

"The Re-presentation of the Body of Knowledge: Successful Holocaust Films and Their Doubles" by Pier Marton, Washington University in St. Louis

(Includes a variety of film excerpts, among which Society of the Spectacle, Letter from Mongolia, Fateless)

=====

"Personally, I do not know how to make an objective document and I would mistrust anyone who said they could. Every aspect of filmmaking is rooted in choice, whether it's in the subject matter, the way the film is shot or edited, how long one remains on location, the duration of the film, the point of view, etc. Every element of a film is the consequence of a choice and that choice is, for lack of a better word, a subjective choice made by an individual". Frederic Wiseman

=====

A body of knowledge born among images, who wins? The body or the images? (cf. Society of the Spectacle).

"The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images".

Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle.

Who knows anything, since media and manipulation are tightly engaged (copulating?) most everywhere (this comes from the mouth of a filmmaker)?

"That's where the truth lies, right down here in the gut. Do you know you have more nerve endings in your gut than you have in your head? You can look it up. I know some of you are going to say "I did look it up," and that's not true. That's because you looked it up in a book. Next time look it up in your gut. I did. My gut tells me that's how our nervous system works." Stephen Colbert.

A tension between believing straight out with your body (Chechnya Lullaby, Memory of the Camps) and wanting to know more, not trusting... Memory is gone, what remains? Film? Opening one's mouth is not an easy task, unless one is a talented writer:

"In our tales, verbal or written, there are common expressions such as "indescribable", "inexpressible", "words are not enough to", "it would take a new language to...". That indeed was our everyday sensation when we were there. If we returned home, and if we tried to speak, words would fail us, for every day is suited to describing everyday things, but this was another world; here it would take a language another world", a language born in that place...". Primo Levi. Re-enactments, illustrations fall flat like symbols that become as self-referential as kitsch (War and Remembrance, Night Porter). No such pill possible, comparing Schindler's List and Shoah, easy to know which one might have a more lasting impact.

=====

Kafka's quote:

"I think we ought to read only the kind of books that wound and stab us...

We need the books that affect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us."

=====

We remain with those who ask us to be present and experience with their bodies, to witness the unmaking of the bodies/soul (Shoah, Sunshine, Fateless).

We remain with those that follow the path going from the body,
through the mind and ending in action (body/mind/action), in parallel
with the Jewish "go study" which is also a path to action.
And action is always in the present, and thus our "opening our eyes
to the present" (Night and Fog) has to become the final non-resting
place.

=====
Pier Marton at Washington University - Film and Media Studies Program
Postal Address: Campus Box 1174 One Brookings Drive
UPS/FedEx/Airborne: 6445 Forsyth Blvd. Mallinckrodt Ctr. #310
St. Louis MO 63130

Mallinckrodt 305
Weds 2:45-3:45 p.m. Thurs. 3-4 p.m.
Appointments Recommended

(314) 935 4055 or 935 4056
Fax: (314) 935 4955

Web: <http://get.to/pier>