

TWO LITTLE-KNOWN 1932 LECTURES OF OLEKSANDR DOVZHENKO IN THE MOSCOW STATE INSTITUTE OF CINEMATOGRAPHY

OLEKSANDR BEZRUCHKO

Abstract. In this article, two little-known lectures of 1932 by the genius Ukrainian film director and script writer Oleksandr P. Dovzhenko in the Moscow State Institute of Cinematography (Higher State Institute of Cinematography, All-Union State Institute of Cinematography, now the All-Russian State University of Cinematography named after S. A. Gerasimov) were investigated and analysed; the reasons for conducting these lectures at Moscow State Institute of Cinematography and not at the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography (All-Ukrainian State Institute of Cinematography, Kyiv State Institute of Film Engineers) were given; the relations of his creative activity in domestic cinema as a director of feature films and educational efforts as a leading Ukrainian mentor of creative youth were covered.

Keywords: Oleksandr P. Dovzhenko, Moscow State Institute of Cinematography, history of cinema, film director, two little-known lectures, 1932.

Problem statement. The urgency of this study is caused with the lack of special studies of cinema-pedagogical activity of Oleksandr Dovzhenko in Ukraine, with the urgent need to create a complete and objective picture of the artist's biography and of his influence on the formation and development of Ukrainian cinema education in the 1930s and 1940s. It is an attempt to open the obscure circumstances from the biography of Oleksandr Dovzhenko, to discover and publish an unknown layer of sources from formerly closed state and personal archives, special storages, and libraries.

Analysis of recent research works and publications. In the studies of M. P. Shudra [13–15], L. Cherevatenko [12], V. Marochko [8], V. Myslavskiy [9] and others O. Dovzhenko's life and work have been thoroughly studied, but besides the publications of O. Bezruchko [1–4], his cinema-pedagogical activity is briefly mentioned.

Objectives of this article are to study the cinema-pedagogical activity of Ukrainian feature films

director Oleksandr Dovzhenko; to analyze his little-known lectures in December, 1932; to give the reasons for conducting these lectures in the Moscow State Institute of Cinematography and not in the Kyiv State Institute of Cinematography; to recall the interconnection of his creative activity in domestic cinema as a director of feature films and educational efforts as a leading Ukrainian mentor of creative youth.

The purpose of the article is to study and analyze the little-known lectures of 1932 by the genius Ukrainian film director Oleksandr Dovzhenko at the Moscow State Institute of Cinematography.

Presentation of the main research material. Considering the lack of works on the subject in the five-volume collected works of Oleksandr P. Dovzhenko, edited by Yliya Solntseva in 1983–1985 [7], his lectures in 1932, 1936, 1949 and 1956 (by that time already published in the Russian Federation [5; 6]), the author during the study of the cinema-educational activity of Oleksandr Dovzhenko actively conducted the archival search in Ukrainian and Russian ar-

chives. The previously unknown lecture of the artist (carried out on December 18, 1932) has been found in the Central State Archives of Literature and Arts of Ukraine (CSALA Ukraine), as well as the archive writings of the lecture on December 17, 1932, published only in Russia [1; 2].

Upon the Kharkiv authorities criticizing from film *Ivan*, O. Dovzhenko was forced to go to Moscow to escape from the arrest, where, despite the danger, on December 17 and 18, 1932, he gave lectures to students at the Moscow State Institute of Cinematography (Higher State Institute of Cinematography, All-Union State Institute of Cinematography, now the All-Russian State University of Cinematography named after S. A. Gerasimov) “on two topics. The first—in general, my attitude to cinema, about my work and the second—about the work on the film *Ivan*” [11, p. 2–3].

