Thinking Space in Cinema and Literature

International Colloquium
March 7-9 2019

New York University
Department of French Literature, Thought and Culture
&
Université Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle
Département cinéma et audiovisuel, IRCAV

La Maison Française
16 Washington Mews
10003 New York
Thinking Space in Cinema and Literature

Penser l’espace dans le cinéma et la littérature

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Co-sponsored by:

New York University
(Department of French Literature, Thought and Culture)

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Université Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle
(Département cinéma et audiovisuel, IRCAV)

With the participation of:

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Université Paris VII Denis-Diderot (CERILAC)

Co-organizers:

Ludovic Cortade (NYU)

&

Guillaume Soulez (Université Sorbonne-Nouvelle-Paris 3)

Acknowledgements (by alphabetical order):

In the wake of Michel Collot’s concept of “literary geography,” we would like to explore the problematics of space by distinguishing three approaches.

1) **The “geography” of literary and cinematic creation** examines the spatial context in which works are produced from a historical, social and cultural point of view. This perspective would be constituted by a literary-critical approach typified by Madame de Staël, Michelet and Taine. In the manner of Michel de Certeau’s “operation of marking out boundaries” (*bornage*) cinema and literature, as well as the critical discourses of which they are the object, form a cadastral map that differentiates works on the basis of a geopolitics of nations, of social groups (“art-house” and “popular” cinema), and of genres and media (critical discourses on the “purity” of the literary work and its “betrayal” by the film adaptation). Placing the emphasis on the (often de-hierarchized) circulation of images and sounds, visual culture contributes to an interrogation of these boundaries. Opposed to this “geographic” approach to literature and cinema would be those critical approaches that seek to go beyond its geo-politics, from the perspective of the genesis of works as well as their reception of its geo-politics, from the perspective of the genesis of works as well as their reception. This could take the form of a universalist hypothesis (Bazin), deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari), a dialogic approach (Bakhtin), an “archipelagic thinking” (Glissant), or of cultural hybridity that undermines the social determinisms and cultural essentialization that result from the Nation-State paradigm (Stam/Shoat).

2) **Geocriticism** explores spatial narratives as the result of perception and the substance of an imaginary. Through the intervention of the perspective of subjectivity, any space becomes a “lived space” (Lynch, Frémont). Geocriticism analyzes the imaginary formed by spatial images that emerge in texts (Bachelard, Mitterand, Collot) and films (Lefebvre, Gardies, Harper/Rayner). In continuity with our first conference and previous works, cinema and literature thus constitute an ecosystem of spatial images and narratives made of chiastic borrowings and exchanges: literature is rife with “pre-cinematisms” (Bourget/Nacache, Soulez/Jullier) and cinema borrows literary *topoi* such as the Romantic “homme-paysage” or the Baudelairian aesthetic of shock. Opposed to this spatial imaginary in literature and film would be those aesthetics of ambiguity that weaken traditional semiotic codings of spaces henceforth “without quality” (the Deuleuzian Time-Image, aesthetics of emptiness, *détournements*, iconoclastic practices).

3) **Geopoetics** would study the relations between space, forms and genres, both literary and cinematic. The semiotic perspective of texts (Genette) takes on spatial modalities: typography and the materiality of the book considered as object; spectatorship and modalities of the apparatus (Barthes, Metz, Baudry); stylistic figures made possible by the gap between apparent signified and the real signified; effects of symmetry and montage, both lexical and perspectival; intertextual play; spatial and visual dimensions inscribed within narratives (Starobinski, Rouset, Dällenbach, Metz). We can subsequently understand space as a structure of representation. The study of literary and cinematic morphology from the geopoetic point of view allows one to apprehend the intersection of the readable, the visible and the degree of trust that the reader or spectator places in the succession of words and images. Geopoetics further permits one to explore the spatial dimension of trust and *fiducia* (Valéry) through the relationship that it maintains with visual apparatuses and modes of perception (absorption, reflexivity, other modes of attention), made contemporary particularly by the concept of “visual culture” considered as a heuristic field.

*Papers are delivered in English and French.*
Thursday March 7

8:45am: *Welcome by Organizers* : Ludovic Cortade (NYU), Guillaume Soulez (Université Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle).

9:00-11:00am: *Scales and Passages*
Eugène Nicole (NYU) : « Le cinéma de L’Oeuvre des Mers. »
Mathias Kusnierz (Université Paris VII Denis-Diderot – CERILAC) : « Passages de la poésie et du cinéma. Pour une perspective géomédiatique. »
Derek Schilling (Johns Hopkins University): « One Up, One Down : Narrativity and Scalar Value. »

11:00am : Break

11:30am-1:00pm : *In-Between Spaces*
Jeanne Etelain (NYU) : « In the Zone: Does Space Matter? »
Marc Cerisuelo (Université Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée): « La ville intermédiaire. Nantes, Julien Gracq et Jacques Demy. »

1:00 pm: Break

2:30-4:00pm : *Outer Spaces and the Fantastic*
Emmanuelle André (Université Paris VII Denis-Diderot – CERILAC): « Ecrire au futur et filmer au passé : la lune à proximité. »

4:00pm: Break

4:30-6:00pm : *Places in Contemporary French Poetry*
Michel Collot (Université Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle): « Le parti-pris des lieux dans la poésie française contemporaine. »

Communication suivie d’une lecture par l’auteur d’un choix de poésies de Michel Collot.

Friday March 8

9:30-11:00am : *(Un) Documenting Space and Time*
Antje Ziethen (University of Kansas): « Geographic Metafiction : Parodying the Spatial Archive in Speculative Literature and Film. »
Carlos Tello (Université Paris VII Denis-Diderot): « La carte n’est pas le territoire. L’espace dans deux fictions post-humanistes : le film Le Monde sur le fil [Welt am Draht] de R. W. Fassbinder et le roman La Possibilité d’une île de Michel Houellebecq. »

11:00am: Break

11:30am- 1:00pm: *Ethics and Memory in Essays and Documentary*
Ludovic Cortade (NYU): « Une stratigraphie stellaire : Patricio Guzmán et Pablo Neruda. »
Robert Harvey (SUNY Stony Brook): « Spatial Poetry of Documentary: For a Poetics of Ethics. »
1:00pm : Break

2:30-4:30pm : Globalization and (De)territorialization

Saturday March 9

9:00-10:30am : Archipel et surface
Nicolas Estournel (NYU) : « Space and Surface in Ousmane Sembène’s La Noire de... »
Aurélie Chatton (Kalamazoo College): « Les œuvres archipéliques, entre cinéma et littérature : le cas Wajdi Mouawad. »

10:30am : Break

11:00am-12:30pm : Frame, Space, Apparatus
Barbara Laborde (Université Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle): « Jarry - Averty: sortir des cadres.»
Guillaume Soulez (Université Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle): « Site, dispositif, lieu : les espaces d'expérience du lecteur et du spectateur. »

12:30pm : End of the colloquium.