It suggests that teenagers want to strengthen communication with their admirers by taking advantage of additional opportunities. Meanwhile, the younger generation prefers graphic symbols rather than words in their profiles, which may be due to the influence of online culture.

Of the 12 bloggers, eight promoted business collaboration accounts on their pages or indicated information about the nature of collaboration in their profiles, and six recommended collaboration links regardless of age group and gender. According to our study, "internet celebrity" is the most desired career among 54 % of Chinese teenagers. High school students with a certain number of subscribers are naturally eager to earn money from this stream influenced by the behavior of internet celebrities, so their video content shows readily monetizable elements.

The evaluation system of successful self-presentation for short videos includes evaluation indices of visual and auditory features. Visual elements contain "behind-the-scenes", the ticktockers' look, and special effects, while the auditory components include not only the topic but also the timbre of the voice or musical styles.

In addition, short videos can be classified into five categories based on their content: everyday recordings, advertising, impression, reaction, and distribution of information. Notably, the majority (67.99 %) of these videos fall under everyday recordings (Table 3).

It is common for teenagers to document their daily routine by detailing their school activities, learning experiences, social interactions with friends and peers, weekend activities, personal attributes, and other characteristics. The two most common themes in the daily recordings are domestic life and school life. The subjects of the videos are often classmates, friends, and family

members. The episodes typically have a positive and emotive tone, portraying healthy interpersonal, friendship, and familial connections.

Table 3. Types of short video content

Types	Quantity	Share (%)
Everyday recording	325	67.99
Advertisement	60	12.55
Impression	52	10.88
Emotional reaction	32	6.69
Information distribution	9	1.88
Total	478	100.00

Advertisements usually take the form of recommendations to subscribers of specific products. These can usually be stationery, clothing, skincare products, and other goods that are often used by teens. This preference may be due to two factors: teenagers imitate adult video bloggers, and merchants use the influence of young bloggers on their target audience to advertise their products.

Only 10.88 % of video content pertains to impressions which typically showcase the beautiful filming of oneself or others, resembling Tik-Tok's "explosive" videos, where the subject poses in front of the camera to show off their attractiveness. The common topics of emotional impression videos are relationships of all kinds, academic success or failure. A smaller percentage of content is about sharing information on teaching methods, recommending resources for any disciplines, courses, or online classes.

The young tiktokers shoot their videos mostly at school and at home. Typical locations for school scenes are classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, cafeterias, and school shops (Table 4). Domestic scenes include the protagonists' living rooms and dorms, bathrooms, and kitchens. Parks, cafes, cinemas, amusement and shopping centers are also popular locations for short videos. However, domestic scenes dominate with 50.21 %. The most common location in these scenes is a tiktoker's room and the most used film set is a desk, which may be associated with a sense of privacy or greater freedom.

Table 4. Locations of short video

Scenes	Quantity	Share (%)
At home	240	50.21
At school	125	26.15
The others	113	23.64
Total	478	100.00

In 65.06 % of the short videos, teenagers prefer not to show their faces, filming themselves only from the side or back. This may be due to both character factors and privacy preference, as well as national culture. Adolescents in East Asian countries are very cautious about self-display due to the influence of Chinese traditional culture, particularly the "culture of shame" (Zhai, 2021). Adolescents maintain certain relationships with their fans to ensure personal interests but set invisible boundaries and try not to present too many scenes from their real-life under the influence of the traditional Chinese "differentiated mode of association" (Fei, 1992).

There are mainly three types of personal appearance: classy, casual, and school uniform (Table 5). "Classy" videos represented the largest proportion, comprising 48.87 % of the 311 short videos. For example, "苏璇儿", a 15-year-old high school student, carefully chooses her outfit, hair-dress, and makeup for each of her videos. Ticktockers, who only film themselves from the side or back also carefully consider their clothing choices. In 34.08 % of their videos, they wear casual clothes but for maintaining an attractive image they keep clean and neat their clothes. School uniforms are usually seen in school scenes, but sometimes in home scenes as well.

