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Cinematography education in Turkey: current situation, new perspectives and suggestion

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Abstract

The cinematography progressively adding up new horizons due to digital technological possibilities; the dimensions of production, fiction and presentation are taken new forms. This formation under the basis of different expression qualities constitutes a new artistic restructuring. In other words, digitalization in cinematography by redrawing aesthetic boundaries of visualization has already started to create an original cinematographic aesthetic. Performing some changes and transformations in the curricula of conventional cinematographic education appears as a mandatory necessity as digitalization is a distinct technological expression (lingo) and, as an extension to this, a distinct aesthetic structure. This study trying to scrutinize the current status of Turkish cinematographic education and the projections for future is constituted of two main complementary axis: one is the reactions of digital technology in cinematographic art and the other is in which vision and to what extent these reactions are considered in cinematographic education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The essential property determining cinema ontologically is that it is an art telling about feeling and experiences concerning life in the context of a narration founded on the ground of images. Films have presented to their audiences different vision forms and emotions which they find intensively pleasing

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since they created themselves as a language (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008).

With the beginning of the twenty first century, cinema technologically entered a quick transformation process. When the technology of digital images production entered cinema, optic films disappeared; films even happened achievable by means of images produced only in the computer media without needing any camera, and this change led to occur a structure passing beyond traditional narrations.

Digital cinema, with its most general and understandable definition, comprises the production, distribution and screening processes of motion pictures by using digital technology instead of 35 mm film tapes being a traditional method.

1.1. Scope and Limitations of Study

The study was established on the argument that digital vision technology and cinema have the perspective of impacts in dimensions of shooting, montage and screening and that digitalization is a different technological language and -as an extension of this- a different aesthetic structure.

The contribution the digitalization brought along to cinema art is that it adds new dimensions to vision, narration and sense correlations and this tends both artist and audience to change their viewpoints. As a natural extension of this, telling about new design methods together with traditional visual design methods education in universities giving cinema education and depending on this, making changes and transformations in conventional cinema education curriculum appear as an obligation.

This study, the aim of which was to examine the situation of cinema in our country and projections of it towards the future, was established on the undergraduate education, and specialties of associate and postgraduate education couldn't be handled. The study comprises two main axes completing each other: The first is impacts of digital technology on cinema art, the other is which vision these impacts take place in and to what extent they take place in cinema education in universities of our country.
2. MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE: DIGITAL IMAGES, NEW DIMENSIONS

Since digital technology entered cinema world much, as the language of computer technologies, changes and transformations started to be lived in semantic and syntax structure of cinema. The limitlessness the digital brought about has radically changed the concrete making-production conditions and the conditions of getting images being the object of cinema completely have changed. While the re-presentation of the existent reality was available in the stock term, this obligation disappeared in digital term and an absolutely new reality was produced through computers. This both led the narration forms in cinema to differentiate and also caused new narration forms to occur. Moreover, audiences started to change their positions across new narrations and narration forms and this revealed the necessity of handling reception aesthetics.

3. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND NEW MODULATIONS IN CINEMA

Cinema, which is ontologically in absolute relationship with technology, has continuously renewed and developed its own narration language every time with technological developments within development process. Digital cinema also makes transformations in conventional narration forms. Monaco (2010) states that "when images, audios and texts are digitalized once, everything is possible. The struggle between things we want our communication tool makes for us and the capacity of the running of these has ended".

With quick development and wide use area of the computer technology, techniques of digital transfer, record, re-production and presentation, cinema started to transform into artistic media that can be deemed "new". This transformation is so great that it is shown as the most important change after the discovery of sound in cinema (Erkilic, 2006).

3.1. Modulations in Production Dimension

In conventional production style, images of objective world were recorded onto the film called the stock by means of the camera, and then given to the screening by passing through chemical and optical operation processes. Images occurred by the camera through recording real scene one to one.
In the montage stage, the narration was founded by aligning the shot parts side by side.

In digital recording technology, if wanted, the narration can be established as objective world through digital cameras or through images created in the computer media. The greatest difference here is that the image can be got in ontology dimension without camera. Another primal property is in the dimension of the narration construction. That images are aligned successively, namely relationships between images are separate (from algorithms) presents the facility of making variations in the construction of the montage or narration.

The most apparent face of digital technology in the production dimension of cinema has occurred in animation area. A new type of motion picture made with three dimensional computer animations has come out (Wands, 2006). Another dimension necessary to be mentioned is that real people and virtual characters, who are produced in the computer media, take place as partners in the same film. These are the concrete examples showing that limits have disappeared and become vague in cinema aesthetics.

