

One an earlier
suggestion, one
would simply have



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One of foremost characteristics of late 20th and early 21st centuries' comedy is the fact that, as time goes by; it tends to become increasingly plot-fragmented, cognitively incomprehensible and even somewhat aesthetically distasteful. This, however, does not seem to affect the ability of such a comedy to win favor with the audiences. As Auslander (1989) had put it in his article: " As of today, whether performance remains marginal or gains mass exposure seems to have little to do with the nature or content of a particular artist's work... Nowadays, the relative success of performance in the mass media attests to the ability of a mass-mediated culture to convert almost anything into ' entertainment'" (122). According to Andersen (2010), there are two most striking traits in what she defines as ' post-modern comedy': " 1.

A tendency toward reflexivity... 2. An emphasis on fragmented forms, discontinuous narratives..." (Carrie Andersen Blog). In order to realize the full validity of an earlier suggestion, one would simply have to familiarize itself with such comparatively recent and very successful Hollywood comedies as Naked Gun, Nutty Professor, A Night At the Roxbury, Scary Movie, etc. All of

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these comedies feature the absence of a well-structured plot, the plenty of plot-unrelated self-referrals, on the part of the characters, and the inclusion of a number of primitively humorous gags.

And, there are good reasons to believe that, the very fact that this type of comedies appear to grow ever-more popular with the broader audiences, should not be discussed as ‘thing in itself’, unrelated to socio-political realities of modern living. In our paper, we will aim to explore this thesis at length, while focusing on what we consider the two most plausible explanations as to the essence of a discussed subject matter.

(2)

As we have implied earlier, when it comes to discussing the essence of a particular cultural phenomenon, such as the increasing irrelevancy of the actual plot in latest Hollywood comedies, it represents the matter of crucial importance to be able to identify the objectively existing preconditions for such a phenomenon to have emerged, in the first place. After all, up until comparatively recent times, the most successful comedies used to feature a well-defined linear narrative as one of its most important characteristics.

While referring to the mechanics of how satire and humor were explored in classical Hollywood comedies, Chambers (1989) points out to the fact that in these comedies, the very sensation of ‘funny’ derived out of viewers’ ability to assess surrounding reality in terms of logic: “An appreciation of the ridiculous is a matter of exposing appearances for what they really are, primarily by realizing the gap between what people say (or how they perceive their actions to be interpreted) and how people appear to an

objective observer" (590). In other words, the presence of a well-structured plot in classical comedies simply reflected the rationalistic workings of their creators' mentality - these people perceived the objective reality through the lenses of euro-centrism. That is, they would go about endowing their comedies with humorous appeal by exploring the dichotomy between white people's sense of rationale, on one hand, and non-white people's sense of irrational emotionality/passion, on another. As Chin (1989) had put it: " In the context of the United States, the cultural power structure has always been dominated by the ideology of a specifically white, Eurocentric, specifically capitalist establishment" (167). Therefore, the reason why until recently, comedies with linear narratives appealed to movie-going audiences is that these audiences predominantly consisted of whites.

This continues to be the case even today, although to a lesser degree, which in its turn explains why recent Hollywood comedies with well-defined plot very rarely feature people of color, as characters. For example, in the recent commercially successful ' white comedy' Meet the Parents, there is no even a single non-white character. Apparently, movie-goers' ability to enjoy a well-defined plot in the comedy reflects their varying ability to remain focused on plot's unraveling, which in its turn reflects their ability to operate with abstract categories, which in its turn reflects the rate of their Intellectual Quotidian. And, as we are all well aware of - the rate of one's IQ is genetically predetermined category. In their book, Lynn and Vanhanen (2002) state: " IQs appear to be determined by the racial and ethnic make-up of the populations... The IQs of 96 are typical of Europeans.

The countries with lower proportions of Europeans and greater proportions of Native Americans, Blacks, and Mestizos have lower IQs" (263). Thus, it would only be logical to hypothesize that the cinematographic trend of Hollywood comedies becoming essentially 'plotless' has to do with an ongoing process of Western societies' intellectual marginalization. And, it is namely the institutionalization of multiculturalism, as an official policy in Western countries, which had triggered such a process. For example, it is now being estimated that by the year 2050, the population of Hispanics in U. S.

will reach 90 million. And, as statistics show, the dropout rate among Hispanics in America's high schools accounts for 45%-50%. In his article, Crosnoe (2005) states: " Compared to other racial/ethnic populations, Hispanics lag behind on most indicators of academic progress, such as grades, test scores, and social-psychological adjustment in school" (563). Thus, it is namely the fact that Hollywood producers are well aware of the actual essence of demographic dynamics in today's America, which explains why they deliberately strive to ensure that their comedies will appeal to the marginalized tastes of America's multicultural populace, as the foremost mean of guaranteeing these comedies' commercial successfulness.

