PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW OF MULTICULTURALISM IN MODERN EUROPEAN CINEMATOGRAPHY

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Abstract

The article focuses on presenting the importance of the recent changes in the European cinema industry. For the last twenty years we have been witnessing the changes in the process of creating films and in their meaning content. The shift from the classical national cinema (traditional films representing the country in the international arena, with their specific plots, genres, persons, names and means) to lots of films created by descendants from different ethnics and cultures, with their unexpected ideas and solutions their films are based on and that astonish us, as well as the methods used in their implementation. The ideology dominating in the film industry has been changing; this has been confirmed by factors associated with popularity of the new films, their being noticed, marked and appreciated on the top level of the film community, receiving positive reviews, being awarded the prizes in the main European film festivals. It has become imperative to carry out a philosophical analysis of the changes that occurred in the European cinematography. The purpose of article is the philosophical reflection on the issues of the influence of the policy and ideology of multiculturalism on the development of contemporary European cinema. The authors proposed a classification of multicultural processes specific for contemporary European cinematography. Complex analysis makes it possible to more deeply understand how a new discourse has been changing the cinematic space. The polyphony of ideas presented contributes to more adequate cinematic vision of an object and considering it as a global phenomenon. The materials of the article can be used for practical purposes, namely, as auxiliary material in developing general and special university courses on social philosophy, philosophy of culture, culture studies, media studies, and theory of cinema.

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1. Introduction

The contradictory pattern of using multicultural attitudes in the contemporary European society with focus on primacy of the cultural factor above the social, considering any conflict, first and foremost, as an intercultural one, generates doubts regarding the socio-political effectiveness of the multicultural models in a number of Western Europe countries. This stipulates shifts not only in the contemporary political and social culture, but also in the artistic practice. Changes of this type have an effect on the trends in the European film industry and on the very process of film production [1].

While European cinema had previously for the most part proposed its audience the cultural and uniform medium, now it puts a particular emphasis on the cultural differences showing the fragmented society [2]. At the same time, modern film industry is endeavouring to evade stereotypes and exotic representation of other cultures. Trying to accomplish both these tasks simultaneously, contemporary European film sector makes paradoxical efforts in its attempts to show intercultural boundaries and, at the same time, challenges their prescribed nature and uniqueness.

This does not mean that some new form or genre of cinematography is being born since the analysed works in many respects are stylistically sustained in the cinematic tradition. Film producers who affect and develop multicultural themes in their creative products do not want to be perceived as directors who are making 'niche' cinema. They are not delimited from the world cinematic heritage and do not want to establish, or associate, themselves isolated from it [O. Kriveleva, *Multiculturalism in Contemporary European Cinema*, 2012, https://www.lap-publishing.com/catalog/details/store/ru/book/978-3-659-16721-8/]. With other cultures interrelated in the European cinematography, the creators of multicultural movies still use predominantly artistic methods and techniques characteristic for the classical European cinema.

Partially, this can be explained by the film makers' 'cultural hybridity' that, one way or another, grew up in another environment, inside the European culture. At the same time, this can also be considered as a conscious step. The analysis carried out demonstrates that the success of any movie depends on the presence and skilful exploitation of the acknowledged European techniques, the language and codes intelligible to European spectators. Many directors use the methods of the western cinema 'mainstream'. This causes some dissonance as the content of the films is perceived as 'theirs, own', and the means of artistic expression are 'alien' [https://www.lap-publishing.com/catalog/details/store/ru/book/978-3-659-16721-8/]. From the point of view of social-and-cultural studies, this phenomenon can be perceived as mimicry of the dominant culture to achieve their goals and promote their ideas.

There has been a shift from the classical national cinema (traditional films representing the country on the international stage, with a certain set of recognizable themes, genres, faces, names, images) to a variety of dissimilar films created by immigrants from different ethnic and cultural environments, and

that express unexpected ideas, background decisions, and ways to accomplish them that really raise our eyebrows [2]. These films put completely different experience in the centre of the narrative, but, at the same time, seek to contribute to the image of the modern European space, to offer a new understanding, never isolating their country from a particular EU state, but being part of European history.

The ideology of cinema has been changing, which is confirmed by the facts that these films have been appreciated by the cinema community at the highest level, received positive reviews from critics, and were awarded prizes at famous European film festivals [3].

The presented ideological polyphony contributes to a more complete cinematic vision of an object and gives it a global scale. This is a direct consequence of globalization that is trying to bring up a new type of an individual, namely, a citizen of the world whose self-consciousness is able to go beyond national and cultural identity and operate cross-cultural concepts.

Based on the problem analysis presented, we consider the purpose of the article to be an attempt to organize and classify some multicultural processes in modern European cinema according to which cultural diversification of European cinema has been developing.

