TRANSFIGURING PAIN POETICALLY
EXPLORING THE LIBERATING POTENTIAL OF ARTISTIC CREATION

January 12, 2018

Research seminar and PhD course
Organized by Cathrine Bjørnholt Michaelsen, Claudia Welz, and Mikkel Wold

Abstract

Working across the disciplines of art theory, philosophical aesthetics, literary analysis, existential-hermeneutical psychopathology, psychoanalysis, theology, and philosophy of religion, the overall ambition of this research seminar and PhD course consists in developing and discussing an “ethico-aesthetic paradigm” (Guattari), which emphasizes the inextricability of ethics and aesthetics in approaching artistic creations by individuals experiencing psychopathological disturbances without reducing their idiomatic singularity.

Focusing chiefly on visual arts, poetic language, and their occasional overlapping, the development of such an ethico-aesthetic paradigm serves three coordinated aims to be pursued predominantly through analyses of various art works, first-person perspective texts, and anonymized clinical vignettes. First, the seminar aims at enabling a better understanding of artistic creation as an ethos, conceived not as a code of conduct or a set of moral beliefs, but as a resourceful way of existing and of (re)making sense of this existence (Jaspers; Heidegger). Second, the seminar explores if and how the creative act may be conceived as a gesture of freedom enabling a reinvigoration of a process of life, which may have become fixated or paralyzed by its subjection to disturbing, painful, or traumatic experiences, and thus reopening a mode of the possible within a reality that may appear devoid of all possibilities. Third, the seminar inquires into artistic creation as an affirmative resistance, which, on the one hand, counter-acts and responds to actualizations that may appear incomprehensible and ineffable to more ‘conventional’ discourses such as the clinical, the conceptual, or the critical, while, on the other hand, affirming a process of auto-hetero-poiesis, understood as a reinvention of oneself in the incessant exposure to becoming other.

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Program

10.00 Words of welcome

First session: clinical experience
10.15 – 11.00: Hanne Stubbe Teglbjærg, Kastedklinikken Aarhus: “How art making can strengthen the sense of self and thereby reduce psychopathology in persons diagnosed with schizophrenia”
11.00 – 11.45: Borut Škodlar and Kristijan Sirnik, University of Ljubljana and University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana: “Transforming existential pain: Poet, mystic, and psychotic”
11.45 – 12.15: Discussion
12.15 – 13.15: Lunch

Second session: PhD papers
13.15 – 13.45: Erik Sandsten, Psychiatry East (Roskilde): “Creativity and mental illness – brief overview of empirical studies”
13.45 – 14.15: Casper Løwenstein, Copenhagen University: “Cuts and wounds”
14.15 – 14.45: Tina Folke Drigsdahl, Copenhagen University: “Untitled”
14.45 – 15.15: Coffee break

Third Session: art, philosophy and theology – between ethics and aesthetics
15.15 – 16.00: Ferdinand Ahm Krag, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts: “C. F. Hill – on the irregular cartography of attention in schizoid image formation”
16.00 – 16.45: Cathrine Bjørnholt Michaelsen, Copenhagen University: “Antonin Artaud and the counter-strategy of writing”
16.45 – 17.30: Claudia Welz, Copenhagen University: “The art of survival: Life-affirming auto-hetero-poiesis in poetry”
17.30 – 18.00: Plenary discussion and closing remarks

Venue
University of Copenhagen, South Campus
Karen Blixens Plads 16, auditorium 9A.0.01
DK – 2300 Copenhagen S

Participation is free, but online registration required by January 8, 2018

Everyone is welcome!