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Sharing of the Creative Experience of O. Dovzhenko in the Informal Setting

Передача творчого досвіду О. П. Довженка у неформальній обстановці

Abstract. This paper researches and analyses specifics and problems of transferring the creative experience by genial Ukrainian film director O. Dovzhenko to students of the Kyiv Cinema Institute in an informal setting. We discovered that Dovzhenko had several meetings with students of the Kyiv Cinema Institute in an informal setting; we reconstructed his informal lectures that took place in the hotel room and during walks around Kyiv; we discovered the possibility of finding the transcripts of these lectures by O. Dovzhenko in the main Ukrainian and Russian archives.

Keywords: history of cinema, film director, Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography, lecture, archive, Oleksandr Dovzhenko's legacy.

Problem statement. The urgency of this study is due to the lack of special studies of cinema-teaching activity of Oleksandr Dovzhenko in Ukraine, the urgent need to create a complete and objective biography of the artist and his influence on the formation and development of Ukrainian cinema education in the 1930s and 1940s, an attempt to open the darkened places of the biography of Oleksandr Dovzhenko, discovering and publishing an account on previously unknown sources from state and personal archives, special storages, and libraries with limited access.

Analysis of recent research works and publications. In the studies of M. P. Shudra [19–21], L. Chervatenko [18], V. Marochko [9], V. Myslavskiy [11] and others O. Dovzhenko's life and work have been thoroughly studied, but besides the publications of O. Bezruchko [2, 3, 22–24] his cinema-teaching activity is briefly mentioned.

Objectives of the study are to investigate specifics and problems of the transfer of creative experience of Ukrainian director O. Dovzhenko in the informal environment at the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography; to reveal the fact of the several meetings-conversations with students of the Kyiv Cinema Institute in an informal setting; to reconstruct his informal lectures that took place in the hotel room and during walks around Kyiv; and discovering the possibility of finding the verbatim transcripts of these lectures by O. Dovzhenko in the main Ukrainian and Russian archives.

It highly important to study and analyze the transfer of creative experience of the genius Ukrainian film director

O. Dovzhenko in the informal environment to the students of the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography.

Presentation of the main research material. In the early 1930s O. Dovzhenko wanted to transfer his own experience to young Ukrainian cinematographers—after a memorable first lecture, students from the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography had several more informal conversations that took place in the hotel room and during walks around Kyiv.

G. Grigoriev summed up these meetings in following lines of his book “What there was, that I remember”: “... unfortunately, not all of my” transcripts “have been preserved” [4, p. 229]. The small part of those conversations, rather the impression of them, were printed in the above-mentioned book and in “Interesting stories. Adventures of famous people”.

But, unfortunately, because of Grigory Grigoriev's unfair arrest in 1937 and his premature death in 1971, the transcripts of these lectures are likely to be lost forever, but the grain of cinematic knowledge and most importantly, the seed of humanity that O. Dovzhenko sowed in young souls still remain. These seeds then sprouted into great films, roles and books, and finally, just helped young people, despite those terrible times, find themselves in this world.

Let's try to restore these memories of pedagogical activity O. Dovzhenko, at least partially.

First of all, Dovzhenko tried to teach students to see the beauty of the world as he saw it—they were walking together around Kyiv: “He loved Volodymyr's Hill very much, and we went there with him. Every time he praised the Dnieper's beauty” [4, p. 229].

A characteristic feature of his artistic and educational method were lectures given in informal settings, often outdoors, because “Oleksandr Petrovych [Dovzhenko] was convinced that nature itself has a positive effect on education, it elevates mood, makes a person more kind and full of tender feelings” [12, p. 126].

Even at the beginning of his pedagogical career at Zhytomyr Second High Elementary College (ZSHES), a young teacher “met with his students in his spare time in a dense monastic garden near school, ...” [12, p. 125]. One of his Zhytomyr students P. Kosminsky recalled that Dovzhenko “considered one of the effective methods of education and up-bringing excursions ... He often conducted ... excursions to the picturesque banks of the river Teteriv” [12, p. 126].