Dovzhenko started his lecture with the speech that many experts did not consider important in the education of the filmmakers: about the organization of the process of film production, “I believe that the main disadvantages of our cinema are caused by the influence of infinite number of small causes. We primarily suffer from disorganization. I am deeply convinced that if a person works in a dusty room, then he definitely misses something in the results of his work. If dust does not disturb him at all, then it is even worse, because he already has dull feelings... That is what I want to start our conversation with...” [11, p. 2]

In these lectures the artist shared with students the thoughts about the work of the film director, the language, the national specificity of the sound in the cinema, and the perception of his films (“My films are like an apple tree—if well taken care of—you get five hundred apples, if treated badly badly—only ten would ripe» [11, p. 4]), an analysis of the own method (“I sometimes get up with some idea, when it seems extremely simple and understandable to me, I make it in three frames and I think that it is clear to everyone” [11, p. 4]); landscape and its significance in feature films (“We recognize that the landscape does not have the right to citizenship on the screen,

especially after critics spoke about such things, as aestheticism, biology, etc.” [11, p. 10]), some aspects of the recording of the choir, work with actors, psychology of creativity, application of the effect of statics.

In the lecture on December 17, 1932, O. Dovzhenko declared his method of working with the cameraman, “The more you can take from the cameraman, the better it is for you” [11, p. 17]. The artist considered the film director to be the true author of the film, so the cameraman should work in the ensemble with him, embodying the film director’s intentions. Oleksandr Dovzhenko did not diminish the role of the cameraman, gave him freedom of creative search, which made the best Ukrainian cameramen consider it an honor to work under his command. Still, Dovzhenko warned the novice film directors not to fall under the influence of experienced cameramen, because “the cameramen can be dangerous, especially if he is stronger than you, still a novice film director. Maybe it will help you in the beginning, but you should always remember that you do not need to fall under his influence. You have to express yourself, your feelings in the picture. Moreover, I assert that I do not see any damage in terms of moral for the cameraman. For me, in my activity, the cameraman is a purely technical figure” [11, p. 17].

The cameramen students were offended and in the next lecture Oleksandr Dovzhenko was forced to explain his vision of relationship between film director and cameraman more clearly, “I see the role of the cameraman reduced to an extremely simple one: he twists the handle and produces good technical product. I do not demand anything beyond that from him, moreover—it is quite a good idea for me” [11, p. 22–23].

Taking into account the sad reality of that time (the first arrest of his cameraman Danila Demutsky in 1932 [10, p. 14]), Oleksandr Dovzhenko was forced to tell half-truths to the students about the situation when Demutsky did not finish shooting *Ivan* and was replaced by Rapoport and partly by M. Gleader, “In most cases, these pictures do not differ from each other, because they are subdued to my artistic and technical requirements” [11, p. 23].

Oleksandr Dovzhenko taught students to think that the cameraman should not only be in tune with the director in the general ideas of the movie. The most important was the symbiosis of the film director and the cameraman in the smallest details, “I conquer their task, I think that the cameraman can then be a full-fledged, so to say your creative soulmate, if you, working with him, can be sure that he also understands absolutely all the details of your plan, not only in terms of ideas that you want to put into the picture, and also in terms of all details of the form. This is very difficult and happens rarely” [11, p. 23].

In an unpublished lecture on December 18, the artist described the creation of a picture as “a rather difficult process. [This] is ultimately a process of peculiar obsession for a rather long time, a pre-created picture in his imagination. That is why, if we exclude an accident, there is a casual effect, and if we consider the process deeply and seriously, then the actual implementation [picture] is the fitting of daily or weekly all that you do in the design of the world of living and dead. And the fitting of all this under the pre-created, a very clear picture of the picture. Therefore, you can not always be guided by the perfection of your right hand—the cameraman, which would allow you to rely on him and give him the portion of work he must do” [11, p. 24].

On the shooting site of *Ivan* O. Dovzhenko taught not only the young film directors, but also the young cameramen [11, p. 24–25].

Oleksandr Dovzhenko could not avoid two popular topics about which “some lively discussions took place at several sessions of the Union”: the preparatory period and “installation as a technical function.” “There is no such period that could be accurately formulated as preparatory. This could be only if the process was mechanized, as in [other] productions, if the attitude towards it was as mechanized as the processes in other industries... But since most film directors are looking for scripts for themselves, or there are co-writers, it is extremely difficult to establish where and when this preparatory period ends and at what stage of the preparatory period a truly preparatory thing is born” [11, p. 38].

