The world viewed and the world lived: Stanley Cavell and film as the moving image of skepticism

Stanley Cavell's work is centrally concerned with understanding the emergence of modern skepticism, and with it an image of our cognitive relationship in which we are seen as detached spectators observing objects devoid of meaning, giving way to a feeling of isolation from external reality. Now film, according to him, is the art that best encapsulates that image. The main goal of this talk will be to elucidate that thesis; to that end I will argue that Cavell's exploration of our condition as viewers of photographs and movies provides an object of comparison capable of reminding us of aspects of our ordinary relation(s) to the world and others that tend to be repressed in our epistemological investigations at least since modernity. By thus situating Cavell's involvement with the photographic basis of film inside a more general philosophical frame I hope his arguments can be seen in a new light, as part of a therapeutic strategy that aims at overcoming the skeptical impulse, showing that the picture of a detached spectator is a rather poor way of describing our richer ways of inhabiting the world and falls apart once is thought through.

Zur Person:
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