3.2. Modulations in Dimension of Screening

Digital screening puts audiences into the centre more in contradiction to the before conventional production shape and this creates changes in the perception aesthetics of audiences. With the presentation of the real and virtual together and of the combination of the dominant perception and emotion loss, classical dramaturgy’s identification, catharsis and enjoyment concepts take a new appearance in terms of the watching experience.

For example, in the result of that images, the getting of which is not possible with conventional ways, are got with digital image technology, James Cameron’s ‘Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991)’ or Wachowsky Brothers’ ‘Matrix (1999)’ films present a new perception aesthetics by creating immersive and perfect environments for the audience.

The leading modulations in the dimension of screening are new presentation techniques like three dimensional (3-D), real-D and IMAX. In conventional cinema, images have two dimensions as width and height, but objective world has three dimensions. In cinema, the illusion of the third dimension is got by a technique based on the pattern matching of two eyes. While both two dimensional (2-D) and three dimensional (3-D) films can be shown with Real-D technology, 3-D films have more realistic three dimension illusion creation and so they give a better watching pleasure. IMAX technique presents very high quality of image and the experience of watching on very largest screen as well. In
IMAX technology, 3-D films occur by two special projectors through reflecting image onto the screen; audiences can watch by converting this image to the normal through using glasses having polarization property.

3.3. Modulations in Narration Dimension

It was said before that digital technology, with limitless facilities it presents, creates new narration forms with the combination of image, animation, sound and text. In other words, media such as film, photograph, text and graphics that could exist only as separate before can be used hereafter in one common platform with digital technology and thus sharp limits between them vanish. This necessitates a new aesthetics as far as cinema undergoes changes in terms of language and grammar.

This new aesthetics is named with the term of liqueescence. Because it has a narration form not being linear and hierarchic. Linguistic context is not simple and static; with its complex and dynamic characteristic, it has a projective structure not reflective like conventional aesthetics.

For example, the artist called Toni Dove trying to establish a hybrid structure describes an application he realized: "My works are in a Bermuda triangle between plays, theatre and film. Sometimes I feel as though I make buildings from films or I am an automat creator or puppeteer both being non-living and giving reaction. I always had a feeling of making cinema spatial, namely making it dimensioned in a way of opposing the linearity of successive story time by allowing it into the process as an experience. My motors help me analyze time, memory and story and re-edit them and constantly keep them in a fluent and unsteady line (Wands, 2006).

The most important name in this area is doubtlessly Peter Greenaway. According to Greenaway stating that "We must save cinema from the dominance of literature; cinema can get rid of the service of storytelling only thanks to this", cinema must be a thing passing beyond presenting moving pictures providing a perspective on the screen; and must be interactive. He points out that thing, which have been made until now as cinema, are not deemed cinema; thanks to digital technology, cinema is possible now. Greenaway gives creating numerous images in the same time on the screen, breaking the frame space and re-arranging it as a series of samples of new narration forms necessary to occur, instead of linear movement of the film, thanks to digital technology. His most known study is called 'Tulse Luper Suitcases'. This study/experience comprises three feature-length films, one Internet site, one computer game, numerous stories and books published on various places, ninety two DVDs, sixteen episode TV series and exhibitions.
3-D films, narrations based on interactive relationship and narrations founded in virtual reality can be given as examples to modulations which will be widespread in the near future.

It was said before that three dimensional cinema experience has a potential of creating more effect on the audience than conventional technologies within the context of identification, catharsis and enjoyment concepts. Therefore, film is realized by figuring out reactions audiences will give while it is in the production stage yet, and this means shaping reactions of audiences.

Interactive cinema describes that the audience and the watched film are in reciprocal relationship and this relationship is structured in a way that allows the facility of affecting each other. While in other production forms of cinema there is distance feeling and one-sided relationship between the audience and film, interactive cinema is conspicuous because this relationship is reciprocal and this is a narration form giving a chance of being subject to its audience first time. Based on reciprocal interaction, since narration is determined according to preferences of the audience, the audience is positioned as one of important subjects determining film. However, since the mentioned preferences are determined by the director and film production team, the audience really doesn't give direction to the narration at will and plays one of subject roles defined for themselves. The first example that we can give for interactive cinema is 'Kinoautomat installation' realized by Check director Raduz Cincera in 1967. In this installation there are two buttons on a special remote control on each of 127 seats prepared peculiarly in cinema hall. Each of these buttons one of them is green and other is red has been put to give a separate direction to the film. In the end of every scene watched by audiences, the director or the determined person get on the stage, presents two options concerning what Mr. Novak, who is the main character of the film, will do, and wants from audiences to choose one of these two options. The film goes on according to what audiences choose and the final realizes with the end which audiences determine. The important difference of this project is that audiences being in the interaction are designed as individuals not as a community and the whole watching process is a personal preference voyage. In other words, in interactive cinema the watching experience has quite personal characterizations and in this sense, interactive cinema has the potential of creating important changes in cinema watching culture (Oz, 2012).

