

Lectures CS5 2019/2020

MICHAELMAS (weeks 1, 3, 5, 7)

Week 1 (**Body Politic**) (Sam Goff)

'Cinema and Biopolitics: The Soviet Case'

The aim of this lecture is to explore cinema's coincidence with modern political practices that are centered on managing the life and bodily capacities of the human being. How might cinema's structuring of embodied experience (sense perception, affect, emotion) relate to political techniques of disciplining and regulating the body? The lecture will explore this question with reference to the work of Soviet filmmakers and their attempt to bring about the physical and psychical 'remaking' of the spectator.

Suggested reading/viewing

Primary viewing:

Dziga Vertov, *Three Songs about Lenin* (1934) (available with English subtitles here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeWK5iRp0BE>)

Sergei Eisenstein, *Strike* (1924) (available with English subtitles here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLiNKaUp0AA>)

Required Secondary Reading list:

Emma Widdis, 'Socialist Senses: Film and the Creation of Soviet Subjectivity', *Slavic Review*, 71.3 (2012), pp. 590-618.

Anna Toropova, 'An Inexpiable Debt: Stalinist Cinema, Biopolitics, and the Discourse of Happiness', *Russian Review*, 74 (2015), 665-83

Michel Foucault, 'The Right of Death and Power over Life', in *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), pp. 133-60 (p. 142)

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Indiana University Press, 1984)

Pierre Bourdieu, 'Belief and the Body'. Chapter 9 of *The Body: A Reader*. Ed.

Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco (Routledge, 2005).

Week 3 (**Nudity and Costume**) (Nick White)

This lecture is subtitled Nudity and Nakedness, Narrative and Painting; and the notion of dressing and undressing is going to be at the heart of our analysis of the ways in which the body, and in particular the female body, has been inscribed in European art and literature, not least in its painting and its fiction. Anyone who has ever walked around the great art galleries of Europe's capital cities will realise that it is in the depiction of the

body beautiful that much art has asserted its own aesthetic prowess. The aim of this lecture is to examine what is at stake in the cherishing of the nude in European art, and why there seems to be such an investment in the value of what is known metaphorically, and not so metaphorically, as the 'naked truth'. To do this we will look at a habitually celebrated time and place in European art, namely late C19 France, a time and a place when the traditional status of the nude comes under severe cultural pressure. One key site of this cultural pressure is the interrelationship between painting and narrative. On the one hand, the narrative possibilities of the nude are articulated in the process of dressing and undressing foregrounded in more and more paintings of the period, not least in and around Impressionism. On the other hand, it can be argued that the unfurling of narrative itself can best be understood in terms of the revelation of bodily truths, not least in the fetishisation of the feminine to be found in the mimetic fiction of the 19th century in realism and that form of hyperrealism known as naturalism.

Suggested reading

Roland Barthes, *Le plaisir du texte* (Paris: Seuil, 1973); *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York : Hill and Wang, 1975)

Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), esp. chapter 5, 'Nana at Last Unveil'd? Problems of the Modern Nude', & pp. 278-83

Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (Penguin, 1993)

John Harvey, *Men in Black*, (university of Chicago, 1995)

Kaja Silverman, 'Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse', in *Studies in Entertainment. Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, edited by Tania Modleski. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana UP 1981, pp. 139-152

Mario Perniola, 'Between clothing and nudity', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, ed. M. Feher (1989)

Griselda Pollock, 'Nude Bodies: Displacing the Boundaries between Art and Pornography', in *The Body*, ed. S. Sweeney and I. Hodder (2002)

Relevant **primary reading** includes:

Chapters 1 (Nana on stage) & 7 (the 'mouche d'or' in front of the mirror) of Emile Zola, *Nana* [1880], available in numerous modern French editions (e.g. in volume 2 of the Gallimard-Pléiade *Rougon-Macquart* or singly in paperback by Folio or Garnier-Flammarion) and in English (by Oxford University Press or Penguin).

Rimbaud's poem, 'Vénus anadyomène' (in most French and English editions, including *Poésies. Une saison en enfer. Illuminations* (Paris, Gallimard, 1984), pp.41-42

J.-K. Huysmans, *A Rebours* [1884] (Paris: Folio, 1977), trans. by Margaret Mauldon as *Against Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. chapter 5; and his art criticism in *L'art moderne* [1883] (Farnborough: Gregg, 1969), reprinted in his *Oeuvres*

complètes, vol. 6 (Paris: Crès, 1928-34; Genève: Slatkine, 1972); and *Certains* [1889] (Farnborough: Gregg, 1970); reprinted in his *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 10.

Week 5 (**Queer Bodies**) (Stuart Davis)

This lecture explores the homosexual body as it was theorized and constructed in early twentieth century narrative. After attending to the methods by which the sexualised body has been medicalized and categorized, I will draw attention to the power of the homosexual body as a threat to social order and to individual sovereignty. Whilst medical discourse may objectify the homosexual body in ways which attempt to neutralize its potential disruptive qualities, representations of the homosexual in early twentieth century narrative foreground the individual traumas of a same-sex desire that is figured as shameful and diseased. The importance of the constructing gaze and performance for others will be explored in discussion of Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* (1912) and Alfonso Hernández Catá's *El ángel de Sodoma* (1928).

