Media Representations of Ethnic Images in the Epoch of Digitalization

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ABSTRACT
In this article the author analyzes social functions of the cinematograph in the quality of a mean of ethnic image media representation. This article considers the animated cartoons in the quality of a mean of the young generation education. Among the means of socialization and enculturation, being the means of identity development, the role of media is noted. The media are represented as a mean of ethnic image visualization. The digitalization presupposes the integration of technologies in the social and cultural processes, to which the education refers. The author has made an attempt to reveal essential features of media representation, being the factor of ethnic image creation and transmission. The special attention is paid to the mechanisms of ethnic stereotypes establishment, their relation to the social myths and mindsets is registered. This article holistically considers ethnic identity phenomenon. The author has chosen cinematograph from the discursive practices, because it fulfills specific social and enculturating functions. The choice of animated cartoons in the quality of a form of ethnic image media representation is explained by the sketchy character of image personification and easiness of perceiving them by recipients.
Keywords: *media, media text, cinematograph, animated cartoons, cultural memory, digitalization*

1. INTRODUCTION

The media sphere, being the subject of scientific study, contains many aspects, including those social and cultural. In this case the media has more subjective nature, because here the communication subjects, studying value-based and spiritual material, appear. In the context of ethnic image representation in a media text, the ethnic images are created within the frames of the collaborative creative activities, whatever they are represented by (cine-, tele- or videofilm, animation or computer graphics, advertisement or information). In certain instances, the ethnic culture images are transmitted in individual presentations, for example, in print publications, blogs, comments. The oral and written form of ethnic image creation and correspondent media text reproduction is more distinctive for the audio-visual means of media. Any of the listed examples of the mass media means may contain an ethnic image, both visual and audio-visual. The ethnic culture may also serve as a thematic dominant idea in the media space under different points of view: presentation of heterostereotype and autostereotype images; as a mean of ethnic identity development.

The media representation and digitalization represent a special type of culture images, which engages wide array of technical means, enhances audio-visual perception channels through the mass media means.

The media representation is a special type of a cultural text, which depends on the cultural context and symbolic presentation of senses. Lotman, M.Yu. notices such significant function of the cultural text, as the development of cultural memory: "a text performs the sense-making activity, and in this case doesn't serve as the passive package of preliminarily assigned sense, but it serves as the generator of senses" [4]. The media culture is in the role of a mean of the social reality construction through the combination of the images of the real world and of its mythological representations. Here, not only mindsets and archetypic images may be included, but also the contemporary types of myths: social, scientific, political ones. Thus, on the one hand, the signs and symbols are systemized under the principle of their meaning objective representation, and on the other hand, an individual chooses the symbol connotation in dependence of the context of that reality, in which he/she is at the present moment. A recipient of media resources shall have a specific set of representations of the world around for the purposes of correct interpretation of the information, coming through the media text. This set of characteristics includes as follows: different types of settings – mental, cultural, social ones, and also currently important models of apprehension, samples of customary behavior, ideology, knowledges. The media representation means form the cultural identity through the visual representation of social myths (in terms of the Us and Them binary opposition).

The media text information is given in the sing and symbol form. With the development of new media, which

are represented not only by the digital cinema or photos, but also by the computer products, social networks, television, virtual reality products, the mean of ethnic image transmission changes. In this case, different media serve as subjects and objects of the myth-making, which is related, to the largest extent, to the term of "ethnic stereotype".

As any other myth-making sphere, the media culture creates new symbolic images. Within the frames of the ethnic image media representation, the following may be referred to the extralinguistic context: appearance (anthropologic features, gestures, mimics), household particularities (clothes, type of habitation, kitchen), lifestyle (family life patterns, rituals, customs, holidays), standards of social interaction, samples of communication with the representatives of other cultures. In different types of media texts one of the listed criteria will be in the first place. For the purposes of the cultural identity maintenance, not only the media representation of the proper nation, but also the representation of the particularities of other ethnos, will be important.