O. Dovzhenko, as an artist who never stopped his creative search, could not put himself up with the idea that work should be done according to some schedule, “It is impossible to consider the mechanical division of the process, which is not ordinary production, but... is a process of some kind of synthesis of human emotions and intelligence. It is extremely difficult to mechanize the delimitation of these concepts” [11, p. 39].

As for the figurative style, Oleksandr Dovzhenko formulated his point of view on another topic for the students that caused heated debate at the time, “The notion of assembling, as a mechanical process, is false and illiterate. Mounting is not the upper floor in the house, it’s rather a hole in the elevator, it is an elevator through all floors, a lift. Here is what the installation is. It turns out, the installation <...> is the backbone, the core of the physical, on which the [whole] building is constructed; this is what connects all floors [for] the movement of air, light, all that you want” [11, p. 39].

O. Dovzhenko declared the necessity of some life experience for young film directors in 1932, that is two years before the introduction of the official cinema-pedagogical doctrine, which envisaged entry into the film director’s department only to university graduates and three-year experience of independent creative work, “Of course, it is necessary to study as professionals, but I think that’s not enough <...> I do not deny the need for this training. I just want to say that this is not enough. I would like you to expand your biography as soon as possible. Maybe you need to travel somewhere on a steamer, maybe you need to go to Kamchatka, to endure the creepy things. You may want to quit your job and go to another job, go to another production, and work in other areas. We need teeth, very firmly, in a military way, to feel the reality” [11, p. 36–37].

According to Oleksandr Dovzhenko, the main problem of the teachers of the artistic institutions (Moscow State Institutes of Cinematography and Kyiv State Institutes of Cinematography, where he sometimes lectured), was the impossibility to determine the level of students by the sum

of a certain amount of knowledge, as in ordinary institutes, “We are aware it’s often difficult to determine, who is responsible for us and why. And here the number of trained wordings does not always determine the suitability of a friend. You need to know how it was learned, on what it is built, on what grounds it rests” [11, p. 37].

A characteristic feature of the cinema-pedagogical method of Oleksandr Dovzhenko was the analysis of students’ work [11, p. 42] and introspection through which the artist instilled students the skill of figuratively solving each episode, with the involvement of the best examples of literature in this process, “I am asked, ‘Comrade Dovzhenko, why did you follow the picture of the death of a person in *Ivan*, [his] departure, by the picture of the train departing? You say the passing away, the departure of the train. Let us take ‘Taras Bulba’...” [11, p. 46]. Dovzhenko had already used the literary heritage of Mykola Gogol early in his film career.

Students of the Moscow State Institute of Cinematography wanted to be taught by O. Dovzhenko, as one of their notes stated, “Please, tell me, if a group of students wants to study your school, what kind of concrete assistance can this group receive?” [11, p. 46]. The master noted a paradoxical thing, “I studied from a bad film director. This, in my opinion, is the best method of learning. If you consider me to be a bad film director, then learn from me” [11, p. 46]. Dovzhenko believed that due to such training young film director will learn to notice the mistakes of others.

Disposed to self-examination, Dovzhenko was not afraid to share his thoughts and doubts with the students, “I thought that such a setting is unlikely: here I am, such a student, I really like the works Oleksandr Petrovich [Dovzhenko] does, I like his artistic [armament], I like his attitude to himself, to cinematography as [a branch], where not all [yet] has been done and [where] he himself did not do everything. So, if he wants to speak in some [unknown] speeches, talk about his own self-improvement, it satisfies me and I want to get involved in the study of his activities and [something] will come out. You

want to say whether your cultural heritage will do or not. Maybe it will or maybe it will not. It does not follow that I am such a unique individualist, not in this matter. You are our cultural heirs <...> I see this as an excuse for all my work” [11, p. 47].

