

Part One - From the time of literature to the culture of images

The end of the “enlightenment reason” — “Renoncer à Hegel” revisited — One world, too many worlds — The end of the “representational” era — The cybernetics diagnosis

Short Panorama

Most of the authors concerned with the analysis of the cultural evolution in Europe agree that the system of thinking which was established from the 18 Century onwards started to disappear after the First World War. In that sense the whole 20 Century could be considered as a transition period in the sense that all Models of thinking were struggling to face the changing situation in culture and in the evolution of society. One of the ‘escape doors’ to avoid this problem was to return to a sort of historicism, something that P. Ricoeur has indicated as ‘Renoncer a Hegel’.

This change towards ‘something which is not yet very clear’ could be better expressed if we observe the role literature was occupied during the 19th Century and what the situation is nowadays. Moreover, analyzing which element within the European culture replaced the role literature was playing could be very indicative of the condition of what we call (still!) literature today.

The assumption that we are living in an ordinary present that is constituted by many senses of reality and by many ways to understand the totality that we still call ‘world’, created a big analytical problem in the sense that there are no longer many concepts that can cope with universal semantic meanings. Things seem to be meaningless if they are not local or immediate.

The idea that we can separate men from world and feelings from objective knowledge has been irreversibly damaged. The immediate consequence is that we need to assume a daily

reality in which experience, knowledge, learning and understanding are entangled and it is difficult to establish any frontline or borderline parameters.

Target

The purpose of this first unit is to give the possibility to situate a historical and conceptual context for the specific discussion about space and cinematography.

Key Questions

What are the characteristics of the so-called enlightenment?

In what sense is it understood that this 'enlightenment' has recently changed?

What is the role of images (or the visual) in this change?

How could one connect the end of the so-called 'enlightenment reason' and the end of the explanations and argumentations grounded in the assumption that Art is a representational tool?

Apart from the entanglement between man and machine, from the lecture and the reading suggested, what other sense of 'cybernetics' can you think of?

If we assume for a moment that we have many worlds and not one World (or Nature) anymore, how do you think cinema can make a contribution to the understanding of the present situation?