

Spectacle
to be created...
Lecturer: Miriam

1. The Triumph of the Will (1935)

found modernism to have also shaped the world war. The revolution of the camera...
Diderot and his 17 books were themselves...
the Nazis... they were...
the Nazis... they were...
the Nazis... they were...

society of spectacle (1968)

17. Nazis, not a nation...
symbolized them in 1935...
the Nazis... they were...
the Nazis... they were...

2. Chaplin's "Separation Paradox"

the film... the Nazis...
the Nazis... they were...
the Nazis... they were...

3. The Nazi Party Convention

The Nazi Party...
the Nazis... they were...
the Nazis... they were...

4. The Nazi Party Convention

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media & spectacle

The Triumph of the Will (1935)

Leni Riefenstahl (1902-2003); after WWII, she worked mainly in the field of photography

the documentary records a Nazi rally in Nuremberg in 1934; 'propaganda documentary'

Triumph of the Will, like Birth of a Nation, embodies an overwhelming contradiction: it is cinematically dazzling and ideologically vicious.

(Richard Meran Ransam, Filmguide to Triumph of the Will, Indiana University Press, 1975) PP 17-18.

ToW offers an extreme example in which media images are used to instill and affirm political beliefs in its audience; and for producing a national ideology of Nazism. -Sturken & Cartwright: p258

icon, ideology (propoganda); discourse; power gaze & practices of looking

#1

pure history VS spectacle

Leni Riefenstahl when interviewed by Cahiers du Cinema in September, 1965

There she denied that any of her work was propaganda, insisting it was cinema verite. "Not a single scene is staged," "Everything is genuine. And there is no tendentious commentary for the simple reason that there is no commentary at all. It is history—pure history."

In her book published in 1935, Riefenstahl had told the truth. The Nuremberg Rally "was planned not only as a spectacular mass meeting—but as a spectacular propaganda film... The ceremonies and precise plans of the parades, marches, processions, the architecture of the halls and stadium were designed for the convenience of the cameras."

How the Party convention was staged was determined by the decision to produce Triumph of the Will. The event, instead of being an end in itself, served as the set of a film which was then to assume the character of an authentic documentary...In Triumph of the Will, the document (the image) is no longer simply the record of reality; "reality" has been constructed to serve the image.

Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," New York Review of Books, 1975

In ToW, the "all consuming power of the spectacle" is carefully planned and constructed. Whereas information emerged during the era of realism as a national industry that was used to forge a strong collective ideology, in this sense, the practice of looking collectively in a public space at the same spectacle was an important aspect of the forging of a mass ideology. S. L. p258

#2

#2: "There is a specific and identifiable focus for each image—Hitler himself. Variations are established in a variety of ways—scale and distance, angle, gesture and so on, each measured against the fact of Hitler's presence." (Neale p8)

#1: "their unity is constituted precisely out of the absence of Hitler...each shot is both breath taking and eye catching"

seemingly, the structure of the film resembles the classicism as featured in Hollywood fiction film, facilitated by repetition and difference

"what counts is not the instance of looking of observation, but rather as fascinated gaze...the concern...is to institute an oscillating play between vision and the visible in order to address scopopic drive exclusively; to lure the gaze of the spectator and fill that gaze with plenitude of the image itself" (Neale p85)

"The film is composed strikingly dramatic compositions in which Hitler is featured as both the master eye that takes in all of the populace assembled and the full scope of the city, and the single object that rivets the gaze of the vast crowds assembled before him" -Sturken & Cartwright

the Olympics as Spectacle



Spectacle

to be continued...

Lecturer: Ma Ran

SPECTACLE

: a very impressive show

: something that attracts attention because it is very unusual or very shocking

the Triumph of the Will
(1935)

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ToW offers an extreme example in which media images are used to instill and affirm political beliefs in its audience; and for producing a national ideology of Nazism.
--Sturken & Cartwright p238



icon; ideology (propoganda); discourse; power

gaze & practices of looking

discursive analysis (analysis of the discourse)

icon; ideology (propoganda); discourse; pov

gaze & practices of looking

#2 :

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[pure history VS spectacle]

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Guy Debord &
Situationist International

Rapid modernization in France after the second world war ; the introduction of the consumer society in the 1950s

Debord and his friends were themselves initially part of a French avant garde artist milieu that was shaped by Dada, surrealism, lettrism, and other attempts to merge art and politics

the Situationists focused on **the city** and **everyday life**, supplementing the Marxian emphasis on class struggle with a project of cultural revolution and the transformation of everyday life

society of spectacle (1967)

221 theses, into 9 chapters;

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same-titled film in 1973, in black and white; uses found footage from feature films such as

The Battleship Potemkin, October, Chapaev, The New Babylon, The Shanghai Gesture, For Whom the Bell Tolls, Rio Grande, They Died with Their Boots On, Johnny Guitar, and Mr. Arkadin, as well as other Soviet films.

Chapter 1 “Separation Perfected”

the shift from 19th century competitive capitalism, organized around production, to a later form of capitalism organized around consumption, media, information, and technology;

gradual bureaucratization, rationalization, and commodification of social life

“In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all life presents as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation.” (#1)



“The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images.” (#4)

...reality rises up within the spectacle, and the spectacle is real. This reciprocal alienation is the essence and the support of the existing society.

(#8)

the spectacle redefines the relation between direct experience and the mediated representations in modern society; it is much more than something at which we passively gaze, and it increasingly defines our perception of life itself, and the way we relate to others.

By displaying life, the spectacle negates them by reducing them to mere appearance (being--having--appearing). And the appearance could be even further turned into commodity.



In this society, individuals consume a world fabricated by others rather than producing one of their own.

The spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible. It says nothing more than “that which appears is good, that which is good appears. The attitude which it demands in principle is passive acceptance which in fact it already obtained by its manner of appearing without reply, by its monopoly of appearance. (#12)

“What binds the spectators together is no more than an irreversible relation at the very center which maintains their isolation. The spectacle reunites the separate, but reunites it as separate” (#29)

in passively consuming spectacles, one is separated from actively producing one's life. Capitalist society separates workers from the product of their labor, art from life, and spheres of production from consumption, which involve spectators passively observing the products of social life

“Spectacle” is a complex term which “unifies and explains a great diversity of apparent phenomena” (#10).

as a metaphor for society--we live in an ongoing and constant spectacle;

a media and consumer society, organized around the consumption of images, commodities, and spectacles; **spectacle as a world vision** that forges a social relationship among people in which images and practices of gazing are central.

and practices of gazing are central.

the concept also refers to the vast institutional and technical apparatus of contemporary capitalism, to all the means and methods power employs, outside of direct force, to relegate subjects passive to societal manipulation and to obscure the nature and effects of capitalism's power and deprivations.

"Debord and the Postmodern Turn: New Stages of the Spectacle", by Steven Best and Douglas Kellner

virtual world: computer games, virtual environments (simulacra), social networks and simulated life---behind which there is not "there" there

in ToW, the "all-consuming power of the spectacle" is carefully planned and constructed; whereas television emerged during the era of Nazism as a nationalized industry that was used to forge a strong collective ideology. In this sense, the practice of looking collectively in a public space at the same spectacle was an important experience in the forging of a mass ideology.

S & C p238