

Kristeva-- Crisis of the European Subject

K talks about philosophy (heidegger), but you don't have to dwell on those passages to get her larger argument

Q: what is the orthodox church?

JK's book is against Euro unification,
bc she sees it as part of globalization

she's a psychoanalyst, and is interested in subjectivity.

in contemporary Europe, free subjectivity is under threat.

why? bc we are losing the capacity to elaborate an inner life

we depend too much on mass media to define our sensibilities and even our subjectivity

life is impoverished when we can't
grasp life reflexively...
when we can't construct a narrative about ourselves

k wants to tap into europe's main currents of cultural memory.

her argument is against nietzsche...

"all experience needs remembering...
it needs reflexivity...
to endow it with full meaning"

with all the 'excited talk about unification and globalization,'
Europe's narratives are being obscured

JK has traditionally identified herself with the left,
but here she takes on a surprising tack.

She argues for the nation
She argues against the EU

She champions the “esprit général” that preserves national identity...

She champions this over identity politics--
such as the claims of women
and minority constituencies

“Europe Divided”

she poses the critical problematic of a divided Europe

what are the problems with unification?

-- it could subsume the ancient and diverse cultures of Europe
-- it could subsume the economies of Europe...

within a greater and undifferentiated
supranational identity

this supranational identity could backfire...
spurring violent
ethnonationalism

question: how do we see this in the case of the former yugoslavia?

REmember that JK is psychoanalyst...
she's interested in the individual psyche.

In fact, even when she's talking about continental politics,
the individual psyche is always at the crux

When she speaks of freedom, she means individual dignity and
expression

So, she's a Bulgarian immigrant,
but does she support Bulgarian integration?

No. the east is underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure

but more importantly, it has deficiencies in public morality.

the east has just left totalitarianism, and doesn't have its own democratic tradition

All this said, she thinks that both sides of Europe have their strengths and weaknesses...

Western Europe suffers the maladies of the soul

-- figura, language,
representation

East is corrupt, but spiritual

-- icon, sensory,
semiotic

Each side supplements the other

JK wants to see the East, particularly bulgaria and the orthodox church...

as a "bulwark against moral deracination"

... and also as a model for returning the European subject to moral and psychic
wholeness

"Europe Divided"

JK doesn't just use terms east/west, christian/orthodox...

question what are the other key terms of this essay?

We/They; us/them

She begins by plotting out the main problem with globalization, from a psychoanalytic
perspective.

Q: what's the problem with globalization?

it privileges economic performance
and technological innovation

JK asks, is this always the best for humans? (115)

in other words, she wants to know how europe can be more than 'useful'
...she wants it to be meaningful

Kant: categorical imperative...
can't use another as instrument

JK makes some of the same points about French Revolution
that were made in Babel Tower. What are they?

Q: what is freedom in the west?

liberal democracy

freedom to produce, freedom to the mastery of production

-- she gives example of calvinist predestination

freedom is the power to produce
-- objects of desire and consumption

Q: are the ppl of the East 'free'?

they have been liberated, but they're not free

she brings up some stereotypes of Eastern Europeans.
What are they?

-- the cynical communist
-- the atheist mafioso

she doesn't really take them apart, but accepts them...

arguing that out of communism and nihilism,
these figures are bound to linger in E Europe

on the subject of nihilism, she doesn't directly mention Nietzsche...

but she does mention a russian writer...

Dostoevsky... god is dead; crisis in morality

JK finds roots of this nihilism, paradoxically, in orthodox mysticism itself.

How?

absorbed in unrepresentable

faith is glorious but inaccessible...

it looms over the universe and

"at the same time evacuates God from human reality"

147/ read passage

Ultimately, JK argues for different christian federations

catholic

protestant

orthodox

what gets left out?

East and West: she wants to put them into dialogue

she sees them as opposite but complementary poles of freedom

159/ at bottom: defines what differing freedoms of E and W are

finally, to integrate orthodox nations is to subjugate them to western designs

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