Virtual reality is three dimensional simulation models providing reciprocal communication facility with a dynamic medium created by computers, and creates a feeling of being in virtual world in its users in a supernatural way. The designed systems significantly increase the comprehension and perception power of the audience/user. That is to say that they create an experience, in which the user feels himself as a physical part of the world represented in all emotional levels, rather than presenting a world to see and hear like cinema does.
3.4. Position of Digital Technology in Turkish Cinema

The Turkish cinema, which has lived technical and economic woes for long time, has started to benefit from opportunities of digital technology. While young directors prefer low-budget digital equipments, the leading film producers use the cutting-edge system technologies for expensive and spectacular effects. For example, Uğur İcbak, as a vision director, in many films, has brought systems like Digital Betacam or High Definition into the application. Therefore, he calculates changes the film lives in the postproduction stages, can provide most truly and at the shortest time necessary preparation and material for every kind of digital effect during the shooting in the film set and so can drop high costs wanted at the postproduction stage to the low as possible.

In Turkey, a great number of films have been shot with digital cameras for the last 10 years. Umit Unal’s ‘Nine (2003)’, Ahmet Uluçay’s ‘Making Ships from Watermelon Zest (2002)’ or Uğur Yucel’s ‘Heads or Trails (2004)’ films are a few of the first samples shot with digital cameras. Nuri Bilge Ceylan’s ‘Three Monkeys (2009)’ film is a leading film which has been shot with digital camera and the screening of which has been realized with digital projection. Another sample we should mention is Biray Dalkiran’s ‘Hell (2010)’ film and it carries the property of being the first three dimensional film of Turkey.

4. CINEMA EDUCATION AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN TURKEY

Cinema education in Turkey is a relatively new phenomenon in Turkey. Cinema education firstly has been started in Cinema-TV Institute taking place in the body of Istanbul State Fine Arts Academy in 1974. That education in this area greatly delayed is understood when compared with the foundation of the cinema school in the Soviet Union in 1918.

In Turkey, cinema education is given within the 3 primary types today. These are direct cinema education, educations given from visual image creation and cinema courses and such applications.

Educations in ‘Radio-TV-Cinema’ departments of ‘Cinema-TV’, Communication Faculties and Fine Arts Faculties form two principal axes of direct cinema education. Education in cinema faculties usually has curriculums towards communication and broadcasting area and on growing individuals who have gained a notion towards this. As understood by its name, topics of radio, TV and cinema are taught in the context of broadcasting and communication. Cinema education in fine arts faculty
handles the art phenomenon in primary plan, mostly has lessons towards art notion in the curriculum and goals to grow individuals towards this. Despite the fact that its name is Cinema-TV, the taken education is mostly towards cinema because lessons towards television stay in the background.

Education modulation from visual image creation is a very new area. It gives education, in which students can establish relation between different contemporary disciplines such as graphic design, cinema, photography and animation, under the name of Communication Design, Visual Communication Design or Media and Communication founded in the body of the communication faculties in the beginning of 2000s. Students continue main branch program in the direction of their own abilities as of the second year and also can take lessons of different departments. They widen their experiences by taking compulsory and optional lessons from areas varied with sub-modules like Photography, Graphics, Cinema (Producing-Directing-Vision Directing and Scriptwriting) and Animation Cinema.

Radio and TV Programming in vocational high schools has been founded to meet intermediate staff need of this area. Photography and Cameraman programs are designed in the way to include professions such as digital image processing, advertising photography, architectural photography, large format photography and cameraman and aim to give a notion of getting profession by means of digital equipments.

With respect to cinema, course and likewise educations, it’s seen that private education of cinema as well as cinema education given in universities presents an appearance becoming widespread. These can be linked to institutional structures or can totally be private enterprises. For example, while courses like TURSAK (Turkish Cinema and Audiovisual Culture Foundation) and Mithat Alam Film Centre or Cinematheque Film School taking place in the body of Bogazici University are based on institutional structure, the course carrying on activities under the name of Digital Film Academy has private enterprise structure.

