

MADNESS AND MODERNISM

Purpose of the class:

We will study the sequences of a "typical" schizophrenic process and their affinity with modern and post modern and demonstrate that much of what has been passed off as primitive or deteriorated is far more complex and interesting.

Requirements:

1. Active Participation in class
2. Reading Assignments
3. Visits to Museums and Galleries
4. Viewing Film (rental)
5. In addition, some surprise in class writing quizz(es)

6. Produce two research papers

One five (5) page report from visit to galleries

One ten (10) analysis of Kafka's *Description of a Struggle*

Kafka's story contains nearly every feature of modernism that we will discuss in class, including de-realization, dehumanization (disappearance of the active self) uncertainty or multiplicity of point of view, detachment. The recurrent plot structure of this anti-story (which is organized not linearly but in something like a series of concentric circles) reveals virtually every aspect of schizophrenia that will be described in class, from relatively mild schizoid phenomena to the most extreme forms of solipsistic experience. You will point them out and analyze them in your paper.

Supplies

Most of the texts will be provided. However, you should buy:

1. Alfred Jarry, *Ubu Roi*
2. Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, Schocken Books, New York
3. English dictionary

A) INTRODUCTION:**I - Definition of schizophrenia**

1) Traditional 19-20th Century view of schizophrenia as primitive state of mind..

Psy. ref.: Karl Jaspers and Freud

2) Three features of schizophrenia that are not consistent with the concept of deficient mind. Introduction of the notion that schizophrenia may derive from a greater rather than an inferior conscious awareness.

II - The aesthetic revolution of modernism and postmodernism:

Reflexivity and alienation

1) Rejection or parody of the conventions.

Art ref.: Marcel Duchamp

2) Uncertainty or multiplicity of point of view.

Art ref.: Impressionist paintings and analytic cubist paintings,

Lit. ref.: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Wave*

3) Impersonal subjectivism or subjectivity without a subject

Poet. Ref.: T. S. Elliot, *The Wasteland*

4) Or, extreme kind of objectivism

Lit Ref: Alain Robe-Grillet, *zero degree of literature*

5) The loss of significant external reality

6) And self-referentiality

Poe. Ref.: Stéphane Mallarmé, Art ref.: Abstract painting

7) Irony and detachment

Art ref: Duchamp, Litt ref.: Theater of the absurd: Alfred Jarry and Beckett

B) EARLY SIGNS AND PRECURSORS: PERCEPTION AND PERSONALITY**I - Perception: the "truth-taking stare"**

1) The 4 aspects of the schizophrenic *stimmung* experience

Psy. Ref.: Renée, *The autobiography of a schizophrenic girl*

Art Ref.: Outsider art

2) Analogous forms of experience in the art and literature of the 20th century.

Lit. ref.: Hugo Van Hofmansthal, *Colours, Lord Chandos*; Beckett, *Watt*; Robert Musil *A man Without Qualities*; Jean Paul Satre, *Nausea*.

Poetry Ref: Rilke

Art Ref: Giorgio de Chirico and Surrealism

II - Personality: The separated Self.

Schizoid personality is characterized by an essential disharmony, a tendency to fragmentation and conflict both with the world and within the self.

1) Disconnection from Social and External World

a) Theories and Subtypes of Schizoid Personality –hyperaesthetic – anaesthetic

Psy Ref: The views of Ernst Kretschmer

b) Franz Kafka: A hyperactive sensibility

Lit Ref: Kafka: *Investigations of a Dog, Letter to His Father, Unhappiness*

c) Charles Baudelaire and *The Spleen*: New aesthetic of disdain

Lit Ref: Charles Baudelaire, *Autobiographical Fragments:*

My Heart Laid Bare

2) Uncoupling: The separation from the self

a) Role Distance: One scrutinizes and judges one's behavior from within as well as from the standpoint of an imaginary other. (split between one's true and false self)