2. Research methodology

It is interesting to note that intellectuals working on cinema and cinema studies have always been talking about cinema as an art, as a medium of communication, as a transporter of different signs, codes and symbols. There have appeared numerous theories like feminist theory, formalist theory, Auteur theory, etc., which emphasize on the point that cinema as an art form, communicates about different complexities existing in the society that can be analysed through numerous ways.

The present study is characterized by an interdisciplinary approach. The investigation presented lies at the intersection of cultural studies, political Philosophy, philosophy of culture, and Media studies. Accordingly, the modern developments of all the above mentioned disciplines, as well as methods of interpretation of visual images and the comparative analysis, have been used in it.

Since the work considers how ideas are being embodied in the cinematic symbols, the semiotic analysis methods have also been involved. We have used the model of the semiotic analysis offered in 'Visual Methodologies' by Rose Gillian [4]. The described scheme is valuable and convenient because it can be used in relation to the products of visual creativity.

When analysing the text content of the films, we have used classical methods of narrative analysis revealing the overall logical structure of the narrative and the functional identity of the characters.

Multiculturalism is not only a phenomenon, it is a special vision of the world which systematizes reality in a certain way, and therefore is looked upon as a discourse. Therefore, based on the understanding that multiculturalism is one of the discourses of our contemporary time, any research into it would involve discourse analysis [https://www.lap-publishing.com/catalog/details/store/ru/book/978-3-659-16721-8/]. Textual analysis is not conducted in isolation from the socio-historical and cultural contexts; the study takes place within a multicultural paradigm, with constant reference to its inherent complexity of relations and values [5]. In this paper, a discursive analysis is used to understand how a language and visual images create a phenomenon of unique vision of social reality.

3. Literature review

The concept and theories of multiculturalism have long been studied in Western philosophical, cultural, sociological studies, as well as political philosophy. Multiculturalism has been looked upon as a fundamental theoretical issue and in the applied aspect. At present, many Western theorists, critics, journalists, political and public figures consider it important, and even to some extent fashionable, to mention multicuturalism when discussing its relation to various spheres of public activity. Multiculturalism can be considered in several aspects – as an idea, as a theoretical doctrine, and as a policy.

Formation of this concept and its trends of development are connected; on the one hand, with historical changes – globalization, intensive migration processes, the domination of liberal ethics with ideas of pluralism, and, on the other hand, with the existing paradigm of scientific research. It was in 1960s that the authors like Deleuze [6] and Derrida [7], as well as Adorno [8] and Horkheimer & Adorno [9], who were assonant and compliant with them, claimed the primacy of differences and differences over identity in their works. Moreover, the apology for the difference in post structuralism has been further developed in post-colonial theory, cultural and gender studies. In all of these areas, society is considered not as a homogeneous mass of individuals, but as a heterogeneous entity [10]. It has become the prevailing trend to study and make conclusions not on the universal human characteristics, which have been so fully studied in classical philosophy, but on the particularities and differences.

Multiculturalism which implies co-existence of many different cultures on the same territory, and proclaims primacy of differences over identity fits into this context.

Discussing the specifics of multiculturalism in Europe, it would be good, firstly, to indicate its diversity. One of the slogans of the European community, '*Unity* in *diversity*', indicates the well matched co-operation between people of different groups living in a single society in spite of their physical or psychological barriers, and, thus, allows for a multiculturalism. However, this diversity may be of different sort [11]. The process of constructing European space is impacted by cultural diversity at several levels: at the level of countries,

at the level of ethnic minorities within a European country, and at the level of immigrants.

Just as it was in a certain period when the view on an abstract individual and individual's needs and thoughts in Science and society shattered (and it became clear that we must counter "the forces of depersonalization and dehumanization which ran rampant in the course of the 20th century" [12, p. 289]), as there is always a specific, certain, and individual, the modern film industry also has realized that it is necessary to make a reference to the differences between individuals.

A panorama of opinions and different points of views have been presented to viewers. The same situation, the same object, i.e. everything reveals itself in its versatility, with different views: class, gender, ethnic, cultural, etc. The phenomenon is so bright that some even propose to talk about it as a new genre. However, the genre variety of films presented is just great. And all these films have one common thing to unite them - understanding how heterogeneous is the environment in which the heroes of the film plot act, the peculiarities of their interaction with it, and the ways of expressing their own self.

The study of cultural pluralism phenomenon on the basis of modern films has become a new trend in the investigations of modern Western researchers [13, 14]. The amount and level of researches developing the idea of the interrelation between multiculturalism and cinema prove the actual interest in it to exist and be popular.