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2 Schools and departments giving the similar education can take different names. The name ‘Faculty of Art and Design’ is given to faculties newly opened as equivalent to Fine Arts Faculties. Another change necessary to be mentioned is that the name of Cinema-TV departments in Fine Arts Faculties of Dokuz Eylul University and Yasar University has been changed as Film Design. Another thing necessary to be mentioned is an apparent differentiation hasn’t been formed in visions and missions of these departments in these faculties. For example, when looked at the Cinema-TV curriculum of Fine Arts Faculty of Afyon Kocatepe University that it is very close to curriculums of the Communication Faculties is seen.

3 A good example of private courses is the education that Modern Music Academy gives to ‘Film Music Department’. The reason is that both it is the first in Turkey and also there isn’t any education given in this area. Given there aren’t many musicians who have taken film music or music education towards visual production, the difference of this education can be understood immediately. In parallel with cinema’s both sector and art development in many countries, film music education has been started to be given place in institutions giving music education for the last 30 years.
The first structuring, which has the relation between cinema education and digital technology and made this a private education area, is ‘Cinema and Digital Media’ department taking place in the body of Izmir Economics University. The only lack of this positive development is that curriculums of them still a lot resemble general tendency of communication faculties. They seem far from replying requirements of a new cinema language for now.

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW MODULATIONS

With the increase in the diversity and quality of images produced in digital cinema, images started to be produced with collective working of engineers and directors. Because these films necessitate high technical profession and occur as a result of many steps. So, the staff must have quite high level of technical knowledge as well as comprehension concerning both potential and limits of using digital instruments (Wands, 2006). Doubtlessly, with continuous change of digital cinema technology, this brings about the problem how the required education of technical staff will be shaped. When looked at the OSYM (Student Selection and Placement Centre) catalogue of the 2012 year, it is seen that any of universities in Turkey (except one school) hasn’t an attempt about digital cinema.

5.1. Problems Concerning Available Education Programs

- In cinema education area the vacancy numbers of the Communication and Fine Arts Faculties are quite many and this greatly indicates the lowness in the quality of education as a problem. For example, cinema academy of Munich educates in classes of about 10 students⁴.

- It’s seen that programs giving this education mostly take place in the body of Communication Faculties. Cinema departments of Fine Arts Faculties have a claim that they raise candidates as

⁴ Those indicated here are educations in the undergraduate degree. Numeric data are like those according to 2012 OSYS (Student Selection and Placement System): Undergraduate Degree: Fine Arts Faculties, Cinema-TV. (360 persons); Communication Faculties, Radio-Cinema-TV Departments (2720 persons); Communication Design, Media Design, Visual Communication Design Departments (947 persons).

Associate’s Degree: Vocational High Schools, Radio and TV Programming Departments (1810 persons); Radio and TV Technologies Departments (945 persons; Photography and Cameraman (552 persons).
cinema staff, but Communication Faculties are places making science education in the main sense. In these faculties, lessons towards 3 various profession areas as radio, television and film studies are given within cinema education and this creates a serious axis shift about what the given education is.

- While cinema education in Turkey has quantitative largeness, its qualitative highness doesn’t exhibit any bright appearance. One of main reasons of this (as real politics) is the form of high school education and university entrance exam. Students win these departments by entering central exam system through constantly doing tests at ages of 17-18. Abroad, people, who have got undergraduate degree and determined their way on this, are accepted to the film academies with the talent exams and given to them education focused on profession areas.

- Since technical equipments are both very expensive and have short semi-annual life, students take education with inadequate technical equipments.

- Curriculums generally have a conventional structuring which doesn’t take the future into account. Communication Faculties and Fine Arts Faculties have similar curriculum programs within their inside. In these programs, in which information of lots of disciplines are given, both enough flexibility and specific visions/missions differentiating themselves from others are not seen.

- Education in both two areas can’t bring the theory and practice together; in this sense, the incongruity with the sector is in huge dimensions. Because that education is not in the academic understanding towards the occupation but in the body of the university reveals the necessity of giving lessons in wider areas to students.

- When looked at curriculums, the continued cinema education comprises some general culture, some theory and some a few productions not passing beyond the in-class working. Awaiting another thing from students, who have taken cinema culture from this curriculum model, is not possible. Already students have mostly this tendency. A great majority of students coming to these schools say they want to be directors. The number of one’s wanting in the areas such as vision, montage, etc. is extremely less. That this model can’t take the country cinema to anywhere seems clearly.

- People, who are working in this area now and reply to the requirements of the market, are obliged to learn their information in different disciplines and occupations and transfer into this area.

- When looked at the technology-art language correlation of cinema education in Turkey, it is seen that this is nearly ignored in programs of the State universities. In this sense, it can be said that the

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5 For a few years some faculties have left the central examination system and started to get students through the talent examination. Dokuz Eylul University Fine Arts Faculty Film Design Department is one of these examples
education can’t pass beyond patterns of the twentieth century.

