

ТЕОРІЯ І ПРАКТИКА СОЦІАЛЬНИХ КОМУНІКАЦІЙ

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DOCUMENTARIES ARE UKRAINIAN CHRONICLES

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Short analysis of Ukrainian documentaries, based on the achievements, history and circumstances of its development. Also in the analysis included theory about connection between figures of modern Ukrainian cinematography and vectors of its development. The work explores our moviemaking process both diachronically and synchronically.

Key words: documentary, journalism, history of Ukrainian journalism, directors, independent movie, Ukrainian idea in cinematography.

Pictures in caves all around the world, The Bayeux Tapestry from Britain or The Tale of Bygone Years (Повість минулих літ/Повість минулих літ) by Nestor the Chronicler – holes in the spiral of history through which we can see the past, what was before us, after all, understand who we are on the basis of our past. All above mentioned historical sights are different ways to catch the moment of life and to preserve that moment for future generations. Now, in contemporary world, we do not need to draw Elon Musk's rockets in caves to show, for example (I am fantasizing), the beginning of Mars colonization. Technological development reached the point where we can record pieces of life on different devices that have memory: smartphones, tablets, after all, cameras. Almost each of us has such gadgets. A lot of people are even dependant on their devices and with the help of posts with audiovisual information try to create a cam reflection of their life, a reflection that is not a copy of the truth, but rather reflects people's dreams. Well, it is different topic to talk about. I am talking about an unbelievable and amazing possibility to preserve peculiarities of our life for future generations through recording videos. It is also worth mentioning that the fact that we all can record videos makes from social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, VK and others trash bins for those products which do not reflect real world, rather fantasies of social network users. And those wastes have no value in both contexts: artistic and in the context of meaning, sense. But just beside those wastes we have real diamonds – products of unusual people, that were born in the form of video, were born to show posterity our life. To show future generations the reason why they are, who they are. And those products are not just simple

videos, we call them documentaries – real chronicles of the modern world – products made by journalists, artists and researchers simultaneously.

“Cinematic art was born and started its development on our lands... even earlier than on the 18th of January, 1896, when an invention of The Lumière brothers was shown for the first time. It happened when Tymchenko and Freidenberh (also in Odesa) did their first experiments in catching on celluloid and further showing moving pictures” [1] says Kateryna Shershnyova in her work with the title “Peculiarities of development of documentaries in Ukraine in the context of the genre specificity”. So the author hints that Ukrainian cinematography has a long-standed tradition. And this tradition started with creating documentaries. Later, Ukrainian cinematography fell into era of totalitarian regime of Soviet Union, so it feels and changes under that totalitarian influence. Governmental institutions understood the strength of cinematic art immediately. Volodymyr Illich once told to his comrades: “You should clearly remember that cinematic art is the most important art for us”. Rulers and close to them used the cinematic function of propaganda very well, but they neglected others: accumulative function or the function of enlightenment, for example. Respectively, quality of movies was poor and, for instance, documentaries were far not documentary, far from the genre that shows reality in real colors. T. Samoilenko wrote accurately about movies of those times: “The quantity of Ukrainian movies was constantly becoming lesser and lesser. If author touched historical themes, he or she distorted the truth of history under the pressure of official views of totalitarian country. These views were about showing Ukrainian people unable to state creation organism, that found their salvation with the accedence with Soviet Union”. [2] Sychov also was very accurate with his words about documentaries of those days: “cinematography and screenings were totally under governmental control and propaganda with the help of movie very soon became the main vector of its development”[3]. But even in such circumstances people were able to create ingenious films. For example, movie by Dzyga Vertov “Man with a Movie Camera”. Reserachers claim that with his film Vertov founded movie language, separate language from other languages of different artistic systems of coordinates. The movie is recognized all over the world and it is a great example of director’s thinking in terms of film categories, film forms that we need for creation of perfect reflection of objective and not very objective reality. The next step of development of Ukrainian documental cinematography was military cinematography in the mid fourties: “everybody understood it was not a political war, rather ideological, and directors were perfectly trained for that kind of war during thirties. Cinematography in a very short period of time became one of the trump cards in standoff for loyalty of citizens of different countries that were in war” [1]. Later was the period of thaw, the period of poetical movies, later again repressions against those who were creating Ukrainian films of good quality for Ukraine, for Ukrainians. Finally, in 1991 was born independent Ukrainian cinematography.