And, as practice shows, in order for a particular comedy to become popular with non-whites, its plot does not have to be concerned with ensuring the integrity of a linear narrative, as much as it needs to be concerned with exploiting viewers' animalistic urges. This is exactly the reason why in many recent Hollywood comedies, directors had made a point in satirizing purely physiological aspects of people's existence, such as defecating, indulging in sex or eating. For example, in such Hollywood's 'black comedies' as 1996

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The Nutty Professor, 2000 Big Momma's House and 2004 Fat Albert , directors had gone about exploiting viewers' sense of humor by exposing them to the sight of main characters simply walking around for no apparent purpose and consuming a lot of hamburgers, while appearing grossly overweight. For intellectually marginalized audiences, these comedies proved being ' funny' enough, as it is only the direct onslaught onto such audiences' animalistic senses, which can result in triggering an emotional reaction, on their part.

(3)

Nevertheless, the same issue (the fragmentation of plot in recent Hollywood comedies) can be accessed from entirely different perspective. It might very well be the case that the increasing irrelevance of plot in comedies is simply being reflective of today's post-industrial realities, as such that are being concerned with the process of humanity growing increasingly ' post-human', which in its turn, undermines the soundness of traditional concepts, founded on the principle of linearly defined rationality. For example, as of today, most people believe that, in order for anyone to be considered a truly intelligent person, he or she would have to know at least one foreign language.

And, the studying of a foreign language is rather lengthy process, which cannot be successful without learner remaining utterly dedicated to studying, throughout process's entirety. Nevertheless, due to the revolutionary breakthroughs in the fields of informational technology and biology that had taken place recently, in 20-30 years from now, it will become possible for just about anyone to learn foreign languages instantly, by the mean of inserting a microchip in its brain. In post-human or cyber-

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human world, just about every aspect of people's existence will be qualitatively different from it used to be the case, from the time when humans evolved from apes, until now.

And, that will include the manner in which they perceive surrounding reality.

In its turn, this will affect the structural subtleties of a cognitive process.

What it means is that in near future, in order for the literary or cinematographic narrative to be considered structurally plausible, it will no longer need to feature such plot's classical elements as exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution, because the manner in which 'post-human' people would perceive objective reality might very cease being linearly defined. As some contemporary Hollywood's 'plotless' comedies (such as Scary Movie) indicate, the absence of a well-structured plot in the comedy does not necessarily reflect such comedy's inability to convey a certain semantic message.

In his article, Kellner (1987) points out to the fact that, under certain conditions, even chaotic meaninglessness can be quite meaningful: "In fully constituted 'flowing' discourse the facts function irresistibly either as indexes or as links in an indexical sequence; even an anarchic presentation of the facts will at least convey the meaning 'anarchy' and suggest a particular philosophy of history" (3). Therefore, the fact that today's comedies become progressively more 'plotless' may simply be reflective of people's subconscious anxieties, regarding the ways of a future. For example, the humoristic appeal of a Scary Movie directly derives out of how this comedy ridicules the conventions of a horror genre in cinematography. Apparently, for people who enjoy watching this particular comedy, it

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represents a particular pleasure to assess such conventions as being outdated – that is exactly what is being funny in Scary Movie and in its sequels, and that is also what makes up for the fact that this movie simply does not feature a coherent plot, whatsoever. As it was noted by Weinberg (2000): “ There really is no plot at all (in Scary Movie) to speak of, and I’ve giggled at several reviewers try to describe one. What you’re presented with is a series of scenes parodying other films, or just plain old being raunchy” (EfilmCritic. Com).

Yet, for the reasons mentioned early, it is specifically plot-fragmented comedies, such as Scary Movie, which are going to attain a mainstream status in Hollywood’s comedy-related cinematography in the future. A somewhat altered hypothesis can be used to explain the apparent popularity of black ‘ plotless’ comedies, such as Fat Albert. The fact that these comedies aim to humorise physiological aspects of people’s lives, may be suggestive of audiences’ tendency to view the biological constraints of one’s existence as being quite inconsistent with the ways of a ‘ brave borderless world’, because it is namely the specifics of our biological functioning that relate us to animals more than anything else does. In post-human society, however, the extent of people’s ‘ biologism’ will reflect their ability to attain social prominence in counter-geometrical progression – that is, the more they would be biologically constrained, the lesser would be their chances to attain such a prominence. This is the reason why viewers tend to perceive individual’s strongly defined ‘ biologism’ as the foremost indication of his or her inability to evolve physiologically and intellectually, which in its turn, renders such individual particularly funny in the eyes of a viewing audience.

(4)

Even though two earlier articulated explanations, as to the tendency of recent comedies to become ever more plot-fragmented, differ rather substantially in how they address the discussed subject matter, we believe that they nevertheless substantiate the validity of paper's initial hypothesis. As we have shown – the increasing irrelevance of plot-presence in comedies has nothing to do with the evolution of people's aesthetic tastes as 'thing in itself', but rather with the evolution/devolution of these people themselves, as representatives of Homo Sapiens specie.

In its turn, this proves once again that, unlike what the hawks of political correctness would like us to believe, it is fully appropriate to discuss the essence of just about any social or cultural phenomenon well within the conceptual framework of 'hard' sciences, which have nothing to do with 'promotion of tolerance' but rather with promotion of scientifically proven facts, regardless of how 'intolerant' they might be.

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