Psy Ref: Schizophrenic patient experiences

b) Modern aspiration toward inauthenticity and unconventionality

Phil Ref: Nietzsche ethic of antinomianism and inauthenticity

The Will to Power: Description of the Great Man;

Hegel *The Spirit in Self-Estrangement*, *The Phenomenology of Mind*

Theatrical Ref: Alfred Jarry, *Pere Ubu*

C) ASPECTS OF MADNESS: THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE

I - Eccentricity and Cognitive slippage

1) Schizophrenic's characteristic ways of manipulating concepts and categories

a) Excentricity of Perspective: sheer strangeness in the principles of classification or in the perspectives the patient adopts

b) Vacillation and Inconsistency: Tendency to shift among or to make paradoxical combinations of incompatible perspectives, thus leading to an oddity of a higher logical type.

Psy Ref: schizophrenic patient experiences

Art Ref: Art Brut Heinrich Anton Muller, Carl Lange, Scottie Wilson, Adolf Wolffi.

2.) Parallels With Modernism:

a) Fluidity of perspective

Lit Ref: Alfred Jarry *Ubu Roi*, Borges' *Chinese Encyclopedia*

Art Ref: Marcel Duchamp, *The Infra Mince*

b) Heroism of the Doubt

Art Ref: Multiperspectivism of analytic cubist painting:

Poetry Ref: T.S. Elliot, *The Wasteland*; Wallace Stevens, *13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*; Rimbaud, *Seascape* (and the Crossfade technique)

II - Inadequacy of Language: Discrepancy between language and reality

1) The particular vision and, the abstract or totalistic vision

a) Response by Psychotic patient:

- Silence

- Approximate or quasi-metaphoric way of speaking

- Abdicate any attempt to express meaning, repetition of non sense and cliché

b) Parallels with modernism

i) Impoverishment and ineffability

Litt Ref: Hugo von Hofmannsthal. *Letter of Lord Chandos*; Sartre, *Nauseau*;

Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (world salad monologue delivered by Lucky toward the end of Act I)

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ii) Focus on the search for a more authentic language.

Process of inner speech: Juxtaposition rather than transition method

Poetry Ref: Guillaume Appollinaire, *Lundi Rue Christine*; Surrealist automatic writing

(Poetic of Fragmentation)

2) The apotheosis of the word

a) Glorification of the being of language itself

Psy Ref: psychotic patients experience

Poetry Ref: Guillaume Appolinaire, *Its Raining* (focus on the sensory presence of the signifying vehicle)

b) Acute consciousness of alternative meaning of words

Psy Ref: psychotic patient experiences.

Phil Ref: Derrida, *Signature Event Context* Margins of Philosophy

D) SELF AND WORLD IN THE FULL BLOWN PSYCHOSIS

I – Loss of Self: Self disturbances or I-disorder

1) Observation of schizophrenic experiences

2) Philosophical relevance

Descartes, *Meditation on First Philosophy*, The Journey of Doubt

Neitzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, on *the Prejudice of Philosophers*, No.17

II – Distortions of the normal sense of the will and the inner nature

1) Psychiatric and psychoanalytic views

a) Freud: Loss of ego boundaries and regression to an "original undifferentiated state"

b) William James: Searching for the Self. Introspection attitude which does not come from a weakening from the observing ego or a lowering of the conscience level, but to the contrary from a hypertrophy of an attentive, self-reflexive awareness.

2) Avant-Gardist Views

a) The genius of suspicion

Litt Ref: Sarraute, *Between Life and Death*

b) Mise en abyme of self-alienating introspection

Litt Ref: Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double*

III – View of the World: Exacerbated subjectivism

1) Schizophrenic solipsism

2) Modernist aestheticism: Experiencing the self as the foundation of all of existence

Litt ref.: Paul Valery, *Monsieur Teste*; Adolfo Bioy Casares, *The Invention of Morel* (The school of the Nouveau Roman)

Art ref.: René Magritte, *The False Mirror*

Film ref.: Robbe-Grillet and Alain Resnais, *Last Year at Marienbad*