

Ondřej Sýkora: Inside the beginning of a film you can only be a child

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We were sitting on a break the other day during a FAMU film shoot, there were sets, lights, niggers, flashlights and props all over the place, lots of people running around, I was the actor, and nothing was happening. The empty concert we saw in front of us took us by surprise. **Elsa Aids**, with that childlike innocence that sometimes connects us, says she's always imagined someone making a film as some lonely fool running alone with a camera somewhere, looking or falling, and in those looks and falls the camera keeps running. We thought we could move quietly around the film. And we were surprised by another institution; I don't mean FAMU now, but the institutionalized cinematic expression.

Childish naivety has arisen again because we have already seen Ondřej Vavrečka's last film, *The Beginning and the Lion*. Without thinking of anything as avant-garde or experimental, I repeat the three words of that perfect sentence: emergence, new, beginning. *The Beginning and the Lion* (to be read also as "alef") is a complete film about the search for the beginning in the "land of the lion". After a previous larger project called *Teremin: body.me.sto.p. Bend: VOX*, in which wires of extended teremin antennae were spread across scenes following the routes of old constellation maps, collecting for the film primarily sounds but also images evoked by performative encounters with the inhabitants of a single city, the author's obsession with topology narrows down to "the beginning" as the central incantation, while expanding to the unconscious of an entire people (or rather "country"), whose fascination is of course primarily with its deformations. (Since the film was shot in 2008, it also reflects the events of the "eight" years: 1918, 1938, 1948, 1968.)

Oppressed by the system, predetermined by the zodiac, demonized by analogy, my brain is able - in an attempt to approach Vavrečko's film using some other terms - to invent at most something like a "time-lapse documentary" (because someone has already invented a time-lapse documentary). That's also why the fancy opening of this article limps at first: how can I compare the making of a feature film and a documentary. But the author himself, ever since he toyed with the term "fylm" as a child (repeating it and rejoicing in its unusual sound), has hinted that his work would be on a different plane of intersection with such a division...

As a child prodigy, I'll take a simple example that fascinates my eyes: light. While institutionalized film deals with how to light an actor's face to avoid "unseemly" deviation from the rules of the sun falling on human skin, Ondřej Vavrečka's film lets light penetrate the film material, the concrete image and the text of the image and the text of the text that contributes to the text of the film. The advantage is that the light is the film's language itself, so the filmmaker is free to do what he does: make a film. It is not at all about the connotations of making in the narrow sense of the word; Vavrečka is synonymous with energetic perpetua mobile (I kindly borrow this term from Jan Bělíček, who used it in A2 no. 16/2010), which moves the camera and makes images, at the same time in the second plan these images are already cut and pasted into the crystal, so that their other sides mirror the insides of other images; but the point of this is not to arrive at a Deleuzian multiform that is meant to fascinate, shock or hurt with its complexity, but to layer a translucent membrane that will thus offer the possibility of getting inside the film. While someone is speaking in a particular scene and it matters what they say, the image of another scene has long been visible on the membrane (the screen) and the sounds of something yet to be born are slowly announced. We are never outside (feature film, documentary).

The influential lectures of the philosopher **Miroslav Petříček** (now also in book form) brought us children at least the concept of "thinking in pictures", which is not primarily about either of the two words, but about what is between them. To this we can perhaps only add that Petříček's lectures

cannot now continue without "seeing" (preferably on both sides) Ondřej Vavrečka's film - if only for pleasure. As far as hurting him is concerned, ***The Beginning and the Lion*** can only be macho towards its actors, because everything they said, how they behaved, how they looked was important to him. Grappling with the constant yardstick of "Vachek's method" (all the more so since the Vavrečka-editor was involved in his opus ***Zavis - the prince of porn-folk influenced by Griffith's Intolerance***) has its quick conclusions: everything is different. When Grygar, Sádlo, Klaus, another mayor, the Forman of Gigabyte Fortress, Skovajsa and others speak in ***Beginning and the Lion***, it's a mapping of key motifs through the central minds of the local scene - and when the "find" succeeds, through the connection of their stretched threads - but the moment the central theme itself pulses from the second to the first plane and speaks itself, it leaves these bodies and heads as embodiments of the nation's conscience somewhere deep in the mineral layer of the other material.

Film can be natural, because, as **Caillois** says, our thinking and all art is nature, in a way - images grow out of us, like flowers out of a flower, or sublimate, like a stone being dewed. ***The Beginning and the Lion*** is a space of perception that institutionalised cinema cannot dream of, and also an incredible story that lasts two hours, structured by the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, always finding the beginning for us where we would not look for it.

"The teacher who was in the beginning gave one of the most beautiful things. And it is the connection of non-being and being in the creative four. It's a regularity that for the first time completes critical thinking in the realm of form, in the realm of space, in the realm of time. He was the first to articulate the connection of this idea to the creator himself. If you will, the big bang. That's the law of life. So let's try a little bit of that extension..."

http://www.diycore.net/sablony/recenze_film.php?id=27&nazev=uvnitr-filmoveho-pocatkumuzes-byt-jenom-ditetem-pocatek-a-lev-ondreje-vavrecky