

21A.218
Anthropology
Identity and Difference
Class #7

The Post-modern self, an excursus on identity

Identity combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations.

culture - signs and symbols, communicative devices

social relations - transactions/interactions

imaginings, consciousness, reflections of self

produced, improvised from cultural materials and interactions

caught between past, present and future, constant negotiation

Deviant identities are those in which person or group has failed to sustain a standpoint of respect, approval, or honor.

The traditional self -- immersed within family, community, place
conceptions of deviance: sin,

Emergence of individualism and the modern self - freed of constraints of social place
conceptions of deviance: individual responsibility, crime;
from 18th century forward, crystallization of concept of individual
(Bentham, Smith, Jefferson, Mill)

Emergence of science of society - 19th century explodes, unmasking, hidden, subsurface
forces that actually produce and manage physical and human affairs
(Marx, Darwin, Freud, Einstein)

The structure beneath becomes the surface
looking for the essential atomic elements of matter as well as human relations,
apparent in architecture, art,; finding the essential elements of aesthetic
experience;
creating the experience without re-presenting the world; creating emotions
without relationships, feeling without meaning

Critique of structuralism (our second perspective)
elements of critique associated with critique of modernism

Post modernity (social formation brought about by technological changes)
time, space collapse, distances eroded, simultaneity, flexible accumulation and
mobility of capital, removed from geographical grounding, location and
boundaries
changes in social relations

Post modernism, a style in architecture, art, popular culture
quotation, echoes of past within the present, playful, distances of time and space
eroded and written simultaneously on buildings, texts, etc..

In social relations, post modern refers to:
self-conscious reflexivity, observing selves, social relations
commentary on what was taken for granted, cycle of production, reproduction
commentary, which is itself production
notion of social life as flux, composed of fragments rather than system,
coordinated whole
skepticism about systems, causes
recognition of multiple interpretations
events as probabilistic rather than determined
room for human agency but individual will not independently produce
social events
what appears as objective is subjective (relativism, shifts)

The post modern self
recognition of self as ongoing project, always in the forming, life long
development (Erik Erikson, 1960s)
self as compilation of multiple influences, past present future expectations
notion of fragmented, decentered self, no single unwavering inner core of being/
Kondo