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Political Engagement: Hermeneutical Analysis of Soviet Films about Yaroslav Galan

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Abstract

This article gives the way for hermeneutic analysis of cultural context - the study of the process of interpretation of media texts, cultural and historical factors influencing the views of the agency / author on the media text. The hermeneutical analysis suggests media text comprehension through comparison with historical, cultural tradition and reality; penetration of its logic; through comparison of media images in historical and cultural context by combining historical, hermeneutical analysis of the structural, plot, ethical, ideological, iconographic / visual, media stereotypes and analysis of media text characters. Example of this hermeneutic analysis of cultural context is analysis the media texts about the life of famous publicist Yaroslav Galan (1902-1949). An analysis of this kind of media texts, in our opinion, is particularly important for media literacy education of future historians, culture and art historians, sociologists, linguists, psychologists and educators.

Keywords: hermeneutical analysis, Soviet, USSR, Ukraine, film, film studies, media texts, media literacy, media education, information literacy.

Introduction

In our previous works (Fedorov, 2008; 2011), I have repeatedly appealed to the technology hermeneutical analysis of media texts (Eco, 1976; 1998; 2005; Silverblatt, 2001, p.80-81). This time I take as an example for this analysis the media texts about the life of famous publicist Yaroslav Galan (1902-1949). An analysis of this kind of media texts, in our opinion, is particularly important for media literacy education of future historians, culture and art historians, sociologists, linguists, psychologists and educators.

Materials and methods

The main materials for this article was the area: the books, articles and Soviet films about the Ukrainian famous publicist Yaroslav Galan (Bantichev, 2009; Markova, 1974). I used also the method of hermeneutic analysis of the cultural context of media texts (Eco, 1976; Silverblatt, 2001). This method connected with the key concepts of media literacy education (*media agencies, media categories, media language, media technologies, media representations, media audiences* etc.).

Discussion

It should be noted that there are two main versions of the murder of Y. Galan - officially-Soviet, reflected in the book *Yaroslav Galan* (Belyayev, Elkin, 1971) and in the film of V. Isakov *Until the last minute* (1973), and a post-Soviet, alleging that the obstinate journalist, was not only against the Ukrainian nationalists, the Nazis, the Unitarian and Catholic churches, but also against of many negative, from his point of view, the phenomena of Soviet rule. And he had fallen at the hands of agents of the MGB (Bantishev, 2009).

Perhaps serious historical study, based on declassified archives, ever would clarify the real life story of Y. Galan. For us it is important to another - as the politically engaged Soviet cinema used the fate of the well-known publicist for propaganda purposes.

Results

Technology of hermeneutical analysis of Soviet fiction films about the life of well-known political journalist Yaroslav Galan (1902-1949)

The scene, historical, cultural, political, ideological context

Historical Context

a) The times of media texts: 1946-1949, USSR (Western Ukraine), Germany;

b) Film of L. Lukov *It should not be forgotten* (1954) was made and released in a short period of post-Stalinist "dual power" of G.M. Malenkov and N.S. Khrushchev, and the film of V. Isakov *Until the last minute* (1973) was filmed already at its peak during the reign of Leonid Brezhnev;

c) The films of L. Lukov and V. Isakov created on the story of the last period of the life of the famous Ukrainian publicist with pro-communist political orientation - Yaroslav Galan, who was killed October 24, 1949 in Lviv. Of course, film of L. Lukov was "hot pursuit", with a strong propaganda against Ukrainian nationalism and western influence. The delivered twenty years later V. Isakov's film revelatory emphasis was largely shifted toward condemnation of the Uniate Church, of course, while maintaining antinationalist and anti-Western trends;

d) The political situation in Western Ukraine in the first half of the 1950s was not so acutely confrontational, as in the 1940s, but is still quite tense. So the film of L. Lukov *It should not be forgotten*, trying to interpret the most current events. This screenplay was built very freely with respect to the real fate of Yaroslav Galan (suffice it to say that in the L. Lukov's interpretation writer successfully escaped death in the final), so the main character is named an assumed name - Alexander Garmash. The film of V. Isakov *Until the last minute*, the same character (derived under a different name - Jaroslav Gaidai) already killed by Ukrainian nationalists, however, and here the filmmakers do not undertake to assert that their media text accurately reflects real events 1946-1949 years.

The ideological, political context

I can see clearly traced ideological message in the media texts about Yaroslav Galan. These films aimed at convincing the audience that:

- A happy life of the Ukrainian people can only be a part of the Soviet Union and only in the context of the communist doctrine;

- The fight against Ukrainian nationalism in all its forms is justified and necessary;

- Ukrainian nationalists of the 1940s, is closely associated with the Unitarian Church, with the support from Nazis, and then with the support from Western countries carried out mass terror against its opponents and the civilian population as a whole (though anti-Church line clearly manifested only in the film of V. Isakov);

- You need to be vigilant, as well disguised agents of Western intelligence services could act with the Ukrainian nationalists, which are necessary to expose and / or destroyed.

In general, the ideological and political context of world depicted in the media texts about the life of Y. Galan, is as follows:

The ideology of the media texts' world:

- for positive characters: communist ideology in its Stalinist / Leninist interpretation;

- for negative characters: nationalist, religion, bourgeois ideology.

The media texts' hierarchy of values according to this worldview:

- for positive characters: the fight against nationalism - the Communist Party - the people - the hatred of the enemy - the family.

- for negative characters: nationalism - the terror - cruelty to enemies neglect - to subordinates.

The values of the media texts:

- for positive characters: Communist values (for all actions of a media text).

- for negative characters: the nationalist, bourgeois, religious values.

