

ARTH 383 - Art & Philosophy

Freud and the Uncanny

- Poussin - classical sublime vs romantically sublime
 - classicism: something missing. imagine transition between calm and storm in landscape.
 - romanticism: artist directly intuited the sublime (ie. Turner)
- Modernism: Barnett Newman, *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* 1950
 - scale; takes up your field of vision > antidote to distractions of contemporary culture
 - Richard Serra, *One Ton Prop* 1969 > Danger in scale
 - Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty* 1970 > can only be seen from above
 - Michael Haizer, *Complex One* 1972 > sublime connected to history (historicist: stands alongside great past monuments)
 - Edward Burtynsky, *Nickel Tailings* 1996 > catastrophe/danger, viewed fro safe distance (dynamical sublime), scale unknown
- E B, *Silver Lake Operations #1* 2007 > in guise of representation (photography) appears less magnitude.
 - Kant mathematical sublime > magnitude is aesthetic judgement
 - dynamical sublime > distance, feeling of safety, “affect”
 - E B, *Shipbreaking #4* > massive size. ethics? concerned about the environment. but safe distance works against this.
 - his career is sustained by taking advantage of the issues he documents. paradox. (moral imperatives, superego, ethics)
 - industry is ultimate sublime (Turner shipwrecks etc.)
 - might/power/strength
- opposite of sublime is ridiculous
 - postmodernism > mocking the seriousness of the sublime

- the more sublime it's supposed to be, the more ridiculous it is when it fails (spinal tap stone henge)

Psychoanalysis I: Freud and the Uncanny

- Freud sees taste as relative to psychological configuration
 - neurosis, psychosis, perversion, autism (Lacans)
 - 'normal' just means you don't complain of symptoms, but still fit the categories
 - neurosis > hysterical (conversion) and obsessional (mental)
- in sociology and psychoanalysis > taste has purpose and is determined (not disinterested)
 - Kant / artists don't like this
 - for Bourdieu, the determinisms matter the most
 - freedom is where our choices fail to define us
 - Foucault: knowledge feeds back into power system. so where is resistance?
- Bourdieu attempts to reintegrate aesthetic/legitimate taste into everyday taste > same level to challenge legitimate culture
- Bourdieu and psychologists > unconscious, denial of interest in aesthetic culture
 - we deny why we like things because we want to be free in our choices, not believe we carve out our space
 - internalize thoughts and compoment (not Freud)
 - unconscious: mental processes not present to subjects conscious at given moment > Freud called this pre-consciousness
 - can become consciousness
 - the Unconscious: physical systems in Freud first typography
 - conscious
 - pre-conscious
 - unconscious: (sexual) unbearable concepts repressed

- dynamical! radically separate from consciousness, through repression, can never become conscious, can only become aware to us in distorted way (ie Freudian slip)
- primary repression: have never been conscious and can never be
 - has discernible affect
- formations of the unconscious: dreams, parapraxis > everything has a reason > ie. forgetting is an active act > latent desire to forget > for Freud, everything is important
 - aesthetics- difference between subject of annunciation and annunciated content
- Interpretation of Dreams 1900
 - unconscious engages in displacement (one concept replaced by another) and condensation (2 elements combined)
 - images have latent and manifest content
 - dreamwork: takes latent content (sexual? not necessarily) and transforms into manifest content
 - the work itself is sexual > dreaming is sexual/libidinal
- Beyond the Pleasure Principle > sublime, negative pleasure, fearsome awe-inspiring magnitude
- we don't psychoanalyze a work of art, or an artist by looking at their art > can only psychoanalyze a person in proper setting, must be qualified
- sublimation: repressed desires symbolically achieved
- evolution of libido - oral anal phallic
- Uncanny: experiences at once familiar and disquieting
 - aesthetics: sublime vs. beautiful > uncanny: repulsion and distress
 - horror: fear/terror (different from sublime), unexpected, too much (sublime)
 - variability to reaction to the uncanny, attaches to psychological configuration
- sublimity is only within us > things only give us a feeling of sublime
- Uncanny> the class of the frightening the leads back to something known and familiar
 - german word: unheimlich - opposite of familiar (homely)

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- how does something unfamiliar become uncanny?
 - Jents: intellectual uncertainty
 - Shelling: something that should be secret/repressed
- something unsure is its alive - animate vs. inanimate uncertainty
 - waxwork figures, automatons (the Sandman), epileptic fits/ insanity
- Casanova - bamboli mechanica
 - poking fun at compulsive/repetitive sexual desire
- late 19th C - equivocation of living and dead > X-rays, anesthesia > uncanny
- castration complex > obstacles imposed on pleasure
 - fear of losing eyesight is a sublimation of the castration myth (male organ just example)
 - loss of something important in someones mental life