V. Prigorovsky gives an interesting account on the emergence of such pedagogical passions by O. Dovzhenko: “What Dovzhenko was not willing to tell in the classroom he expressed it in the forest, near the river Teteriv or on boats” [12, p. 126]. It is possible to understand what the young teacher did not want to tell students in light of recently declassified documents from the ex-KGB archive: “in 1917–[19]18 Dovzhenko was a teacher in Zhytomyr, and expressed himself as a supporter of the nationalist, Ukrainophile movement” [6, p. 75].

The memoirs of L. Rubinstein [14, p. 7], S. Tsybulnyk [17] and others may serve as a proof that in his lectures outdoors Oleksandr Dovzhenko taught students to treat national history and culture with respect: “He ... has instilled love in us for our language and literature” [12, p. 126].

The roots of this learning style should be sought at the Glukhiv Teachers’ Institute. As the artist noted in his autobiography, despite the fact that “the moral climate at the institute was gloomy... he familiarize himself with Ukrainian books in the apartment of his friends” [16, p. 15]. After this, student Oleksandr Dovzhenko “read books to young people, when with his fellow student Petr Tikhonovich Fursoy visited his home in the village Bereza near Glukhiv” [12, p. 125].

Lectures in an informal setting (in the nature, in his own apartment, etc.) Dovzhenko conducted throughout his life. Most of the memoirs of former pupils of Dovzhenko were printed in the Soviet era, and therefore people could not tell about this aspect of their teacher’s teaching activities in full. This may be confirmed by Oleksandr Muratov’s “Memoir of Dovzhenko”, printed after Ukraine gained its independence [10, p. 58].

Great dreamer, O. Dovzhenko liked to rebuild, improve the surrounding world not only in his films—the artist’s plans spread to architecture. This is also found in the autobiography of 1939, and in the memoirs of S. Tsybulnik, Y. Tymoshenko and others. For example, G. Grigoriev talked about his teacher’s dream to make the Contract House a branch of the historic museum, to restore the old concert hall. A lesson on directing at the monument to St. Volodymyr [1] also was recalled.

At these improvised walking lectures, Oleksandr Dovzhenko taught young filmmakers to think that they should not be cogs in the complex mechanism of film production, but full of “authors of cinema”, “whose personality

should be manifested in every part of the editing, in each frame” [5, p. 191].

O. Dovzhenko proved his position by examples taken from history of art, especially artists of the Renaissance. He referred to them throughout his entire pedagogical activity: “It is considered that the author who produced ‘Mona Lisa’ was not that woman, who served as model, but famous Leonardo da Vinci! And the girl, who served for Raphael as a model of the Sicstine Madonna, does not put forward any pretenses to copyright, either to Raphael or to the owner of the painting” [5, p. 191–192].

“Therefore”, concluded Dovzhenko, “we reserve the right to call scriptwriter ‘author of a script’ and director to be called ‘the author of a film’” [5, p. 192].

In a lecture given in 1932, O. Dovzhenko encouraged future filmmakers to keep everything in the film under their control: “It seems to me that you, future filmmakers, should become masters of absolutely everything that is in a picture. If your activity is locked in the script or in the work with the actor, or in editing, none of you will succeed. I do everything myself ... because there are no unimportant things in art. Everything important, and it is absolutely necessary to take into account the sum of small things” [15, p. 18].

During improvised conversation lectures there were stories and lively discussions about “Zvenigora”, “Arsenal”, the planned film “Ivan”. In the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography Dovzhenko read the scenario of the future film.

It is likely that “Eastern” way of thinking—irrational, emotional, one were spirit domineers technique, was characteristic for Dovzhenko, and not a rational “Western” way. In pupils the artist would like to see like-minded associates, and therefore, what was close to him, he tried to instill in young cinematographers, and therefore some postulates (only in a slightly different interpretation) encounter him throughout entire pedagogical activity.

Oleksandr Dovzhenko did not bypass the theory of cinema and generously shared his knowledge of it with young cinematographers. However, this was not a dry theory, but a reflection of the director, often filled with philosophical meaning.

