

Dinamiche dell'immaginario: una prospettiva semiotica

Abstract

The paper identifies, in the dimension of the imaginary, a specific dynamic of the human species, a dynamic that — exactly as in the mechanisms of language and narrativity — essentially consists in the capacity of exploring virtual alternatives to a situation that is experienced as more or less real. In reconnecting this perspective to both Saussure's linguistic structuralism and Levi Strauss's ethnological interpretation of it, the paper points out, nevertheless, the reductionism of the framework endorsed by the famous anthropologist, whose studies do attribute a rationality to the language of myth, and therefore to the mechanisms of the imaginary, but always as a derivative dimension of a supposed signified reality, meant as more solidly tangible than experience. Through a series of examples taken mostly from 'highly imaginative' contemporary cinema, from King Kong to Avatar, the paper puts forward the hypothesis that the dichotomy between reality and imaginary, vaguely inspired to Lacan, should be replaced by a more nuanced conception of levels of reality, where myth does not only transfigure a pre-existent reality but, in a certain sense, prepares a future reality.