

ARTH 383 - Art & Philosophy

Uncanny II

- the Uncanny - familiar but disquieting
 - Freud: castration complex in Sandman, symbolic with threat to eyes
 - the only way in which we fail to live up to demands of others
 - superego berates ego for shortcomings
 - doubling of father figure: loving and cruel/castrating
- animism: intellectual uncertainty between living and dead
 - automata dolls > discrepancy creates horror (ie clown from poltergeist)
- the double: “doppelgänger” > encounter with the self > shadows
 - in primary narcissism: a way of warding off death (physical and symbolic)
 - ie Egyptians embalming, twins
 - preserving the ego, denial of death > thinking beyond the finite
 - Kant: role of ideas of reason in sublime > looking beyond empirical phenomena
 - Lacans, the Mirror Stage > when child sees himself as autonomous self contained individual > crucial to creation of the ego .. ex. twins in the Shining, Jeff Wall photos
- Freud- laughter happens as a build up of tension
 - punchline of a joke is something we already know, while buildup is expectation of novelty
 - like uncanny, a return of the same when we expect something different
- compulsion to repeat - ie Freud keeps finding himself in red light district, elements of chance (seeing the same number > superstition)
- compulsion to repeat both menacing and comical . mystical
 - obsessional neurotic Rat man wishes man would die and he does
 - believe omnipotence of thoughts (like Kant - our beliefs go beyond our minds)
- (Shining, Freud) evil is not uncanny, it's the sense that evil comes from supernatural

- horror reanimation; zombies, undead
 - Kant affirmative judgement, negative judgement, infinite judgment > changes definition of what it is - i.e.. he is 'undead' > redefines meaning of dead / not dead
- Freud: superego and consciousness connected
 - 'the gaze' (Lacans) > delusions of being watched (Freud)
 - today the superego > incited to do something but we don't know what
 - Nike: Just do it!
- Freud double - (serious / sees things as sublime) superego as double of (sees things as ridiculous) ego
- uncanny fear of being engulfed by the other (ie drowning, buried alive, etc)
- Meshes of the Afternoon - why is it uncanny?
 - doubles (her and objects)
 - compulsion to repeat (pursuit)
 - mirrors
 - the other (dark figure)
 - notions of space (montage) > a priori time and space
 - latent mutability (objects transform)
 - libidinal objects: key, knife (fear of castration)
 - phallic objects stand in for desire (not biological organ)
- Jacques Lacans - major psychoanalyst rereading Freud
- grand A: social conventions, manners, etc. 'autre'
- petit a: cause of desire but can be too much (Kantian sublime)
- uncanny blurs exterior and interior, the self and the other
 - puts objective reality into question, provokes anxiety and horror
- Dollard > comforting dimension to mirror at mirror stage
 - but at what stage is it uncomfortable?