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PRODUCER'S MESSAGES AS INSTRUMENTS OF SUPRANATIONAL SLAVIC IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION (ON THE CASE OF A SCREEN VERSION OF GOGOL'S NOVEL «TARAS BULBA»)

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Summary: The article presents the results of a comparative analysis of the Gogol's novel «Taras Bulba» and a screen version, produced by A. Bortko. The author highlights the producer's messages as the instruments of supra-national Slavic identity construction.

Key words: the Cossacks, Orthodoxy, the producer's messages, the Slavic identity.

Анотація: У статті представлені результати порівняльного аналізу повісті М.В. Гоголя «Тарас Бульба» та кінопродукту режисера А. Бортко. Автори виокремлюють режисерські месиджи як інструмент формування наднаціональної слав'янської ідентичності.

Ключові слова: казаки, православ'я, режисерські месиджи, слав'янська ідентичність.

Аннотация: В статье представлены результаты сравнительного анализа повести Н.В. Гоголя «Тарас Бульба» и кинопродукта режиссера А. Бортко. Автор выделяет режиссерские месиджи как инструмент формирования наднациональной славянской идентичности.

Ключевые слова: казаки, православие, режиссерские месиджи, славянская идентичность.

In the context of sociocultural transformation on post-Soviet space the sphere of icon-symbolic communication (including cinematography) becomes the hot spot of social sense construction, creates the system of symbolic coordinates, influences on structures of social perception. As J. Soroka stresses that such aspects of content composition as an item, characters, historical and cultural context, political background, artistic language stand out as an icon-symbolic explication of perceptive structures, relevant for both an author and an audience [4].

Mass-media provides varied cultural fields with different axiological structure and trend. It makes possible to «read» cinema as a relevant historical context which reveals the ideology of an appropriate epoch: it can be presented in a movie or in a sociocultural context of the cinema product (the example of such research is provided in [1, p. 5]). In the process of such an analytical stream the cinema product is decoded as the text with an individual combination of images and sounds which includes a narrative structure. The latter influences spectators in a specific way: it defines the outer cinema reality and the stream of interpretation [2].

Analyzing the screen version of a literary work it is necessary to employ a set of methodological principles, presented by S. Hall. Yet, visual culture is viewed as a complicated system of representation, on the one hand. Representations can refer to a variety of social facts, they enable different levels of visual products understanding and interpretation, on the other hand [6].

Thus, the researcher concludes that there is no social phenomenon out of ideological pressure. The character of ideological messages depends on sociocultural context and contemporary ideological mainstream in the society. Cinema icons exist only in the sphere of cinematography as a social institution, in a specific way they correlate with different sociocultural contexts: with a sociocultural reality in which the product was created and broadcasted for heterogeneous audience.

Hence, the multidimensional array of sociocultural contexts is created. At the cross points of these dimensions, symbolic, semiotic and axiomatic ideas of the cinema product are constructed.

It is too categorically to deny the existing of the author's strategies and institutional policies which deal with cultural texts distribution and popularization (see, for instance [3]). Following the researcher's logic, we stress, that in the focus of such strategies there are microlevel ideas, senses, meanings and sociocultural components of the macrolevel of values, norms and orientations.

Consequently, the most heuristic cinema product for sociocultural perspective of the research is the one of Gogol's novel. We compared this cinema product of A. Bortko with Gogol's manuscript of 1842 – the second edition of Gogol's novel. The film crew, which was created by the Russian Federation Ministry of Culture protection (this fact is relevant for the analysis), sparked off a huge resonance of discussions among the Russian and Ukrainian intellectual elites. The movie was promoted in 2009 – in the year of 200th celebration of Gogol's birthday in the Russian Federation. The cinema product of A. Bortko does generate an interest to historic and literary heritage of the Slavic nations, and the selection of famous actors highlights the orientation on mass audience (the fact proved by box-office success).

Based on the multi-dimensional character of the film, the aim of this work is a detailed sociological identification of the general and specific screening aspects of the cinema product through the analysis of producer's key messages. The object of this work is contemporary Russian cinematography; the subject is the identification of supranational Slavic identity construction. We define producer's messages as content accents of the cinema product, which are created by the producer's team with the help of different compositional tools, correction of the scenario structure, selection of actors' cues. The latter is provided through certain ideological influence on the audience.

