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One of the central arguments of my film course-- and this is one of the ways it's different from a traditional film course in a university, in a cinema studies program, or even in an English department-- is that it sees the advent of television as a critical factor in the history of the movies, much more central and critical than most contemporary histories acknowledge. Because what I try to show is that the function that the movies had in American society before the advent of television was the function that the novel had in the 19th Century in Europe, and the function that Shakespeare's public theater had in Shakespeare's day, a form of popular narrative that's articulated a kind of assumed or imagine consensus of values for the whole of the society. That made it a culturally, and anthropologically, and socially much more important medium than a mere artistic medium, even though it's artistic quality remains very important.

So that one of the ironies of entertainment is it can become a space, especially public forms of entertainment in cultures, like Shakespeare's public theater, or like the public theater of the American movie system in the studio era, these public spaces can become spaces in which the body politic, the political and social community entertains ideas about its own nature, entertains, considers, speculates, holds in its mind accounts of its origins, stories of its values. And what we can say then is that the space of entertainment becomes from in a certain angle in virtually all societies, a space of discourse, a space in which-- exactly because it's a space recognized as not real, as make believe, is therefore licensed or allowed to explore possibilities that might be too dangerous or too disturbing to explore in other way.

And I taught both television and film in this way. In an ironic way, it's a deeply literary way to teach the medium. So the argument ends up being that the movies after television, the movies after about 1970, are profoundly a different animal. The old studio system is dead. Movies have become much more single, individual deal-making events using great stars, and particularly bankable scriptwriters, and scripts, and so forth, nothing like the great factory for the making of stories, the story machine that the movies had been until the advent of television, and that television became as it took on that consensus function.

I think it's a powerful and central insight that helps to explain the tremendous changes that overtake American movies after, certainly, after 1970 and beyond. Another way in which I think my film course is not fully a film course, even though every text we study is a movie, all the scholarship site is movie schol-- not all. But some is movie scholarship. And I try to teach them

about the history of film in ways that I think are helpful to them.

But there is a profoundly literary dimension to my teaching. And I think of as deeply as a literature course. It's a course that, if a student takes, serves as a prerequisite for advanced subjects in literature as well as in media. And my reasons for that is that I treat the problems one confronts in a film from the perspective of a professor of literature, from the perspective of one who's a specialist in narrative.

Remember, many of the narratives that I have taught all my life we're not printed texts like novels. They wear all narratives, like Homer's *Odyssey*. Or, they were dramatic presentations. Like Shakespeare's plays. Literature has never meant simply printed text. And I think my field is narrative of all sorts.

And what I try to do is show them, among other things, certain kinds of linkages or continuities across different forms of narrative. And I certainly try to make them see that movies in a certain era, television in another era, were like the literature of earlier eras. And it makes my film course a much more centrally literary and humanistic subject than would be the case if it were taught in a more conventional kind of cinema studies sequence.