A film is considered not only from the point of view of aesthetics, but as a phenomenon with its specific functions and social context. The main directions in the study of the problem are the following [https://www.lap-publishing.com/catalog/details/store/ru/book/978-3-659-16721-8/]:

1) presentation and interpretation of cinema as a new niche, a kind of third space where the discussion about multiculturalism is being carried out (directors: Mania Shochat, E. Shohat, R. Stam, K. Sternberg, D. Bergman);
2) an attempt to determine the functional significance of films (the authors try to oppose them to the mainstream, to consider as an act of resistance, protest or commercially conditioned action) (directors: L. Lowy, J. Brackins);
3) an attempt to classify the movies from the point of view of national or transnational film culture (D. Iordanova, A. Adil);
4) interpretation and evaluation of film as a field for multicultural discussion, as well as analysis of the strategy of multicultural discourse in cinema (directors: A. Adil, K. Wright);
5) consideration of problems concerning national and cultural identity through the prism of the films (directors: K. Barucha, I. De Pascalis, M. Ko).

Researchers argue that the cinema institution becomes a place where power, oppression, privileges, representation, theory and identity have been discussed. The dynamics of multicultural processes are contradictory, they are not complete, but this is the living reality in which individuals exist and interact. Artistic culture in this context is a way of expressing one's position that is a way

to express a particular point of view. As in the scientific or political sphere, in the field of artistic culture, such positions also differ.

Thus, modern European cinema presents different positions with the only purpose to be heard. This is considered to be another field where significant social and cultural processes have been discussing.

Currently, the phenomenon of multiculturalism that has been interpreted in several concepts is described as conservative, liberal, liberal-left, communitarist, critical, radical, and corporate. Bearing in mind its initial stage (starting point) – the problems of heterogeneous society – multiculturalism theorists offer opposite concepts. A conservative approach to multiculturalism (also called classical) implies the denial of racism and the direct oppression of subordinate groups, with the dominant groups retaining their power [15]. That means that a situation is created when different cultures are represented, but they are on marginal positions. Liberal approaches are based on the postulate of cultural equality discussed by U. Kimlik [16], M. Walzer [17]. In the ideal scenario of this model, all groups should have equal opportunities to express their own cultural identity, and preponderance of any group is excluded [18].

Liberal-left trend attaches great importance to cultural differences, and Ch. Kukathas [19] encourages and, to some extent, even exaggerates them. Within the framework of this interpretation, a high degree of fragmentation of society has been realized. However, as it is traditionally noted, the liberal-left approach is not able to recognize and accept the differences within the groups, i.e. their heterogeneity.

Communitarist approach brings encouragement and promotion differences to its logical limit. Within this approach, different groups of population should have specific rights, based on specific needs and taking into account all the cultural characteristics of the group. Thus, the legal focus shifts from the individual to the group. Communitarianism as an approach is also called 'radical multiculturalism' because it traditionally is opposed to, or contradicts, liberal ethics [20]. Critical multiculturalism is based on recognition of cultural relativism [21].

Key problems in developing the concept of multiculturalism include finding a balance between an individual and a group, determining the degree of fragmentation of society into groups and subgroups, the question of the legitimacy for the existence of exclusive group rights, and the boundaries of these rights and freedoms, the attitude to existing differences. (We can agree here with Do's and Valco's recent comparative analysis on human rights, according to which "[d]espite the undeniable social and political responsibility of individuals, one should be free to embrace diverging views (cultural or spiritual), unless they prove to be directly dangerous for the thriving of the community. There is fine line here between the rights of the individual and the well-being of the community/political society. Principles of individual and social life need to be derived in such a way, as to allow for a convergence of and constructive interplay between collectivity (emphasizing communal needs and mindset) and the individual's life philosophy with overlaps into social ethics."

[22]) Depending on the ratio of these categories and the priorities set in the outlined field, various models have been constructed.

Therefore, the use of the term 'multiculturalism' in this work refers the reader to the complex of positions, provides a reflective field for discussion within the frames of this direction, rather than only implies one of the existing concepts.

4. Discussion

Albeit the seeming naturalness, it is difficult to call what is happening nowadays a spontaneous process. European cinema today is not just a diverse cultural set. It is no coincidence that the work does not simply look into a situation of cultural diversity, but considers it to be more specific and that is why the term multiculturalism has been used. The analysis shows that what is happening in society is a purposeful process, managed strictly in accordance with the principles of multicultural policy, namely:

• the principle of equality of all cultures (large and small), where special attention is paid to cultures "with limited linguistic predominance and small volume of audiovisual products", that is why a special support is provided to these regions and ethnic groups [5];

• the postulate according to which there is a need for the interaction of cultures (expecting mutual enrichment), increasing the co-production and circulation of European films among European countries with the aim of greater awareness and involvement of nations into neighbouring cultures [11].

