

Transcript of Part Eight (by Andy Elliot, 2007)

What I would like to discuss today is something that has started to be discussed only recently, which is that when cinema arrives at such a development, we are looking at a sort of *self-referential development*. Remember I have said before that cinema has been affected for so long in the sense that people who were making cinema wanted to establish cinema as an art; now that is over, and cinema is in a well-established domain, and what happens is that cinema becomes even more important, because a high degree of autonomy becomes self-referential. This idea of cinema within the cinema has appeared much stronger within the last 20 years, but is growing and growing, and has consequence not only at the level of the plot (having a reference to a film inside a film), but also has a consequence on a more general level, not just at the level of cinema but at the level of cinematography. So *La littérature selon le cinéma* (this is the first point that I have indicated), or *Literature According to the Cinema* is an expression which I have used to try to convey this change. You will remember that when we discuss the idea of an author applied to film, basically it was that some people pick up the idea of an author from literature and make that applicable to cinema. What happens now is that cinema reverses this situation, and now it is cinema which is determining the nature of literature. There are plenty of people, for example, who are writing for the cinema, you have writers who are including more and more images to ensure that the book is going to have a cinematographic version, and so on. So this process in which literature was the tool to analyse cinema has been reversed to another, in which cinema is affecting the way in which people are creating literature. This is an example of how important cinema (cinematography) has become in our culture.

The other part that I would like to discuss is the idea of cinema after the TV period.

Well, it is interesting if you look at how, in the 20th century, cinema and TV have developed more or less in parallel. It is interesting because I believe in their relationships they were more or less autonomous up until the 50s, but after that they became more and more entangled. In my view there are two periods in this entanglement: (i) the plot period, and (ii) the technique period. The plot period is very simple; you have the first part in which for films the TV was not present, both because it literally wasn't there, but also because it was not discussed in film. And you have a second period in which the TV was 'born' in film; the TV came up as an object, as a part of the people, and it started to interact with the film. I think this second period is interesting because it presented a challenge to the directors to see how, from the perspective of one medium, they can see that of another, and that remains an interesting challenge. The second period, the 'technique' period is one in which you have two possibilities: the first is when the people making films were not aware of the ways in which TV was being made, or how those who were producing TV were working. In this second period things completely changed, because the people who were making cinema were aware both technologically and methodologically speaking of how TV was working; it is then that some authors began to incorporate into film some of the techniques, tools and methodology used in TV, which also works in the opposite direction. However, the impact of film on TV is less important because TV has a different system, both in terms of commercial restrictions and technical requirements which are completely different to cinema, therefore these limitations prevented TV from being too radically affected by other media. We cannot say the same thing about the cinema, though, as I think to some extent that the influence of TV has been quite important in the way in which films have been made over the last 15-20 years.

As regards the idea of cinema after the cinema: the meaning of this is basically that when cinema has been established as an art, when it became a dominant element in our culture as we are suggesting here, cinema became cinematography, and this is what we are suggesting. The idea of cinema after the cinema is this; the situation in which we are no longer talking only about 'cinema' or 'a film'. Nowadays when we place a particular film, we start from a process in which ideas of cinematography, or mechanisms connected with cinematic concepts take part in this process. So the idea that films are a sort of single artistic manifestation, the idea that we can see or

perceive them as such completely disappeared, because films are now no longer *innocent*, they are no longer one manifestation among others; they are *the* manifestation of art in our society. So cinema is the centre, or if you prefer the gravitational centre of our society, because our society is now grounded in images (cinematography). So 'the cinema after the cinema' is how we can approach the idea of cinema after it has been established as the dominant area in terms of imagination, or in terms of artistic conceptions in our society?

So that is the question. There are several perspectives, there are some who have hypotheses asserting that this tendency, this direction of cinema is going to increase even more, and there are others with a more pessimistic perspective, those who analyse cinema from the market point of view as an element of domination of society. There are plenty of bibliographies to look at if you like. What is important is that 'cinema after cinema' implies that we are talking nowadays about a cinema not in the simple, traditional way, but when we say cinema we imply cinematography.

As regards the selected reading, well, I have picked up from what I believe is an interesting book, *The Reconfigured Eye*, one article which is an account of this situation of how we can see cinema. I have also selected several articles from Jean Baudrillard, from one of his books - chapters one and two, of which I believe there is an English translation. And a classic from constructivism which I think is particularly pertinent, from Varela, "First person Methodologies: What, Why, How?", which combines this knowledge of living in an image-orientated society with this idea that perspective disappears to a different sort of vision. Then *Science if Fiction: The Films of Jean Painlavé*, who was a director, author and documentary maker, a key figure to understand the connection between science and cinema. This book is dedicated to him, and there are several very interesting writers. From an exhibition called *Future Cinema*, I have also selected what I think is very interesting in the way that this future cinema was trying to explore the idea that if we can no longer make this distinction between the idea of society and the idea of cinema, then what will the future bring? "The Stimulating Misunderstanding" is an article which looks at the world and the images which connect with the idea of images in the the 20th century. Finally, there is the Martin Jay book, Chapter 7, which gives a nice overall view of the whole situation. For all the rest you can contact me and we can discuss it.

Recommend Reading

William J. Mitchell, 'How to do things with pictures' in William J. Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye. Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 191-224.

Suggested Reading

Jean Baudrillard, *Le Pacte de lucidité ou l'intelligence du Mal* (Paris: Galilée, 2004), Chapters 1 and 2.

F. Varela/J. Shear, 'First-person Methodologies: What, Why, How ?' in Francisco Varela/Jonathan Shear (eds.), *The View from Within. First-person approaches to the study of consciousness* (Bowling Green: Imprint Academic, 2000), pp. 1-14.

A. Masaki Bellows *et al.* (eds.), *Science if Fiction. The Films of Jean Painlavé* (Cambridge, Mass.: Brico Press, 2000), see all writings from Painlavé, pp. 148-169.

Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Future Cinema. The Cinematic Imaginary after Film* (ZKM | Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe/The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2002).

Sean Cubitt, *The Cinema Effect* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004).

Erik Slagter, 'The Stimulating Misunderstanding' in Jan Brand *et al.* (eds.), *The Words and the Images. Text and Image in the Art of the Twentieth Century* (Utrecht: Central Museum, 1991), pp. 97-104.

Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1994), Chapter Seven.