Cultural Context

Obviously, the media texts about the life of Y. Galan strongly supports the popular Soviet myth that Ukraine can exist "correctly" only as part of the communist regime of the USSR, and "Loving Moscow is to love humanity" (a characteristic phrase of the protagonist of the film).

Genre modification: drama (also interspersed elements of detective: the exposure of agents of Western intelligence agencies).

Dramatic stereotype: the nationalists are trying to destroy the peaceful and happy life of the people of Western Ukraine (L. Lukov's film begins with this kind of holiday pictures: the scene with cheerful folk festival on the streets of Lviv), the nationalists terrorize, intimidate the civilian population. Writer and publicist fights with the nationalists, exposing them in their articles. In the first film, he is still alive, in the second - is dying. But most importantly, according to the authors of media texts is not it, but that the overall victory over nationalism, bourgeois and religious values is inevitable, "the life of Galan ended, but this life live and struggle for justice, peace and brotherhood among peoples his passionate pamphlets, his plays, his ideas" (Markova, 1974).

Methods of representation of reality (iconography) - furnishings, household items, etc.

Typical iconographic codes in Soviet fiction films about the life of Y. Galan:

- residence-enemy character is shown in two versions: the luxury life of representatives of the Uniate Church and the relatively modest living conditions of the "forest brothers" and their accomplices. As for the main enemies in the movie *It should not be forgotten*, one of them is the owner of second-hand bookshop, and another hiding under the guise of a Galan's family friend...

- residence Soviet character modest but well made. The protagonist does not live in a communal apartment: he has own flat.

The typology of the characters (their values, ideas, ethics, clothes, physique, vocabulary, facial expressions, gestures)

Male characters (character Age: 20-70 years).

The appearance, clothes, physique: the positive characters are dressed modestly (especially - the villagers), and negative characters is clearly richer; Athletic characters - both positive and negative - varies widely and depends on the context of a particular film. Negative characters first (especially if they are masked) may look intelligent, but in the end (face distorted grimace) reveal their negative essence.

Education: university level (the protagonist, his wife, colleagues, many of the camp hostile to the hero), incomplete higher education (students), secondary and primary.

Social status, profession: the social position of the positive and negative characters depends on their professional status.

Marital status characters: the main character is happily married, and the rest are positive and negative characters are mostly single, or the status is not punctuated.

Personality traits, values, behavior, methods of resolving conflicts.

Commitment, emotional activity, loyalty, optimism, courage (the main character), hostility, cunning, cruelty, purposefulness (negative figures). The main character has a pretentious vocabulary. Negative figures (nationalists, enemy agents) shows as the evil and cruel fanatics, however, they can use a positive masks. Positive character peculiar to communist values, negative - nationalist bourgeois, religious values. The actions of the characters are dictated by the development of the plot of a media text. The positive characters demonstrate their best qualities in the fight against nationalism. The actions of the negative characters have the close connections with the cruelty and ruthlessness.

In the L. Lukov's film there is also the doubter character - a student. At first he (under the influence of the enemies of communist regime) has passionate nationalist ideas and composing hymns for free Ukraine. And in the media text's end, this student became an active supporter of the main character, and write new verses glorifying the indestructible union of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples.

Female characters (character Age: 20-70 years).

The appearance, clothes, physique: positive characters usually have to average build, dressed in street clothes. Negative characters are richly dressed, but physiognomically filed repulsive.

Education: higher, secondary and primary.

Social status, profession: the social situation of positive female characters is the same; the social position of the negative characters differentiated.

Marital status: dominated by married women.

Character, behavior, methods of resolving conflicts: activity, loyalty, optimism, courage, commitment (positive characters), hostility, cunning, cruelty, meanness (negative figures). Positive character peculiar to communist values, negative – to nationalist, bourgeois, religious values. The actions of the characters are dictated by the development of the plot of a media text. The movie *Until the last minute* shows an ambiguous character of rural teacher, which initially sympathized with nationalist ideas, but then disappointed in them.

A significant change in the plot by the media and lives of the characters, problems encountered: the positive character is faced with the machinations of the enemies who do not want the publication of his revelatory pamphlets.

A problem, finding a solution to the problem: the only way to solve the problems - an uncompromising struggle against the enemies of the Soviet power (the nationalists). *The solution:* the exposure, arrest, destruction of enemies.

Conclusion

We realized Hermeneutic Analysis of Cultural Context - the study of the process of interpretation of media texts, cultural and historical factors influencing the views of the agency / author on the media text. And we mean that the hermeneutical analysis suggests media text comprehension through comparison with historical, cultural tradition and reality; penetration of its logic; through comparison of media images in historical and cultural context by combining historical, hermeneutical analysis of the structural, plot, ethical, ideological, iconographic / visual, media stereotypes and analysis of media text characters.

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**Политическая ангажированность: герменевтический анализ
советских фильмов о Ярославе Галане**

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Аннотация. В этой статье дается пример герменевтического анализа культурного контекста – исследование процесса интерпретации медиатекста, культурных и исторических факторов, влияющих на вид на агентство / автора медиатекста. Герменевтический анализ предусматривает понимание медиатекста в контексте исторической, культурной традиции и реальности; проникновение в логику медиатекста путем сравнения медийных имиджей в историческом и культурном поле, сочетая исторический, герменевтический, структурный, этический, идеологический, иконографический, семиотический анализ. В данном случае это делается на примере герменевтического анализа культурного контекста медиатекстов о жизни известного публициста Ярослава Галана (1902–1949). Анализ такого рода медиатекстов особенно важен для развития медиакомпетентности будущих историков, культурологов, искусствоведов, социологов, лингвистов, психологов и педагогов.

Ключевые слова: герменевтический анализ, советский, СССР, Украина, фильм, медиатекст, медиаграмотность, медиаобразование, информационная грамотность.