

Affiliated Psychoanalytic Workgroups
and
The Philadelphia Lacan Study Group
cordially invite you to:

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The Art of Madness

A Study Weekend in New York
April 28 - 29, 2012
Fordham University

Lacan famously said that “*le fou est l’homme libre*” (“the madman is the free man”), that there is a “*pathologie de la liberté*” (“a pathology of freedom”). How should we understand these words when the current technologies of surveillance give Bishop Berkeley’s famous Enlightenment dictum, “Being is Being Perceived” a monstrous twist? When every single city block and alleyway of lower Manhattan is now under direct surveillance 24 hours a day? When we are x-rayed “naked” and barefoot to board an airplane? When the entire critique of narcissism since Plato disappears in the assured quip of Bret Easton Ellis’s protagonist Victor Ward, “The better you look the more you see!”? Are we to be concerned with the panopticon structure of the asylum or with the internalized panopticon of self-scrutinizing “normalcy” that makes mental health equivalent to “looking good”? Have we not become a culture where, contrary to the panopticon, the many watch the few and mimetic anxiety has become a normative proscriptive apparatus of power?

What is *la folie*? Does what we call *la folie* differ from “madness today”? In English *mad* means angry as well as crazy. Does the English *mad* resonate differently from its “*folle*” French counterpart? Is madness or *folie* to be distinguished from psychosis? What does it mean to “drive someone mad”? Does madness concern the drive? “Road Rage,” has become an official DSM diagnosis, a new disease! How are we to think of *folie* in and out of the clinic? Is there an “in and out” of the clinic? And what about *amour fou*, ‘crazy love’? Madly in love? Yeah! What about that?

If we agree with Foucault that madness concerns discursive tropes and histories—how do we define madness? Lacan tells us that “the phenomenon of madness is not separable from that of language.” In Žižek’s gloss, “Madness is not the pure excess of the Night of the World, but the passage to symbolization itself.” Is madness thus a resistance to interpretation or is interpretation itself a form of madness? Is madness an artful response to the commandment of normalcy? In a culture that is “mad” for evaluation, where we are asked to shop in order to do our civic duty, where the master discourse of capital sustains pharmaceutical companies and new reproductive and medical technologies in the service of “normalcy” that bulldoze the unconscious and the symptom—how do we

Sylvia Plath
Hans Bellmer
Boris Pasternak
Camille Claudel
Antonin Artaud
Jack Kerouac
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner
Edgar Poe
William Styron
Gerard de Nerval
Marina Tsvetayeva
Vincent van Gogh
Herman Hesse
Njinsky
Martin Heidegger
Salvador Dalí
Virginia Woolf
Mark Rothko
Charlie Parker
Hölderlin
Osip Mandelstam
Zelda Fitzgerald
Ezra Pound
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Heinrich von Kleist
Emily Dickinson
Franz Kafka
Fyodor Dostoevsky
Albrecht Dürer
Empedocles
Robert Schumann
Herman Melville
Edvard Munch
Ludwig van Beethoven
Henri Duparc
Sarah Kane
James Joyce
James Barrie

figure what we call mad? Is madness resistance to the Other or too much submission to the Other? If language and language are constitutive of identity and concomitantly, of the symptom, have the new technologies that have become being's prosthetic "enhancers" diminished this fundamental subjective capacity? Has the iPod turned the speaking-being into the vegetative Speaking Bean? Is the *unheimlich* postmodern double of the compulsively dieting gym-rat the texting, video-gaming couch potato? As a remedial English student of mine at CUNY when asked to write about a social problem so elegantly said, "We got a problem with self phones today. People be leavin' voice massages and text massages, not lookin' where they goin' no more. Not only that, people are becoming obese!"

This study day seeks papers or works in progress that ask questions about clinical and socio-political discourses and practices as they pertain to "madness," whatever that is, as well as—

<i>The relation of madness to art</i>	<i>The feminine inflection in la folie</i>
<i>The paradox of "health"</i>	<i>Breath-words, Howl-Words: the art of delirium</i>
<i>Capitalism and schizophrenia</i>	<i>Philosophy and psychotherapy: inventing an art of psychotherapy, the clinician's work as art</i>
<i>Therapy culture and the apparatus of social control</i>	<i>The art of madness and new ethics of sustainability</i>
<i>The Aesthetics of the Symptom: a turn from interpretation to expression</i>	<i>Language and Exhaustion</i>

—Manya Steinkoler,
on behalf of the organizing committee

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Please send paper abstracts by January 31, 2012

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Registration:
\$180 before March 15, 2012
\$220 after March 15, 2012, and at the door

Register at apwonline.org

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A study group in NY will meet regularly at Fordham University Lincoln Center Campus on Sundays until the conference in April. For information on the reading group and for the bibliography please email manyasteinkoler@att.net. The group is open to all interested.

Please distribute freely.