“Performing the Past”

First quarter: many of the texts on border of myth and history
tension between cyclical and chronological versions of time

_Oresteia_: how break cycle of violence by moving from mythical to historical, from recurrent patterns to the judging of specific cases; passing into society & history as passing into ethics and justice

_The Matrix_: how break out of a chronological time that nonetheless seems programmed, patterned; break out of time, stop time, get in “sync” with time

Second quarter: many of the texts about conceptualizing one’s place in society, in part by recognizing how deeply embedded in past histories & past stories present society is

Marx’s _camera obscura_ metaphor

social ideology puts a veil on present, turns things upside down, makes them not transparent, starts to focus on who gets to control social storytelling

_Guelwaar_ and _Hamletmachine_’s attempts at a communal character

Freud looks more at how social stories and their authority are internalized

who or what produces my desire? am I one or am I many (_Krapp_)?

what is the “shadow” that falls “between the intent and act” (_Black Rider_, 32)

“We’d have to crack open the tops of our skulls to really know each other” (_Danton’s Death_, 9)
If human & world relation (and relation of art/representation to world) is not a mirroring, not a reflection, not transparent, what tools become useful for understanding one’s place in world?

Inter-historical, inter-memory plays: *Cloud Nine, Krapp, Hamletmachine, Black Rider*

- Nietzsche’s technique of genealogization, what pasts are colliding to produce our present, what keep & what change?
- Saussure’s signifier/signified relation as arbitrary
- breaking down “naturalness” of signifying can yield an understanding of how social ideology becomes embedded in everyday language

2nd Gentleman: “The earth has a thin crust. You could fall through a hole in the middle of the street” (*Danton’s Death*, 39)

vertigos are scary, but such moments of crisis can become transformational

What to conserve and what to change not as simple as political conservatism & liberalism

To the extent that we all produce our society, we all need to make claims to others about what needs to be remembered and why, what needs to change and why

We perform ourselves, we have scripts, but we can also improvise to a degree dialectic/oxymoron of “be again”

does the present repeat the past, or does the past only become real as performed in the present?