

THE ORTHODOX SURVIVAL COURSE

Lecture four: Modern Art and Spiritualism

Transcendental Idealism

- I. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
 - a. Reaction to reason.
 - i. “Hume destroys external reality. Kant restores the self as the center of reality, mind or the self as the center of reality, and then this becomes the new god. This is the new god; the old God is dead.” -Fr Seraphim Rose
 - ii. Kant critiques the way in which we judge an object and the way in which we perceive and define beauty.
 - 1. He states that there can be no “objective rule of taste by which what is beautiful may be defined by means of concepts.” There is no ideal beauty. Thus, in interaction with the existence of an object, and sensing ones “taste” for it, he must recognize that “it must have a subjective principle.”

The Monsters Come Out

- I. Francisco Goya (1746-1828)
 - a. One of the most destructive forces is bringing about a new art and the definition of a new humanity free from the “old regimes” prior to the revolution.
 - b. No disguise, no pretext, but gives visible form to a dream world, to the irrational, and exposes the inner state of a society divorced from the divine.
 - c. Art begins to derive itself from inner man, but a new humanity that is unhinged from divine or objective beauty.
 - d. Hell is no longer constrained and man has given himself to a demon empire. [read 403, Hans Sedlmayr]. [[slide for Goya’s “Proverbs” and Fussli’s “Sleep No More.”]]
 - e. All this takes place in the height of revolution, when occultism is very fashionable.
- II. Honore Daumier (1808-1879): Man as caricature [[slide: “A Famous Cause”; “The Imaginary Invalid”]]
 - a. The end of the 18th c. sees caricature appear as a serious art and man is reduced to phantom, animal, an apparition, a grimace, or an automaton.
 - b. However, Daumier believed in the importance of man, so in his art we see a tragic combination between the human morphing into the subhuman.

Man as Automaton

- I. Paul Cézanne (1839-1906)
 - a. “Pure painting”—that is a reduction of meaning, to paint “as things are” with no deeper connection behind it. Very mechanical and a reaction to developed photography. [Slide: “The Card Players”]

- b. The world becomes reduced to geometry. [Slide: “Mont Sainte-Victoire” and “The Pyramid of Skulls”]
- II. Various early 20th c. movements and represent later styles throughout the 20th c.:
 - a. Cubism: Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)
 - i. Humanity reduced to mechanics [slide: “Girl with a Mandolin” and “Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler”]
 - b. Fauvism (beasts): Henri Matisse (1869-1964)
 - i. Reduction to color and expression [slide: “Fall of Icarus” and “Landscape at Collioure”][slide: Jackson Pollock, “No. 5”]
 - c. Dada: Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)
 - i. Reaction against WWI, rejected all logic, reason, and aesthetics. [[slide: Duchamp, “Fountain” and Francis Picabia “Alarm Clock”]]

Subhumanity: Man as Reduction

- I. The dignity of man is lost, a personal hell is projected onto canvas, and now his world drives into complete absurdity.
 - a. He is conscious of his death, but devoid of dignity.
 - b. Death becomes not tragic, but infernal and erupts into this world.
- II. Surrealism (1920’s-50’s)
 - a. Chaos as absolute [[slide: Max Ernst, “The Triumph of Surrealism”]
 - b. Paul Klee (1879-1940)
 - i. “Our beating heart drives ever deeper towards the ultimate ground of things.”
- III. Abstract Expressionism
 - a. Nuclear art: reaction to WWII [[slide: Mark Rothko, “Violet, Black, Orange, Yellow on White and Red”]]
 - b. Man as completely fragmented and disjointed.

Spiritualism

- I. A return to pantheism through deism.
 - a. Modern art has its own religious background, even if it completely rejects it: Deism that moves toward pantheism.
 - b. This was evidenced between 1480-1516 in the person of the painter Hieronymus Bosch. Orthodoxy is lost and demons enter.
- II. Hydesville Events
 - a. Fox sisters
- III. Science and Religion
 - a. Various sciences to discover and test the spirits
 - b. Return to the science of alchemy and something beyond the five senses
 - c. Various tyrannical governments of the 20th c. tried to use Parapsychology and other various schools of thought to harness power.
- IV. Theosophical Society
 - a. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky
 - i. Philosophy mixed with Hinduism and Neoplatonism

- ii. Syncretic and Occultic
 - iii. Paved the way for acceptance of eastern cult religions in America
 - b. Jiddu Krishnamurti (friend of Aldous Huxley)
 - i. Proclaimed as a messiah and groomed to be the “One teacher.”
 - ii. Lived most of his life building a camp in Ojai
- V. The self as the center of the universe
 - a. The problem of humanity is within yourself
 - i. Scientology
 - 1. The “Thetan”
 - ii. Eastern Cults
 - 1. Hare Krishna Movement
 - a. Hinduism mixes with philosophy, a very American religion
 - b. Caters to the senses
 - iii. Schools of modern psychology
 - 1. “Discover answers within”
 - 2. A concept of “person awareness” that is foreign to any Christian concept.
 - iv. Humanity helps himself along the road to “self-transformation”

No Transfiguration

- I. Modern concepts of experience require no change of self.
- II. There needs to be an awareness and a criticism of this age in order to keep ourselves from falling into the pits of destruction.
- III. This is why Orthodoxy has prescribed medicines to heal the soul
 - a. We do not find it within, it is given to us and we take these medicines with obedience for healing.