

Part Three - The problem of the construction of the present

Bergson's *Matière et mémoire* — The interpretation of Gilles Deleuze — The present as spatial perspective — Virilio's description

Short Panorama

The contemporary problem we face is not only due, as we already see, to an incommensurability between perception and knowledge, but also due to the consideration of the present as a flow, as a sort of 'pure becoming' that cannot be named directly. The main philosophical schools of the 20th Century have found it difficult to consider the present as something acknowledgeable, therefore, it is clear that there is a conflict between the perception of the present (or what is happening) and the use of the language as a tool to achieve knowledge, understanding and communication.

As Jean Baudrillard points out, the 'mediatical reality' of our present does not require from us any intervention, quite the contrary, it supposes a mute observer. And this indeed is one of the problems we need to face: we have passed from a sense of public space grounded in monuments and institutions to another more slippery space dominated by the media.

Gilles Deleuze, following Henri Bergson's ideas, made a proposal of understanding of the present as sort of multiple convivial forms of times, in which past, present and future get entangled in the same frame of time. And this is why, even against Deleuze's views, an approach grounded in space is fundamental to face this 'timing multiplicity'. Paul Ricoeur's consideration of present as an entanglement of 'present of the past', 'present of the present' and 'present of the future' is also an attempt to address the same problem.

Finally, Paul Virilio is probably the author that went further away in exploring this 'spatial perspective'. His main hypothesis is that our knowledge and understanding is determined by different forms of *architectures*, in physical but also in no material ways.

Target

The purpose of this third lecture is to see and understand why a great number of authors ground their views in a notion of 'space' instead of the more classical idea of time.

Key Questions

Do you believe that our visual culture pushes us in the direction of time or space?
Why?

Virilio's perspective is that cinema and war environments are part of the same equation and he therefore suggests that we incorporated to our 'peace time' a great number of elements from the war period (reason for which we do no longer have 'world wars'). Do you agree? Why? Why not?

Virilio also exposes the hypothesis that the idea of 'ground' became a non material one (Baudrillard and Auge, explore similar arguments), therefore stating that our notion of 'territory' has radically changed and that 'geography' became a cinematographical discipline. Can you discuss and briefly explain this point?

The authors who consider the idea of present as something singular and those who believe the present is inevitably multiple seem to respond to two completely different approaches. Can you describe each one?

Special Task

Search the meaning of the Latin expressions motus and mora and try to fit them within the problem of the present we are discussing in relation with the contemporary culture.