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*Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,*

*It is a great honor and a pleasure as well to join you this morning for the last day of this seminar on “French and American perspectives on Internet” . Being inside this Harry Ransom Center Auditorium , surrounded by manuscripts, books, etchings, engravings , daguerreotypes, talbotypes, cyanotypes, prints and films is a treat . This speaks to the accessibility of all the various departments of the University of Texas at Austin. This of course includes the France-UT Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies which is supported by the University and the Cultural Office at the French Embassy, as one of the twenty most significant centers for the promotion of French- American reciprocity.*

*Various issues have already been raised since Thursday afternoon , thanks to all the different lecturers, professors and students . Musical pieces have also been listened to and enjoyed – or at least provoked new ideas or tastes for some of you .*

*Unlike the previous conference that I attended, in this very same building, about the first photographic picture ever made, “Le Point de Vue du Gras” by Nicephore Niepce which is wonderfully displayed nearby, I approach today’s topic with some concern. That is to say, I am seriously uncomfortable about the overwhelming quantity of information circulating daily on the Web. How can we even start to summarize it, to clarify this expanding chaos and instability by new scales or experimental classifications, like Mendeleiev did for atoms ? Then the resourceful help from Michel Foucault came to my mind as I prepared these remarks; I quote the following translation of Foucault as cited in Jacques Rancière’s book Le Destin des Images:*

*« Rather than producing speech, I would have liked to be enveloped in speech and carried far beyond any possible beginning. I would have liked to perceive, at the moment of speech, a voice without name that came well before me: it would have thus sufficed for me to latch on, to pursue the sentence, to lodge imperceptibly in the interstices, as though language itself had signaled me, holding itself, for an instant, in suspense. »*

*This passage is for the Web wanderer, like a buoy to grab in order to stay afloat: the only solution is not to keep still, but to keep up the pulse, perfectly tuned in to all occurring rhythms and movements .*

*Movements / Rhythm / Speed / Forgotten Time, Forgotten Stories : aren't they the specificities of this new internet field, where order is not possible and flux inflates the billions of connected computer screens ?*

*Before Web, mice and screens, cinema theaters were the twentieth-century fortresses of the moving image : cinema (and I may add that one of its birthplaces, Lyon, is not that far away from Niepce's "Point de Vue du Gras") was the only window that allowed for a "live" entertainment in real-time . I again cite the text of J. Rancière:*

*« The story of cinema is that of a power to make stories. Its time, as Godard tells us, is that in which phrase-images have the power, dismissing stories, to write the story, through a direct connection with the "outside." This power of connection is not that of homogeneity .../.... Instead, it is a power of the heterogeneous, of the immediate shock of encounter between three solitudes: the solitude of the shot, the solitude of the photograph, the solitude of words that speak of something entirely other in an entirely new context. It is the shock of encounter between heterogeneous elements that provide a common measure. »*

*The last century was characterized by multiple revolutions and earthquakes , for the arts like for everything else . Compared to those three solitudes of which Mr. Rancière speaks regarding the genre of cinema, the internet adds yet another, which is the solitude of the invasion of timelessness, spacelessness. Time and space combine to define Speed . Since the first railway, speed accelerates our desperate need for a closer future, while nostalgia simultaneously takes us all backwards: speed as time's measurement has turned paintings to photography, photography to cinema, cinema to interactive media . Like Caspar David Friedrich's onlooker facing the sea or the mountains, the Web user abuses himself or herself, facing the rise of tomorrow, in the dual threat of lost time and space .*

*After loss, like after death, there is always room for Renaissance . The post-Second World War period was such a complex and enlightening one . In his book *Devant le Temps*, Georges Didi -Huberman quotes Barnett Newman on this period in history:*

*« One could, without betraying Newman, I believe, paraphrase his famous title of 1948 (« The Sublime is Now ») in saying that, for him, the premise of an artistic time was necessarily accompanied by this dialectic and critical claim : the origin is now. It is in the reminiscing Now that the origin appears .... »*

*If Barnett Newman, in 1948 wrote “The Sublime is Now” after Auschwitz and Hiroshima, should we not be forced to proclaim, faced by the growing threat posed by Speed that “ Tomorrow is the Sublime,” since we are no longer here – at this very place – and we are no longer now ?*

*Hopefully, other speakers YannChateigné and Jacques Perconte will provide us with much more tangible accounts of Web experiences so that we can have a rest. But before I end, I make a last wish, or search for a last bit of wisdom in the words of Fernando Pessoa, author of The Book of Intranquility:*

*“I would give a lot for a road leading from a place from which no one comes to a place where no one goes.”*

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