The implementation of the culture-creative potential of ethnic image media representation, being a factor of identity development, passes through the socialization and enculturation processes. It is required to give an explanation of the essential difference between these terms. In the generalized sense, the socialization is deemed to be an individual's retention of the system of standards and prohibitions. This mechanism of retention of the social standards of behavior, which allows to get successfully adapted to the life in society since childhood. The enculturation is a more complicate mechanism, because it has the culturally-conditioned context. The specific reference points, depending on the state of mind, archetypes, autostereotypes, history of ethnos, language, customs and beliefs, are added to the common standards.

In terms of socialization and enculturation, the media technologies use visual means. The visuality is a leading feature of the media. Simbirtseva, N.A. notices in the article "The visual things in contemporary culture", that "the text visualization serves as one of the tools, important for both author and reader, and required for working with reality" [7]. Similar texts require special approach and apprehension quality. The author underlines the reasonability of the culturological interpretation [8].

The media representation of ethnic images engages the archetypical layers of the human conscience through the process of identification. A German historian of culture, Assman, Ya., specifies the presence of two components, forming the cultural identity, in the work "Cultural Memory": On the hand, it is formed from the outside "in a separate person" thanks to his/her engagement with the interaction models and group communication" [2]. In this case the society develops identity. On the other hand, the group identity, which the researcher calls "We-Identity", forms from "Me" images. He states, that the identity is always cultural, because "it represents a product of social construction" [2]. Murzina, I.Ya. reveals external and internal

conditions of the identity development. "The attribution of this individual as the one, appertaining to the specific national culture, social group" [6, p. 102] refers to the external features. Alternatively, the internal motives are related to "the life-purpose orientations" [6]. It means, that the competence of the media image correct interpretation, its sense "reading" is the result of an individual's enculturation through the media means.

2. STUDY METHODS

In the quality of the main methodological approach, the culturological approach was chosen, within its frames the ethnic culture evolution is studied through the system of national values, behavior stereotypes and lifestyle, being the factors of the personal identification.

In course of solution of the assigned culturological objectives, the instrumentariums of some human sciences were used:

The content-analysis, intending the analysis of the representative media texts of the animated cartoons;

The theoretical methods of study: analysis and synthesis of the scientific works, dedicated to the problems of identity, to the media, cinematograph and animated cartoons;

The axiological (value-based) approach allowed to determine the currently important value-based reference points, transmitted in the media text;

The information and sign method helped to analyze ethnic symbols and their connotations.

3. STUDY RESULTS

Considering the cinematograph as a mean of media representation, it is required to pay attention to the animated cartoons. The animated cartoons and animation are a part of the cinematic art. Paul Wells gives the definition, provided by an animated film director McLaren., N., in the work "Understanding Animation": "Animation is not the art of drawings that move but the art of movements that are drawn" [1, p. 10]. Tarasov, V.I. uses the term of "animatography", he notices, that this term "contains the animated film itself, the primal animation essence of the video, animation nature of the computer screen, and other various culture-technological realities of the screen culture of the 21st century" [10]. The researcher distinguishes three spheres of animation existence: artistic, culture-scientific, virtual reality. But "the screen representation of the information in the easily observable, brightly sensuous form" is characteristic for all these forms [9].

The animated cartoon films are oriented, generally, to the growing generation, because they can transfer the values of culture, including of the ethnic one, in the intelligible way. The transmission of ethnic culture, creation of ethnic images may become one of the acute social themes of cinematograph.

The cinema executes the following social functions: self-

cognition, self-perfection, presentation of society's problematic situations [5]. Zhabsvky, M.I. indicates the subject-objective model of interaction in the cinematograph. A spectator isn't just the object of social exposure, he/she is also "a subject of the multilateral social activity" [3]. Through the interpretation of Zhabsky, M.I.'s idea within the aspect of media representation in the animated cartoon, it can be said, that the image, passing through the spectator's conscience, comes to the social relation layer, and then becomes a discursive practice, returning to the spectator in the form of the one, filled with additional senses. The connotation addition accompanies the process of self-cognition. The reflection through the ethnos media representation is available in the quality of one of the processes of ethnic identification. As the identification process isn't limited to the self-analysis, it is broaden with the authentication of "oneself" with "the others" at all levels of the human's social being.