The artist warned students that the transfer of experience is a very complicated process, “[However] if I consider you as my cultural heirs, to whom I have to convey [my creative] heritage, then I [at the same time] want to say that the legacy is simply not transmitted. Obviously, you will have to learn the experience not only of the best, but also of the worst. What is the most needed in this study? I think—the labels, let us stick less labels on their thoughts, less mechanical doctrinal attitude... you need to be courageous, you need to be honest, you need to carry your young ‘I’ well. If a person handles these moments correctly, they will never leave his creative [life]” [11, p. 47–48].

Dovzhenko implied to continue to lecture for the students of the Moscow State Institute of Cinematography, and therefore finished the lecture on December 18, 1932, with the following words, “I think that if I do not leave during these coming days, I will be here a couple of times, and then I will take two definite themes and we will process them” [11, p. 48].

One of these lectures should have been on the installation in cinema. “Installation in cinema should be considered in terms of the very first appearance of thought. I can not deal with this issue in detail now, I promise to dedicate a separate lecture to this case” [11, p. 40], or the cycle of lectures, given that “it will take six to eight hours” [11, p. 38].

Conclusions. Two little-known lectures of the genius Ukrainian film director Oleksandr Dovzhenko at the Moscow State Institute of Cinematography in 1932 were investigated and analyzed.

Summerizing all the above, it can be noted that the research tasks were fulfilled: the pedagogical activity of the Ukrainian feature films director Oleksandr Dovzhenko was studied; the reasons for conducting these lectures in the Moscow State Institute of Cinematography and not in the Kyiv State

Institute of Cinematography were given; the relations of his creative activity in domestic cinema as a director of feature films and educational efforts as a leading Ukrainian mentor of creative youth were mentioned.

Prospects for the further research. Despite the thorough scientific research of the December 1932 lectures, it can be noted that the perspectives for scientific research remain wide, since Dovzhenko's educational activity from the 1932 remains poorly researched.

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**Безручко О. В. Дві маловідомі лекції 1932 р. Олександра Довженка
в Московському державному інституті кінематографії**

Анотація. У цій статті досліджено та проаналізовано дві маловідомі лекції 1932 року геніального українського кінорежисера О. П. Довженка у Московському державному інституті кінематографії (Вищий державний інститут кінематографії, Всесоюзний державний інститут кінематографії, нині Всеросійський державний університет кінематографії ім. С. А. Герасимова); наведено причини проведення цих лекцій у Московському державному інституті кінематографії, а не в Київському державному інституті кінематографії (Всеукраїнський державний інститут кінематографії, Київський державний інститут кіноінженерів); згадано про взаємозв'язок його творчої діяльності у вітчизняному кінематографі як режисера художніх фільмів та педагогічної діяльності як провідного українського наставника творчої молоді.

Ключові слова: Олександр Петрович Довженко, Московський державний інститут кінематографії, історія кіно, кінорежисер, дві маловідомі лекції, 1932 рік.

**Безручко А. В. Две малоизвестные лекции 1932 г. Александра Довженко
в Московском государственном институте кинематографии**

Аннотация. В этой статье исследованы и проанализированы две малоизвестные лекции 1932 г. гениального украинского кинорежиссера А. П. Довженко в Московском государственном институте кинематографии (Высший государственный институт кинематографии, Всесоюзный государственный институт кинематографии, ныне Всероссийский государственный университет кинематографии им. С.А. Герасимова), приведены причины проведения этих лекций в Московском государственном институте кинематографии, а не в Киевском государственном институте кинематографии (Всеукраинский государственный институт кинематографии, Киевский государственный институт киноинженеров); упомянуто о взаимосвязи его творческой деятельности в отечественном кинематографе в качестве режиссера художественных фильмов и педагогической деятельности как ведущего украинского наставника творческой молодежи.

Ключевые слова: Александр Петрович Довженко, Московский государственный институт кинематографии, история кино, кинорежиссер, две малоизвестные лекции, 1932 год.