That glance back into history was important in terms of modern Ukrainian movies analysis and in terms of understanding of why we shoot what we shoot, not other kinds of movies. Having survived the difficult period of dependence, the period of impossibility to revive our own country, ukrainity and blighty cinematography, the last one starts the period of chaotic production of documentaries about suffering that our nation has overlived. It is very

adequate reaction. We try to pass the knowledge about difficult times to future generations via documentaries of good quality – impressive, educative documentaries. From the very first years of independence we start talking about, maybe, one of the most hurtful wounds – about genocidal famine – Holodomor. That is why we have such pictures as “Pietà” (1993), “Ukrainian night in the 33rd”, “Time of darkness” (2003), “Tremendous famine” (2005), “Holodomor/Famine. Ukraine in XX century: the technology of genocide” (2005), “Alive” (2008), “Scenery after mass death” (2009), “The spell of oblivion: Holodomor in 1932 – 1933 in Luhansk region” (2009), “Robbed land” (2012) and many other films about genocide against Ukrainian people that had its tragic place in the thirties of XX century. But it is also worth mentioning that the first movie about Holodomor was even not a movie from the independence period but a film from 1989 – “33rd, testimony of witnesses”. The theme of the tremendous famine, like a red thread, goes through the hole Ukrainian cinematography. Why is that so? The answer is not that complicated: we shoot movies about things that hurt us, we shoot movies about things that we want to warn about, after all, we shoot movies about mistakes that we can’t allow to be repeated. The same root is in the process of thematic changes in Ukrainian cinematography that started in 2013 and 2014. We see changes in structure, themes, forms of Ukrainian documentaries. The war has broken out. Our society started searching for new new senses. And immediately it started creating something that can be fitted in these senses. Documental cinematography, as a mirror of society’s mood, reacted very quickly, reacted in an unseen before way of creation documental movies. It was not enough for us to have simply informative journalism, that kind of journalism that is able only to inform. We started searching for new forms, we started searching for appropriate forms to preserve the memories of such a tragedy in souls of our posterities. We started shooting movies about military aggression of Russian Federation against Ukraine. In contemporary Ukraine documentaries are disturbed, according to my observations, because of different from western countries’ problems. While western cinematography is obsessed with unprotected elements of population, our senses are more patriotism oriented. We shoot films about war, about the war that was imposed by Russian imperialism. In my subjective opinion, the greatest movies on that topic are “Winter that has changed us” (not exactly about the war, but about the Revolution of Dignity, and after all, maybe, about war, because then and now our heroes are fighting for your and my also Dignity, Dignity that can be shown through being free, being Ukrainians, being masters of our own houses), view of a young nineteen-years-old director “In the line of fire”, “The frontier of Earth” (this movie proves that war has human faces, real taken lives), “Debaltseve” (movie about dreadful happenings on the frontline in the beginning of 2015), “Undeclared war. Diary”, “Mine”, “Raid. Power of unconquered”, “Airport”, and many others.

One of the greatest achievements in the world context, if we talk about documentaries produced in times of independency, has a movie about the Revolution of dignity – “Winter on Fire”. It is Academy Award Nominated documentary. But that year western experts decided to give statuette to the creator’s of the movie about life and death of Amy Winehouse. That is what I was talking about when I mentioned that senses of western cinematography are different from those that we are trying to find in our movies.

