

Utopia Introduction to Animation Seminar

16/02/23

Overall Objective -- Write an essay about a utopia/dystopia

Story:

A company in a capitalistic, totalitarian society commands the worker, in essence the fool, to work the typical 9 – 5 without pay, however the perks of the organisation convince the workers that they are gaining profits through the small benefits of free lunches.

Notes:

What is Informed Practise -- Critical Thinking desires a Reflexive Analytical Imagination

- The story 'WE' influenced George Orwell's '1984', a society in which everyone is a number and live in rigid timetables, everyone lives in glass so they cannot hide from the state spies. There is glass around the city to exterminate and hide outside nature, they live on synthetic food, wear identical uniforms, any recreation is uniform and what the state wants them to do.
- '...you are sick. And the name of your sickness is fantasy. Fantasy is the last barricade on the road to happiness.' -- French Philosopher – Jean Baudrillard 1990 – 'We once lived in a world where the realm of the imaginary was governed by the mirror, by dividing one into two, by theatre, by otherness an alienation. Today that realm is the realm of the screen, of interfaces and duplication, of proximity and networks.'
- 'if there is no more mirroring, there is also no possibility of getting to the other side of the mirror, no possibility of escape...in part because our world and the other world have fatally fused.' – there is no such thing as escapism anymore as phones, games, etc are normal and no longer a form of escape. Walter Benjamin – 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'

Personal thoughts on AI -- AI Art is without creative fulfilment of the journey

Technical Determinism – causal link between new technology and changes in society and culture.

Technological Imaginary – framework in which to understand the role of the imagination as a user-led determinant of the meaning of technology.

The imaginative/technology removes obstacles to desire the role of the imagination is not only to reflect upon them the world but to become the world.

Machines are not just technology, they repositories meaning imagination, technology and desire – are a non-redactable matrix of histories.

(the post digital membrane – Pepperell & Punt 2000)

It is **our imaginations** are what makes us Human

- 1) How we relate to tools and technology (in particular AI)
- 2) How we relate to our governments and our governments to us (media, matter, nature, ecology - our life-support systems)
- 3) Stories about the future and how they relate to the present

Thomas More (advisor to King Henry 8th) wrote a book called 'Utopia' (meaning a good place, however in Latin means 'nowhere')– when Henry the 8th ruled, he brought the state and religion together

There are two types of Utopias:

Carnavalesque Utopia = Carnavalesque is a literary mode that subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere through humour and chaos. It originated as "carnival" in Mikhail Bakhtin's Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics and was further developed in Rabelais and His World. Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian linguist and literary critic writing in the first half of the 20th century, used this term to characterize writing that depicts the de-stabilization or reversal of power structures, albeit temporarily, as happens in traditional forms of carnival.

Austere Utopia = (cant find it online)

Utopian = a representation of the ideal state / society / commonwealth

Sci- fi = a sub-genre of this in which scene and technology predominate thematically

What if – from science fiction to Speculative Fictions to Speculative Fabulations

Science Fact complimentary to SF as it is the storytelling practice of everyday people ((mothers, kids in playground etc.) and are the fables / worlding / creatures of the imagination / impossible worlds that will allow us to survive in the future.

Dystopian art is a human response to what is seen. We can speak about 'creative practice' but what does that mean: the *way of seeing* that the artist must cultivate, one that does not separate *meaning from experience*.

It always celebrates human freedom: the struggle to free ourselves.

Alternative universes are really devices for embarrassing the present, as Imaginary cultures are used to estrange and unsettle our own.

Key Words:

- Press Freedom
- Right to Protest
- Independence of the judiciary
- Freedom of expression
- Climate change
- Religious freedom/freedom from religion
- Illegal detention
- Abortion/reproductive rights
- Sexuality
- Women's rights

Quotes from Lecture:

- “the dystopia of your darkest insomniac imaginings is almost always someone else’s dream of a new utopian dawn” -- Notes from an Apocalypse: A Personal Journey to the End of the World and Back *Mark O’Connell*
- **As Baudrillard writes of Philip K. Dick, in the essay “Simulacra and Science Fiction”** “there is no longer a double, one is already in the other world, which is no longer an other, without a mirror, without a projection, or a utopia that can reflect it - simulation is insuperable, unsurpassable, dull and flat, without exteriority – we will no longer even pass through to ‘the other side of the mirror,’
- ‘If you want to know who controls you, look at who you are not allowed to criticize.’ – Voltaire (1694-1778)
- ‘Art/Storytelling is the activity by which a person, having experienced an emotion, intentionally transmits it to others’ – Leo Tolstoy

Lecture Topics:

- Making Babes: women and dystopia -- Creative Writing workshop
- Brave New World & beyond.
- Mutate Britain -- From post-war mutation in a post- industrialised UK to the post-climate-crisis metamorphosis of living creatures (plus other artifacts of the Anthropocene
- Film & the Future -- World building – how moving image has shown us the future
- Anxious Animals -- From Nostalgia to Eco-Media and Critique
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What is happening the coming weeks:

Interim Presentation #1: The Last Night of the World (screening will be in college)

Interim group presentation #2

Imagine you are scouting locations for a short film.

In your group you will develop a simple *dystopian* storyline in response to one of the titles.

- Under land
- The Egg Children • After London
- Bone River

Group Presentation : 24 April 2023

Prior to the presentation you will research and visit locations that will serve as inspiration for your story.

Homework:

New Worlds End – Epitaph / Epigraph

1. select a sequence of moving image (film, TV, game, animation etc) and also a quotation from a critical text (not specifically related to the object) of no longer than five sentences.
2. if you need to add minor transitions or effects so text and image sync do so (but not attempt editing multiple clips).
3. The quotation should then appear onlife screen in some dynamic interaction with the video.
4. Further, either replace or significantly alter the soundtrack.

Timetable:

Weeks 1 – 5: Lecture Series (now)
(Easter Break)

Weeks 6 – 9: Intern Briefs x2/ visits/screenings/presentations/tutorials

Weeks 10 -: Final Essay hand in

Next week: post war mutation (mutate Britain)

Essay = 1600 word essay

Submission = **18th May 2023**