5.2. Suggestions

- Since the image production technology constantly renews itself and starts to transform to a more complex structure, developing education programs according to this is an obligation. Because in order to better comprehend reflections of digital technology on cinema, knowing its affections with both technology and other modern arts is necessary.

- The current situation in cinema education (relevant departments in Fine Arts Faculties and Communication Faculties) lives certain compressedness in terms of missions and visions of their faculties. It is necessary to remove education from this structuring and to take it into a private structuring model like cinema faculty/academy. As in samples in Europe and America, education must be made via a cinema academy⁶.

- As in all art branches, the most important property separating cinema education from the education model of other universities is that it should be based on application by depending on disposition and ability rather than information transfer. This principle should take place as determinant in curriculums.

- Since all processes of the cinema of the future (from production to distribution) will be produced within digital technology, in education programs, digital image production information (in the context of hardware and software) should constitute the skeleton of the curriculum. After the graduation of students, technological innovations and substructure must be continuously updated for them to find job opportunity as full-equipped and ready. For example, the sector has demands like “we want people, who know using High Definition and can apply this in cinema” and so education should be designed according to this. The only department towards this is ‘Cinema and Digital Media” department taking place in the body of the Communication Faculty of Izmir Economics University. When looked at the curriculum of this department having a vacancy of 40 people (despite this positive development), that lessons concerning the communication theory are intensively available and lessons, which will give information about today and future of digital technology, are in the

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⁶ Munich Film Academy in Germany, VGIK in Russia, Lodz in Poland and FAMU in Czech Republic can be shown as examples of these schools. The equivalent of these in Turkish university education system may “Vocational school”. Vocational schools giving four-year undergraduate degree towards occupation seem a structuring model which most easily will be able to adapt into higher education system.
limited number seems as an important lack.

- Visual effect design is an indispensable application area for today’s cinema. For example, decades of people have prepared the effect images on digital media in the film called ‘The Conquest’ (2012) being one of the most expensive productions of Turkish cinema. In cinema education there isn’t any sub-module towards this area. This ignored area should be taken into cinema education.

- Another element is that not only the production aspect but also the screening aspect of digital cinema should be taken into account. In Vocational High Schools, technicians, who will be able to use special software and screening instruments such as 3-D, Real D and IMAX, should be raised.

- Since raising new ones, instead of the available academicians not knowing digital technology, will take time, a calendar study towards this should be done.

- Given the fewness of the number of both academicians and applicants in real meaning, special programs must be realized for professionals of the occupation to take place absolutely within education process.

- It is seen that in cinema, with respect to new technologies, the foundation universities produce a mission much more beyond of the State universities. For example, Bahcesehir University presents an appearance adapting new generation technologies in cinema world into education platform and assuming a leading role in this area.

**AS RESULT**

Cinema has passed through many stages thanks to technological developments. Sound cinema, color cinema and three dimensional cinema are a result of technological developments. Films using innovative technologies and making a breakthrough have accelerated this advancement. Digitalization, which has started to develop at the end of the 20th century and provided a great advancement at the beginning of the 21st century, affects cinema art as well as many areas. This technology taking place of analog technology leads systems like the production-screening and distribution in cinema area to change.

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7 In Turkey, nearly 1700 cinema halls regenerate by transforming to digital system with a gradually increasing speed. Similarly, the number of halls doing 3-D screening quickly increase. Although the numbers of Imax and Real-D halls are less in large cities today, it is predicted that the numbers of them will gradually increase.
Although digital cinema hasn’t started to give its most mature products now and shows all indications of conventional cinema, it is seen that tendencies different from the narration language in traditional sense are entered even with the results got. This new art, which is dimensioned with the use of sound, movement and text, gains cinematographic properties and is made interactive by various methods, transforms into cinematographic narrations that are multi layered and convenient to new readings by moving away from linearity. For example, today in many films, real people share the same stage with virtual characters created through computers.

Knowing the image processing techniques well but applying these techniques to digital media (shooting, effect, montage etc.) without evaluating them in a scientific, artistic and conceptual frame makes the result of the narration unqualified aesthetically. In the same context, only building a conceptual background well without knowing the image processing techniques doesn’t happen adequate for the result of the design.

When students have notions of developing the cinema education they took together with digital technology ability and of putting it to application easily, they can reveal easier and multi-alternative works. In this context, a Turkish film, which has been shot in digital standards, will be able to be screened and watched all around the world.

REFERENCES