Dovzhenko spoke about the synthetic method of compaction of the material, which was typical for the Soviet cinema and for Dovzhenko in particular, during a trip to Europe, and therefore he could not avoid mentioning it in his lectures. The practical embodiment of the synthetic method was the film “Earth”.

O. Dovzhenko, as a man who was born in a peasant family, had never cut his links with country side, praised it in his writings, and in all periods of his teaching, he called young cinematographers to study the village. They did what were told, relying on the memoirs of a former student of the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography E. Lisovskaya: “In summer, we usually left for ‘the village’. We gave concerts, and guarded the collective farm (“kolkhoz”) grain. Somebody would reap in the field, somebody would write scripts, somebody would install the radio” [8, p. 124]. Taking this into account, it can be admitted that it was thanks to the initiative

of Oleksandr Dovzhenko that students of the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography took over the colony “New World” in Pirogovo village [13].

The beginning of pedagogical experiments with planting trees together with students should be dated not at the beginning of the 1, but the early spring of 1916. At the Zhytomyr Second Colledge, young Dovzhenko together with his pupils laid a garden [14, p. 7]. “Suddenly, one of the students quietly put a shovel, decided to run home. The teacher noticed this intention. And then he turned to all: ‘The one who will not leave at least one tree after his life is not a man’. The student stayed with his friends” [12, p. 126].

Human charisma and, most importantly, talent films of the artist attracted students to the director’s department of the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography in want to study under his guidance. O. Dovzhenko had a desire to work with students: “I promise to you and to the whole directorial course to use your young energy, creative fervour in my first sound new film” [7, p. 82].

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Conclusions. We set the goal of researching and analyzing of the issues and the specifics of the transfer of creative experience in the informal environment of the genius Ukrainian film director O. Dovzhenko to students of the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography. As a result, the goal and the scientific objectives were fulfilled: we investigated the artistic and mentoring activities of the Ukrainian director of feature films O. Dovzhenko; discovered the fact of several meeting-conversations for students of the Kyiv Cinema Institute in an informal setting; reconstructed his informal lectures that took place in the hotel room and during walks around Kyiv; and found the possibility of finding the transcripts of these lectures by O. Dovzhenko in the main Ukrainian and Russian archives.

Prospects for the further research. Despite the thorough scientific study of informal lectures for the students of the Kyiv Cinema Institute, we believe that the prospects of scientific research remain significant, since the transcripts of these meeting-meetings have not yet been found, the artist is honoured with young cinematographers.

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Безручко О. В.

Передача творчого досвіду О. П. Довженка у неформальній обстановці

Анотація. Досліджено та проаналізовано проблематику та специфіку передачі творчого досвіду у неформальній обстановці геніального українського кінорежисера О. П. Довженка студентам Київського державного інституту кінематографії. Виявлено факт декількох зустрічей-бесід для студентів Київського кіноінституту у неформальній обстановці; реконструювано неформальні лекції, які відбувались у готельному номері та під час прогулянок Києвом; з'ясовано можливість знаходження в основних українських і російських архівах стенограм цих лекцій О. П. Довженка.

Ключові слова: історія кінематографа, кінорежисер, Київський державний інститут кінематографії, лекція, архів, творча спадщина Олександра Довженка.

Безручко А. В.

Передача творческого опыта А. П. Довженко в неформальной обстановке

Аннотация. Исследованы и проанализированы проблематика и специфика передачи творческого опыта в неформальной обстановке гениального украинского кинорежисера А. П. Довженко студентам Киевского государственного института кинематографии. Подтвержден факт нескольких встреч-бесед Александра Довженко со студентами Киевского киноинститута в неформальной обстановке; реконструированы его неформальные лекции, проходившие в гостиничном номере и во время прогулок по Киеву; выяснена возможность нахождения стенограмм этих лекций А. П. Довженко в основных украинских и российских архивах.

Ключевые слова: история кинематографа, кинорежиссер, Киевский государственный институт кинематографии, лекция, архив, наследие Александра Довженко.

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