

The University of Toronto
GER332F: Deviance, Madness, Outsiders in Literature

Fall 2014

Instructor: JOHN NOYES Office: Odette Hall #304 Office Hours: Tues 4-5; Wed 4-5 john.noyes@utoronto.ca Tel.: 416-926-2344	Class meeting times: Tuesdays 1-3 Venue: TBA
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------

Outline

What does it mean to be sane? To be normal? To be human? Throughout modern history, writers have tested the limits of normal human experience by casting their protagonists into the depths of madness and following them through their trials, their elation, their despair. In a speech in 1970 Michel Foucault pointed out what he called "a curious affinity between literature and madness. Literary language is not constrained by the rules of everyday language. For example, it is not subject to the severe rule of constant truth-telling, any more than the teller is under the obligation to always remain sincere in what he thinks and feels. In short, unlike the words of politics or the sciences, those of literature occupy a marginal position with respect to everyday language." Taking these ideas as our starting point, we will examine a number of texts written between 1800 and 1970. Our aim will be to analyze the literary descriptions of the limit experiences that separate sanity from madness. In the process, we will discuss topics such as truth and truth telling, exclusionary and assimilating practices for dealing with madness, discourses of containment, and how the outsider perspective of madness unsettles truth in literature.

Required texts

- Kleist, *Penthesilea* Stuttgart: Reclam (RUB 1305)
- Georg Buechner: *Lenz. Studienausgabe*. Stuttgart: Reclam (RUB 8210)
- Hugo von Hofmansthal, *Elektra* Stuttgart: Reclam (RUB 18113)
- Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Die Physiker*. Zürich: Diogenes (ISBN-13: 978-3257230475)
- Peter Handke, *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp (ISBN-13: 978-3518365274)

These books will be available from the University of Toronto bookstore.