One of the most important formal corrections, used by the producer's team, is changing of textual location of the final, culmination of Bulba's speech (I would like to tell you, my friends...). A famous monologue opens the screen version while in Gogol's literary work it is articulated by the main character following the final fight between the Zaporozhye Cossacks and the Poles. We interpret this producer's correction as the intentional act of attracting a spectator towards ideological context, as a focus on arranging and a tool of drawing audience's attention. Thus, the content of the culmination speech has acquired another meaning: the selection of phrases and statements takes place in the cinema product

(the text of Bulba's monologue is an exact abstract of the original version of 1842 and the part in bold is screened in the movie).

*«Хочется мне вам сказать, панове, что такое есть наше товарищество. Вы слышали от отцов и дедов, в какой чести у всех была земля наша: и грекам дала знать себя, и с Царьграда брала червонцы, и города были пышные, и храмы, и князья, князья русского рода, свои князья, а не католические недоверки. Все взяли бусурманы, все пропало. Только остались мы, сирые, да, как вдовица после крепкого мужа, сирая, так же как и мы, земля наша! Вот в какое время подали мы, товарищи, руку на братство! Вот на чем стоит наше товарищество! Нет уз святее товарищества! Отец любит свое дитя, мать любит свое дитя, дитя любит отца и мать. Но это не то, братцы: любит и зверь свое дитя. Но породниться родством по душе, а не по крови, может один только человек. **Бывали и в других землях товарищи, но таких, как в Русской земле, не было таких товарищей.** Вам случалось не одному помногу пропадать на чужбине; видишь - и там люди! также божий человек, и разговорись с ним, как с своим; а как дойдет до того, чтобы поведать сердечное слово, - видишь: нет, умные люди, да не те; такие же люди, да не те! Нет, братцы, **так любить, как русская душа, - любить не то чтобы умом или чем другим, а всем, чем дал бог, что ни есть в тебе, а...** - сказал Тарас, и махнул рукой, и потряс седою головою, и усом моргнул, и сказал: - **Нет, так любить никто не может! Знаю, подло завелось теперь на земле нашей; думают только, чтобы при них были хлебные стоги, скирды да конные табуны их, да были бы целы в погребях запечатанные меды их. Перенимают черт знает какие бусурманские обычаи; гнушаются языком своим; свой с своим не хочет говорить; свой своего продает, как продают бездушную тварь на торговом рынке. Милость чужого короля, да и не короля, а паскудная милость польского магната, который желтым чеботом своим бьет их в морду, дорожке для них всякого братства. Но у последнего подлюки, каков он ни есть, хоть весь извалялся он в саже и в поклонничестве, есть и у того, братцы, крупца русского чувства. И проснется оно когда-нибудь, и ударится он, горемычный, об полы руками, схватит себя за голову, проклявши громко подлую жизнь свою, готовый муками искупить позорное дело. Пусть же знают они все, что такое значит в Русской земле товарищество! Уж если на то пошло, чтобы умирать, - так никому ж из них не доведется так умирать!.. Никому, никому!.. Не хватит у них на то мышинной натуры их!».***

Thus, the main messages of the final Bulba's monologue are interpreted as a manifestation of the following ideas: the unity of the Cossacks's community; the recognition of «Russianess» («Russianship») as a central component of patriotism; the priority of Orthodoxy as a core criterion in the enemy construction process.

These accents create certain vectors for initial perception of the content of the cinema product. These tools specify the perception scheme, the coordinational system which determines the following understanding and interpretation of the icon-symbolic product by the audience.

Moreover, producer's strategy is identified in the selection of the author's words in the cinema product. The comparative analysis of cinema and literary contents has shown that the author's words in the cinema product are presented in certain order. The accents are pointed in the content dimension: followed by the strategy of perceptive schemes construction, the producer's team gives utterance to the author's words only in case of certain images description. These images are: the image of Sech (the Russian land) and Orthodoxy, Cossacks' and Enemy's image. While the insonification of personal heroes' characteristics, the nature description

and so on are not presented. This fact can be interpreted as an indication of the producer's activity by stressing certain images whose importance acquires a paramount meaning in the ideological and semantic dimension of the cinema product.

Sharp criticism of the movie has stemmed from a huge opinion resonance due to the deliberate nominal substitution of the Ukrainian land of that historical period as «the Russian land» and an excessive accent on «Russianship» done in the film.