In this case, the self-perfection has dual nature. On the one hand, the representation of real positive and negative traits of the one's nation, ironical attitude to the last ones, allow to develop mechanisms of their liquidation. On the other hand, the media representation may become a mean of myth-making in the aspect of ethnocentrism. This is to say, that the deformation or amplification of whatsoever positive traits of the one's ethnos occurs through the cinematographic ethnic image. The same situation is possible within the frames of creation of the ethnic image of another nation. As the self-cognition may be based upon the comparison, the negative characteristics and demonstration of such traits in the own ethnos come in the first place.

Concerning this aspect, it is required to pose the question on the cinematograph's faithfulness. Ferro, M. notices, that the cinema becomes the tool of ideological propaganda, herewith, it reserves a part of independence [11, p. 48]. This independence is represented in the artistic image. The historian suggests to consider the interaction of cinema and history in three aspects: cinema – history factor; particular characteristics of the cinematographic communication; film as a history document. He refers the syncretic character of the text, of the combination of oral form and language of images to the cinema's specific particularity.

In the contemporary scientific studies, the cinema analysis methods are systemized by the following groups:

Traditional film study method – the broadest type of analysis, which includes the consideration of the film contents and technical implementation.

The context analysis presupposes presence of several aspects, comprising a film. This type of detailed review presupposes revelation of political, social, world outlook, historic conditions, influenced on the production of the film.

The semiological analysis of the cinema – places the emphasis on the semantic content of the film [12].

All three analysis methods may be engaged in the process of animated cartoons, being a part of cinematograph. But the contextual and semiotic types of analysis are the most representative ones in terms of culturology. They may include mindsets, external attributes of ethnicity, value-based behavior. These criteria fulfill the function of the cultural memory through the means of media.

We have chosen the correspondence of the attitude of mind and of the external manifestation of ethnic image in the quality of the basis of analysis criteria. The choice of these parameters is conditioned by the fact, that the ethnic image is based not only on the ethnos external manifestations, but also on the mindsets, which will transmit the culture values. The representation of external attributes has been chosen for the analysis of the ethnic image visuality in the animated cartoons: representation of nature, national clothes, utensils. The cycle of animated films "Animated Fairy-tales of the Peoples of the World", produced as a part of UNESCO cultural program, has been chosen as a material for analysis. The following may be referred to the mindsets, creating the ethnic image in the animated cartoon "Shepherd Boy Tumur":

The time is linear, the development of the country is apprehended as the traditional one, the new khan follows after the old one. The traditional nature of the society is represented in the statement "experience is the best teacher".

Herewith, it is important to pay attention to addressing to the higher force representatives in a complicate situation (an astrologer interprets the prediction of the stars in relation to a new khan). The astrologer's authority isn't in question, and people come to meet the new khan, who shall appear, riding a tiger, and with a python in the arm.

Along with that, in the quality of the positive traits the simplicity is defined, and in simplicity the wisdom is hidden. Notwithstanding the fact, that from time to time the wisdom is hidden in the metaphors and puzzles, the evident events obtain additional connotation. In this manner, the governor is represented as a shepherd, and his people – as a flock. The mice, crunching the roots, are the thieves, devastating the territory.

There is special attitude to the term of "honesty". The honesty, understanding of one's destination, being in the appropriate place in society, apprehension of one's real potential are equated with the term of "bravery". The death becomes more preferential, than the continuous lie.

The value of the friendship is confirmed by the fact, that Tumur and his friend exchange the belts, when they leave. A special, honourable attitude to the horses (racers) is represented within the same criteria, because the Mongolian peoples were nomads.