Table 5. The ticktockers's appearance in short videos

Appearance	Quantity	Share (%)
Classy	152	48.87
Casual	106	34.08
School uniform	53	17.04
Total	311	100.00

Video effects include video editing, using video templates and filters, adding subtitles, adding emoticons, etc. Video effects were used in 95.61 % of the selected short videos. As a virtual platform, social media offers users more opportunities to modify their performances and adolescents are eager to use these tools to showcase themselves.

Musical symbols are used by teens in 90.38 % of short videos, while voice symbols are used in 47.28 %. Ticktockers use music to enhance the communicative effect of their video content. They select mostly background music according to the nature of the video, to advance the narrative, to create a certain atmosphere, to evoke the necessary emotions or the desired resonance of the audience. There are three types of music in this collection: narrative music, rhythmic music, and background music.

Table 6. The nature of audio information in short videos

Nature of audio information	Types	Quantity	Total
Musical symbols	Narrative music	38	432
	Rhythmic music	66	
	Background music	328	
Voice symbols	Introductory descriptive text	219	226
	Celebrity Quotes	7	

Background music in videos encompasses action songs, sound effects, or music that complements the overall theme and tone. Often, rhythmic music such as rock or electronic music is embedded in dance videos to emphasize the dynamism of gestures and movements. For instance, #4 selected "Move Your" as the soundtrack for her dance video with her friends.

Narrative music is accompanied by lyrics that convey emotions to evoke a response from viewers. For instance, in the graduation video, #12 picked the song "Cheers" to express gratitude for friendship.

We have identified two types of narrator voices: introductory descriptive language and celebrities' quotes. The former includes original sound, synchronized dubbing, and voice-overs created with the help of artificial intelligence. Teenagers are keen on employing the vast resources of artificial intelligence for voice-overs. This application generates quirky dubbing that can help eliminate a potential gap in the viewer's understanding of the video and foster a pleasant atmosphere.

Celebrity quotes are mostly motivational in nature. For example, No.10 chose a quote by Dong Qing, a well-known Chinese television host, to inspire himself: "Those days when we can't sleep at night, those moments when we want to avoid the abyss are precious moments that allow us to truly understand and accept ourselves, so that we can exceed ourselves".

5. Conclusion

In summary, according to the analysis results, the self-presentation of Chinese adolescents in short videos has the following features:

1. Virtual personalities. Teenagers create them based on their real personalities. These online identities are formed through the use of short videos using real scenes from school and home life, which serve as the foundation for their online identity.
2. Idealized self-presentation. As a general practice, idealized images are enhanced through the use of retouching and filters to achieve a more flawless appearance. Furthermore, the majority

of adolescents depicted in short videos demonstrate favorable interactions with their families, classmates, and social surroundings, signifying contented lives.

3. Hidden self-presentation. This is a common practice among adolescents who choose not to use their personal image as their user picture or their real name as their social media handle. In addition, many opt to conceal their face in videos by filming from a side or back view.

4. Adult Imitation. In behavior, language, and even the way they videotape, teens show clear traits of imitating adult Internet celebrities.

In addition to customized settings and short videos, teenagers' interactions with their audience in the comments section also have a significant impact on self-image management and the choice of self-presentation topics. Cultural factors that influence the characteristics of self-presentation include:

1. "Shame culture" and "social evaluation culture" continue to shape the way Chinese adolescents present themselves on social media today.

2. Young people in their daily lives mirror the behavior of Internet celebrities in various aspects, such as entertainment, experiences, cultural consumption, and creative activities. This trend displays a distinct inclination towards de-ideologization.

3. Impact of commercial values. Advertisements featured in the teenagers' short videos and information about their business collaboration with users suggest the impact of commercial principles and capitalization on the youth.

So, self-presentation on the internet manifests a person's self-identification and their social interactions. Considering the growing reliance on new communication channels for information, communication, and entertainment, it is pertinent to examine the position and role of adolescents in the social information system, especially during their self-perception and self-presentation change phase. Audiovisual and media literacy is an essential component of this study (Lin et al, 2021).

The availability of audio and video editing technologies has expanded the possibilities of self-presentation, allowing adolescents to create online avatars at will, bringing them closer to their idealized selves. However, social values, online culture, and the ethical attitudes of Internet celebrities still influence these representations of self before anything else. Although adolescents exist as virtual personalities in cyberspace, traditional culture has a more subtle influence on the meanings of their self-presentation.

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