Suggested reading

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'Introduction: Axiomatic' *Epistemology of the Closet* (London: Penguin, 1990)

Judith Butler 'Introduction' *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993).

Week 7 (**Violence**) (Ian James)

The Representation of Violence and the Violence of Representation

This lecture will offer a comparative perspective on the way violence has been treated across a range of twentieth-century literary contexts. Violence in the texts and contexts explored here involves not just the symbolic representation of violent acts but also, and more importantly, a questioning of the violence of symbolic representation itself and varied attempts to do violence to representational form. Interrogating the manner in which symbolic or ideological violence may always precede any specific instance of empirical violence this lecture will look at surrealist and surrealist influenced texts (André Breton and Aimé Césaire) and then further explore this problematic in relation texts written in the later twentieth century (by Elfrida Jelinek and Toni Morrison).

Suggested reading/viewing

André Breton, *Manifestes du surréalisme* (Paris: Gallimard/Folio), 'Union libre' (text available online and on moodle)
Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: Éditions Présence Africaine, 1983); *Notebook of a Return to my Native Land* (Hexham: Bloodaxe, 1995)
Elfriede Jelinek, *Die Klavierspielerin* (Rowohlt, 1983); *The Piano Teacher* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988)
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (London: Vintage, 2007)

LENT (weeks 1, 3, 5)

Week 1 (**Contagion**) (Martin Crowley)

Contagious Bodies

This lecture considers the use of the figure of contagion as a way of conceptualizing communication. In medical and everyday usage, we talk readily of 'communicating' a disease; but to turn this association around, to suggest that verbal or artistic communication be thought along the lines of infection, is to risk lapsing into nonsense: by definition, such communication implies distance and mediation, not contact or immediacy. Avant-garde artists and writers, mostly working from unorthodox versions of Modernism, have consistently and wilfully run this risk, however, proposing that their works and those of others be valued precisely for their ability to function in a manner analogous to contagious disease: namely, to produce in the viewer or reader an immediate bodily response. Specific attention will be paid to the thought of Georges Bataille and Antonin Artaud; by way of illustration, works discussed will include the films of Catherine Breillat, as well as examples of performance and body art by such as Stelarc, Jean-Jacques Lebel, and COUM.

Suggested reading/viewing

- *Georges Bataille, "Sur Nietzsche", in *Œuvres complètes*, VI (trans.: *On Nietzsche*, available in UL).
- *Antonin Artaud, "Le théâtre et la peste", in *Le Théâtre et son double* (trans. *The Theatre and its Double*, available in UL).
- *Any of the films of Catherine Breillat. The MML library now has many of Breillat's films including *Romance* and *Anatomie de l'enfer*. NB: health warning: these films are sexually explicit. No explicit material will be used in the lecture.

Week 3 (**Hysteria**) (Nicholas White)

This lecture will focus on the relationship between medicine and fiction in the nineteenth century, exploring the ways in which Freud's model of talking and listening to hysterical patients at the end of the century is preceded by an essentially visual mode of diagnosis which runs parallel with the visual logic of narrative in classic fiction. This pre-Freudian

story largely takes place in France and the physician Charcot will be central to this tale. We shall ask to what extent the association of hysteria largely with female patients was replicated and/or interrogated in such fiction, and whether the Modernist turn around the 19th/20th centuries allows, in texts such as *The Yellow Wallpaper*, for a deconstruction of such a gendered diagnosis.

Suggested reading

Janet Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies: Narratives of Hysteria in Nineteenth-century France* (Cornell UP, 1994)

Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), esp. chapter 8, 'Talking Bodies, Delicate Vessels'

Georges Didi-Hubermann, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière* (2004)

Evelyn Ender, *Sexing the Mind: Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Hysteria* (Cornell UP, 1995)

Jan Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (U of Chicago P, 1987)

Jann Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (Columbia U.P., 1994)

Elaine Showalter, 'On Hysterical Narrative', *Narrative*, 1.1(1993), 25-35

Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady* (Panthon, 1985)

Week 5 (**Dreams**) (Ian James)

The Dream Aesthetic

This lecture examines the function of dreams and their implications for the body in Sigmund Freud's *Traumdeutung* (*The Interpretation of Dreams*), in surrealist writing and film, most notably Dali and Bunuel's *Un Chien andalou*. While introducing major aspects of Freud's theory, it addresses in particular the cross-currents and differences between psychoanalytic, literary and filmic dreams. When Freud through the exploration of dreams attempted to find 'the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind', European avant-garde writers and modernists engaged with the uncertain status of these activities between the rational and the irrational. In this context something like a 'dream aesthetic' can be discerned in writing, film and art in the wake of Freud. When looked at in comparison, what emerges in Freud's, and other works treated here is a shared interest in the psychosexual genealogy of desire, and in the realm of the physical as an area that is as much of the body as of the mind.

Suggested reading/viewing

Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung, Gesammelte Werke* vol. 2/3 (*The Interpretation of Dreams* – available in Pelican Freud Library or World's Classics series), section II ('The Method of Interpreting Dreams'). Andre Breton, *Nadja, Manifestes du surréalisme*. Salvador Dali, Luis Bunuel, *Un Chien andalou*.