The analysis has stressed that there is almost absolute correspondence of the nomination used in the movie and in the literary work. But in this respect, there is a need for the selection of cues. «Ukraine» nomination is used three times during the movie. Secondly, such criticism is leveled by the fact of conventional historical terminology of the late 16th century with a generally accepted nomination the «Russins» and «Malorossia». «Ukrainian» and «Ukraine» nominations entered historical discourse later. Producer's accent on the importance of «Russianship» is present evidence (which is supported by the selection of phrases, the frequency of using «Russian land», «Russians» nominations, manifested ideas and goals – to protect the Russians and Russian land). Thus, such a position of producer's team is appropriate to ideological tendencies of contemporary Russian cinematography, (such a focus on «Russianship» can be found in a series of contemporary Russian cartoons about three Old Russian strong men whose artistic and ideological performances are similar to Bulba's image). These accents are oriented on the national identity creating and the Slavic identity foundation by enforcement of accepting and manifestation of the idea of historical, religious and cultural Slavic nations unity. These ideas gain a special importance according to permanent society process of meanings construction and the fact that besides actual/nominal identity (for instance, «we are the citizens of Ukraine») it is necessary to point out value conditions which help to identify, to unite or to distinguish a certain array of values.

In this context the allusion on famous Repin's picture «The Cossacks write a letter to the Turkish Sultan» is interesting for our research. Such a technique underlines the accent on Slavic cultural heritage as a consolidative factor of supranational feeling conscience which is based on recognition of historical and cultural unity of Slavic nations (in this case Repin's person is symbolic due to his Cossack origin). The lingual aspect – the core power of identity construction – is presented by specific phrases, emotional context of the language, accent on «Russianship» and recognition of all «Russian» components as a central consolidative mechanism of supra-identity.

One of the key ideological and symbolic moments of the literary work and its visual representation is the religious aspect. Faith fills the entire sense of the movie, it is presented in lingual and ceremonial discourses. Faith is the background of the Cossack army prosperity and the main criterion for joining it, faith serves as a focus of unity of the Slavic nations. As a sociocultural component Orthodoxy is presented in goal achievement of the Cossacks' marches («Воевать за веру!», «Всегда стояли за веру Христову!»). The other aspect of this component is

stressing the importance of religious constituent in the film, supported by a number of scenes: the ataman initiation is accompanied by church psalms, priests prayer though this detail is absent in the literary work. The other evidence stems from the fact that the description of childhood and characters of Ostap and Andriy in the literary work is changed by the scene of Bulba's recollection of Andriy's christening.

Thus, the priority of Orthodoxy is highlighted in the film as the consolidative source of the Cossacks and the criterion of differentiating between «ours» and «strangers». In these terms the scene of Bulba's wife killing by the Poles opens a new horizon for interpretation. This producer's decision comes out as the symbolic manifest of pleading the war with the Poles as a way of enemy's identification. On the other hand, it is a demonstration of democratic European «civilization» (the image of the Poles as representation of the «civilized» West). Thirdly, it is the legitimating of common Russian historical past opposed to European historical past. Construction of a complex enemy image is supported by the episode of Bulba's recollection of Sultan's female prisoner created by the producer's team.

Among the main value components of the film there are promotion of collective and community values, the Cossacks solidarity and the unity of this community. The value priority is shown by patriotism importance, devotion to Sech and the nation, moral values and partial leveling of family values. Common mental Cossacks' characteristics (such as strong will, heroism, devotion) focus attention on the idea of spiritual unity of the Slavic nations. The importance of patriotic and heroic Cossacks' feelings is especially underlined by the producer's team. The alteration of the scene order (particularly, the scene of Andriy's killing by his father and the atamans' deaths) confirms this thesis.

Consequently, the formal differences between Gogol's literary work take place in Bortko's screen version. Particularly, there is a selection of cues which helped the producer to make ideological and symbolic accents, to present his messages without corrections of the literary work content. Among the core messages of the movie there is an idea of the Cossacks unity (the value message), the recognition of «Russianship» as a central component of patriotism (the lingual message), the priority of Orthodoxy as a core criterion in the enemy's image construction (the ideological and political message). Thus, these messages create a symbolic and ideological background for supra-national Slavic identity construction further analysis of which provides perspectives for our research.

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