The external traits of ethnic image are represented in the view of national clothes, yurts, combats. The particularities of the landscape representation also influence on the ethnic image creation. On the way home, the shepherd sees the animals and the birds, typical for that area; skylarks, mice, eagle, tiger, domesticated bull. The protagonist is in harmony with the environment.

The representation of the prairie shows the vastness. Consequently, in this manner the easy attitude to the journey, its habitualness is developed.

The ethnic image is developed also through the representation of race signs, in this case,

the Mongolian features are expressed in the eye shape, dark straight hair and the brightly expressed cheekbones are principally represented.

At the same time, the leading type of activities, the cattle breeding, is represented in the animated cartoon.

In order to execute analysis of the European peoples, their ethnic images and the mindsets, expressed in them, we have referred to the animated cartoon, based on the Holland fairy-tale "Gold Apple Tree" from the cycle of "Fairy-tales of the Peoples of the World". In this

animated cartoon there are no clearly revealed mindsets, but the visual ethnic image is brightly represented through the objects of the physical world. Those pieces of culture, with which the Holland people are associated: windmills, national clothes (for women: a houve, waistcoat, skirt, pinafore; for man – a jacket, formal shirt, plane billed cap). The anthropological features also develop the ethnic visual image: light hair, light-colored eyes.

4. CONCLUSION

Thus, the cinematograph, being the mean of ethnic image media representation, may serve as the mean of an individual's socialization, enculturation and identification. Ethnic images in the cinema and animated cartoons create autostereotype and heterostereotype features. The ethnic images compose the mental fundamentals of the culture, consolidate the representation of the nation's particularities. Their significance is in the self-identification within the ethnic group. The problem of ethnic image functioning in the media culture space is closely related to the issues of development of the tolerant attitude to another ethnos' representatives. As the media forms the public opinion, the problem of ethnic tolerance appears. The globalization involves contradictory global processes: on the one hand, the borders get blurred, the ethnic unicity gets lost, and along with that, the world remains to be differentiated by the cultural (language, confessional, ethnic) characteristics.

The importance of the ethnic image appearance in the media culture isn't related just to its development in the minds of another nation representatives, it's also related to the fact, that "the image for oneself" gets developed in this space. Thuswise, the visual perception channel exerts ever-greater influence, the media culture space transmits that set of ethos traits, which becomes relevant, particularly, for a culture-bearer. Each ethnos sees positive traits in its image, the media space allows to strengthen, visualize them, represent them in another, more comprehensible form. On the one hand, it simplifies the nation image development and distribution, on the other hand, the stereotypes get established.

In media, the nation images shall be easily perceived, recognizable, but not always they can reflect the image of a contemporary representative of ethnos.

The distinctive feature of the ethnos image in the media culture space is its syncretic nature. It gets developed from the auditory and visual components, i.e. ethnos particularities can be transmitted through the auditory, music imagery, correlated with the visual imagery.

These components formed the basis for the criteria of the analysis of ethnic autostereotypes in media culture. In media they are transmitted through the visual images. For the purposes of ethnos stereotypization they shall be recognizable by a culture-bearer, outline significant, value-based areas.

Consequently, the cinematographic products aren't always faithful, and the artistic images may have specific liberty of implementation. The mindsets, everyday culture, behavioral motives also find reflection in the cinema images. Considering the animated cartoons, as the cinematograph component part, we have noticed their conventional nature. The ethnic images have sketchy characteristics, but, along with that, they transmit ethnic images in the simplified illustrative form of ethnic ideas. In an animated cartoon, as distinct from a fiction film, the spectator's attention gets attracted not only by acting, arrangement of shots, but also by other attributes, complementing the ethnic image. The background music, narration, voice, representation of emotions, reference to the history period, up-to-dateness of the images for a contemporary spectator refer to them. In ethnic animated cartoons all these things compose the media representation of ethnic images.

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