

Chapter 14

Multiculturalism in Cinema in the Context of Popular Culture: Where Exactly Ferzan Özpetek Stands?

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ABSTRACT

The presentation of what the viewer wants and expects has turned cinema into a mass consumer industry, spreading into a universal space. Cinema is not merely to please the masses, but has been transformed into a multicultural business that carries a different intellectual meaning which is named as narrative or auteur cinema. As an auteur director, Ferzan Özpetek stands in highly unique place in the name of cultural wealth as a director. His cinema draws up in the thin line between being a popular cultural product and being a narrative, spiritual cinema product, and is considered as the most important feature that differentiates the concept of auteur from other cinema genres by focusing on the cultures of both countries. If the cinema industry returns to a differentiation between commercial and narrative types, film should create its audience by presenting its own cultural heritage, rather than exposing the same culture to the masses. It is the factor that nourishes the cultural variety.

BACKGROUND

I want to tell you some of the difficulties I have with the term “popular”. I have almost as many problems with “popular” as I have with “culture”. When you put the two terms together, the difficulties can be pretty horrendous. (Hall, 1981: 227)

Multiculturalism may not be able to provide a basis for the preservation of cultural values. This situation may have consequences such as degeneration, uniformity of cultural values. Considering the influence of cinema on the mass spectator, which has a great influence on the masses, it is important how multicultural reflections take place in cinema films. The same importance applies to the preservation of cultural values as well. In this context, it is important to look at the reflections of multiculturalism

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in the cinema and to examine the cross of the hybrid directors. Ferzan Özpetek, who is known for his contributions to both Italian and Turkish cinema, can be a good example for such directors considering his place and artistic significance in the world cinema. Looking at the generality of Özpetek's films, it can be seen that the director tried to reflect both cultures and natural form in which he belongs. Well, the popular culture to avoid, in the globalized vision of the films is exactly where Ferzan Özpetek stands. As an auteur director, Ferzan Özpetek tells his backstory, learning, thoughts and feelings thru his film and this is an important point to consider the auteurs' world during monitoring.

The concept of culture, in a very general sense, is identified with the forms of production of society and human. The danger of reestablishment of popular culture product is definitely as a result of the effort of reproducing existing cultures. The main difference is the structure of the terms. The concept "popular" is prone to change but "culture" needs to be protected extensively rather than change. Meeting in common can create imbalances in terms of these two concepts. In this mean, to stay in the middle of conserving and degeneration is the main questioning of balance. According to Miller (2015), the concept is based on simple theories which would also be considered as main idea of the popular culture such as; differentiation between everyday understanding and academic norms, gender distinctions and effect of existing cultural identities. The degree and the type of popularity would differ from culture to culture, since popular culture is not an independent concept. The connection of the cultural elements belonging to human production should never be ignored because human being is an individual producer within the mass communication (Sherman and Cohen, 2007). It is very important to identify the popular culture elements that make big influence on masses.

In late eighteenth century, as a reason of urbanization and industrialization, the status of "popularity" started to change. Beginning the twenty-first century also production structure of the whole world has varied. This movement is affecting where capitalism encouraged modification in production conditions, the consumption habits also. However, the diversity and the sale of the popularity of the consumed products are always kept on the front plate (Pugliatti, 2013p23). The pace of the industry has led to the recognition of consumer products by more people. It is hard to maintain cultural values and to be un avoided because it invites unification models with. The preservation and relocation of cultural values has become difficult due to the influence of globalization. Globalization brought people to be at the same stage, and the influence of McLuhan's definition as world transforming a global country.

As a result of this an avoided globalization period, people love the same things, they watch what the others are watching, and they tend to enjoy the same things in terms of respectability and acceptance. Adhering to this mentality the fields and tools that people enjoy are joined by. One of the most irresistible visual mediums leading television and cinema became more involved in our lives. Like Mc Luhan classified the mediums related to their domains and named as hot and cool mediums in accordance to the participant's intervention rate. He rated the TV as cool medium where the participant is higher and he also noted that seeing a video, hearing an audio type or reading through images has more effectiveness on students' learning (Siegel, 1973 p2). Visual arts have a further advantage in perceiving the messages given to the masses of spectators who use the activities such as seeing, hearing, consciousness, subconscious, reasoning, thinking rapidly where the images and cinematographic language is very attractive to consume. Also the consumptions conditions would be mentioned here. Other than reading, listening or researching, watching is always more easier and attractive for the audiences (Mayne, 1993 p 13-18)

This aspect of visual messages has been presented with different experiences in terms of the film directors and video producers. Especially the moving image led the affection as Bergson described the cinematographic illusion. Bergson emphasized the importance of movement with the relationship he

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