What is interesting, yes, now we are shooting films about war. But, indeed, we did not stop producing movies about different historical events. We just have enlarged the general quantity of movies that are present in cinema or TV. We have films that are concentrated on ATO, but didn't stop penetrating deeper into our own history. And that is very useful penetration, that leads us to answers to our topical questions. For example, don't you see such a great similarity between events in the beginning of XX century (a hundred years ago), when we tried to revive independent Ukraine, and events in modern Ukraine. After all, the core idea of contemporary documentaries is to formulate and perceive the notion of Ukrainian idea, using both synchronic and diachronic ways to reach that goal.

There is no chronicles without chroniclers. There is no sense in analyzing documentaries without individuals that create them. There is no sense in analyzing the cinematography without authors, because some part of creator is always in creation: his or her anxiety, his or her emotions, his or her essence, his or her spark, his or her ideas. Serhii Loznytsia is one of the most recognized figures in the sphere of documental cinematography, an author of "Maidan" movie, author that received his recognition in Cannes. But, to be honest, we need to add that according to experts, Loznytsia's niche is feature films, not documentaries. His acclaimed films are "My happiness" and "In fog". "Babylon '13" is real phenomenon, fusion of journalism and cinematography. The head of this cinematographic community is a revolutionist in the field of Ukrainian documental movies. I would say about "Babylon '13" only couple of words: stylish, profound, touching. "Equally successful in creating both documental and feature films. His last work "Buffet" is an example of modern classics. He can successfully combine directing and producing". That is how Ivan Hrabovych speaks about another unusual Ukrainian director, about Valentyn Vasianovych. If we talk about his fresh movies, we have to mention "Twilight" that is a laureate of Odesa international filmfestival. And if we talk about feature films, of course it is worth to mention that Vasianovych was a producer and a cameraman of "Tribe" movie (film that became a festival phenomenon). Ihor Podolchak, on the other hand is, according to experts, is the most noticeable representer of Ukrainian art film genre. We have a lot of other talented filmmakers, who with difficulties try to tear through cloud of indifference and shallowness of those officials who are called to protect Ukrainian cinematography.

To sum up, we hear a lot about support of our cinematography, but, to be honest, we do not have it. And despite this we still have phenomenal products, movies that we are proud of, that we are proud to show to our posteriors. And despite that indifference from those who have power, we still have that chronicle of truth, which we used to call documentaries. We have it, because we have great people, individuals, talented individuals, with unusual artistic point of view. These individual will not remain silent even when circumstances would be the most unfavorable to say a cinematographic word. Well, too much words. We have the people that we have to be proud of!!!

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Документальне кіно – це сучасний літопис, літопис про суспільство і для суспільства. Фільмографія тієї чи іншої країни – це, наче яесь сплегіння ідей, сенсів, посилів, яке формує таку площину, що, відповідно, мов дзеркало, відбиває ті сили і сенси у майбутнє, до прийдешніх поколінь. Ця робота – роздуми про український кінематограф, що ми піддаємо синхронічному та діахронічному

аналізу. Проаналізовано підбір тем, які використовує модерний український режисер, оглядається його мотивація. Також аналізуємо зв'язок між постатями та їхніми кінематографічними творіннями, що містять у собі світогляд, духовність, моральність автора, його професіоналізм.

Власне, творчі постаті є тими, хто штовхає вперед розвиток українського кіно – чи то документального, чи то ігрового. Попри намагання не ступати далі попудізму про підтримку кінематографа від наших функціонерів при владі, це виражальне мистецтво досі живе і навіть, час від часу, дивує, в позитивному сенсі слова, усю світову громадськість дуже якісним, свіжим, подекуди, новаторським матеріалом.

Наше кіно – функціонує, воно є тим дзеркалом, що документально відображає наші реалії, своєрідно показує шлях у майбутнє, відкриває вікно в історичний світ прийдешнім поколінням, засіває високі національно-громадянські та морально-духовні цінності.

Ключові слова: документальне кіно, журналістика, історія української журналістики, режисери, незалежне кіно, українська ідея у вітчизняному кіно.