The authors show that the above mentioned principles are the part of the missions of official European programs and commissions. Having appeared in order to protect the European film space from the widespread expansion of Hollywood products, for the last 12 years of their existence, MEDIA programs have outlined the territory of European cinema, increased its competitiveness and determined the directions for the development, in recent years the priority of development being the preservation and promotion of European cultural diversity. Eurimages, a cultural support fund of the Council of Europe, aims to strengthen ties between the film industries of European countries. Europa Cinemas network responsible for the distribution of the European films offers a ranking scheme of the 'degree of Europeanness' of a particular film and creates an additional bonus for the cultural diversity depicted in the film. The aim of our study was also to trace how they are embodied in the European film industry.

Speaking about the reasons for such a massive support for 'multicultural' films, it should be noted that the latter often act as a means for promoting political objectives, such as: propagating the myth of European cultural unity ('in the hearts and minds' of the Europeans); informing the European citizens about the life and culture of their neighbours regardless of the scope of their territory; the prevalence of their language and political influence in the international community and European space; removing barriers, stereotypes and

xenophobic attitudes; lack of knowledge about new settlers, representatives of different Western cultures; a clear demonstration of the complexities of illegal immigration as a warning to potential future refugees; and as an attempt to influence in this sense the immigration flows to Europe. For example, such films as 'Dirty Pretty Things' (2002), 'Journey of Hope' (1991), 'Dessert Paloma' (2007), 'Far and Away' 2001, 'Exils' (2004) are about experience and hardships associated with illegal immigration. Most of these films were funded by European organizations.

Hardships faced by those who succeed in becoming illegal aliens are the most frequently exploited models, i.e. the path that an individual has to choose ('Where East Is East', 'Bend It Like Beckham', etc.), his journey (real and mental) ('Im Juli', 'Exils', ' Un prophète', 'Benvenuti al nord', 'America'), the clash of two opposing forces (cultures) ('Love+Hatred', 'Rage', 'The edge of Heaven'), the desire to meet the dream ('La graine et le mulet', 'Journey of Hope'), meeting others ('Spanish hostel',' Fantastic',' You are very beautiful', 'My mother loves women'). In most films the focus in the storyline is an intercultural dilemma.

Modern European cinema outlines the range of problems specific to a particular category of the films that are being under consideration, raises a set of new issues that previously remained on the periphery of the attention in cinema industry. These are the issues related to the existence and self-perception of the individual in a multicultural environment; the relationship of subordination and dominance within this environment and their impact on the personality; search for one's own cultural identity by comparison with others; isolation from cultural roots, exile and belonging, borders, borderline, migration, movement, transfer, etc.. The issue of differences is coming to the fore. In the films studied, there is a clear reflection on the differences, their nature, origins, legality or, vice versa, naturalness and artificiality, insurmountability or overcoming.

5. Conclusions

The study might help in reshaping the debates on cultural aspect associated with the transnational cinema and can be used by scholars as well as those involved in the practical exploration of multicultural cinema with reference to certain countries. It is important to understand who is making movies in modern Europe, who are the masters, who reveal the problem of intercultural coexistence, are directly involved in the process of creating and, thus, being the critical element and the motive force of multicultural cinema. In an attempt to streamline and classify multicultural processes in modern cinema, we can conventionally identify three areas in which the cultural diversification of European cinema is developing:

- films co-produced by producers or investments from several countries – examples of such cooperation are associated with 'Visions of Europe' (2004), 'Promise' (1996), 'Journey of Hope' (1991),' America ' (1994), etc.;

- films created by representatives of minority nations of Europe, ethnic minorities historically occupying certain regions (Scots, Irish, Catalans, etc.) − in films made by L. Ramsay, P. Mullan, K. Glenaan, K. Sheridan, K. Murphy, K. Bosch, A. Pastor, I. Coixet, etc.;
- the immigrant films made by the representatives of the newcomers to the European continent (outstanding British-Asian cinema, German-Turkish, French-Arabic, producers like G. Chadha, P. Udayana, F. Akin, Z. Aladag, N. Pillar, A. Polat, R. Bushareb, M. Aloisi, A. Kechiche, K. Dridi, etc.).

The contradictory use of multicultural attitudes in modern European society with a focus on the dominance of the cultural factor over social, interpretations of any conflicts primarily as intercultural ones' raises doubts in a number of Western European countries about the socio-political effectiveness of the multicultural models. This has led to changes not only in modern political and social culture, but also in artistic practices. Changes of this kind, undoubtedly, may have an impact on trends developing in European cinema and film production.

Acknowledgement

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