

EETC 1987 : UK : Dir. David Larcher

David Larcher was born in London in 1942, studied Paleolithic Archaeology at Cambridge 1951-1961, and Film and TV at the Royal College of Art 1964-5. His films include MARE'S TAIL, 1969 (Cannes Critics' Choice 1971) and the 6 hour twin-screen MONKEY'S BIRTHDAY (Toulon Gold Medal 1975). This version of EETC - ten years in the making - was funded by C4 and shown on THE ELEVENTH HOUR in February. We print here an edited programme note by the filmmaker entitled "The narrative pre-text: deep as opposed to surface structure...The fromwhenceitcameness ...Why EETC?"

As a child I was very fond of my sister Elizabeth. Her role in my life was such that when it came to writing her name I couldn't decide whether it should be written with a z or an-s, both being correct. It seemed to me that if I spelt it either way, some part of the totality of her attributes would be lost to me. Not only that, but I realised that if I split this magic mistake (a superimposed s and Z, ie 8) I got two Greek E's, one reversed. But the E was the start of the name which had caused me the dilemma in the first place. It became associated with and eventually signified that special feeling that I got from my sister and her name. Naturally I later fell in love with someone called Elisabeth, and the film is an attempt to reconstitute that feeling, or rather re-member, re-trace, re-vive, etc...

The re/deconstruction of this feeling as reflected in the programme has its origin in the process of language (S/Z) and it seemed more than coincidental that whilst living in France I had recorded the first migrating flights of the cranes as they passed over the house each spring. These 'make letters as they fly', and one tradition has it that our alphabet was invented or discovered by Palamedes whilst watching their flight. Even more important, however, is the emotional frisson that their trummpeting, which invades the air, and their subsequent appearance, combine to produce. A true 'herald' in G. Graves records how Ramakrishna as a child fell in a dead faint from the experience. With the intention of making their sound and image a recurring theme in the film, I returned to the Dordogne to record their passing. Naturally they made a perfect, significant E.

The film assumed its present form through a process by which images came to be collected, conversations and sounds recorded, and the resulting accumulation of audiovisual material replayed and reworked time and again in an attempt to redefine it - to formulate some definitive expression of 'the trace'. A haphazard, eclectic collection of ephemera, shots, photographs, words, quotes, scraps of paper, snatches of music, linked not only by invested significations, but also through more universal implication. The paradoxical nature of recall becomes the focus of the narrative.

One wants to invest the still photograph with movement whilst wishing the filmed image would slow down. The tension created between these poles soon causes one to lose sight of the original E-motive stimulus and becomes its own justification. The patchwork processing throws up new generations, each with its own internal logic. One takes for granted that at some point the jigsaw is intact, and even should some of the pieces be missing, once the frame is determined these can be retrieved. But the determined frame (cliche) only retains its form within the wider framework of its medium, and continual transpositions alter its referents. No doubt greater fleas have tackled this problem of continuity, but what becomes of prime concern to the inveterate medium-hopper is the gaps, crackle, pops between the scenes/seams. Once aware of this she runs riot around the psycho-paths in search of the seenless edit. Push-button decalomania becomes the order of hte day. Video palimpsest...

Programme notes written and compiled by A.L. Rees and David Curtis

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