

Department of Social Science

AP/SOSC 3116 6.0 The Patient

Fall/Winter 2011-2012

Review Essay: due 27 October 2011

In the late 1920s two men, one fictional and one real, had institutional experiences with tuberculosis, a common and often fatal disease in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Thomas Mann's 1927 *The Magic Mountain* helped win him the Nobel Prize for Literature. This is a classic tale of the long institutional sojourn of Hans Castorp, a young man who travels to visit his cousin in a tuberculosis sanatorium and, taking on the illness, habits, and beliefs of those who inhabit the facility, becomes a patient himself. Norman Bethune (1890-1939), physician, medical innovator, and radical, is famous for his medical work in the Spanish Civil War and with Chinese Communist forces during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Before this, however, he was a long-term patient at the Trudeau Sanatorium in New York State. While he was there Bethune painted a powerful series of wall sized drawings depicting the place of tuberculosis in his life, and he later wrote a commentary to explain the ideas behind his art.

Copies of this novel are for sale at bookstore, but you will also find it relatively easy to obtain it from a public library or used bookstore. This is a lengthy text and I ask you to focus on chapters 1, 3, 4, and the first 3 parts of chapter 5. Bethune's painting and his commentary on each one are posted on the course website under Assignments:

<http://www.yorku.ca/daviesmj/courses/sosc3116/>

This first section of the course has considered the ways in which patients are constructed, used, and understood by those who have power over their lives. To do this we have looked at the creation of 'the patient' as a medico-sociological typology and as an institutionalized entity. We have discussed concepts of 'normal', 'the sick role', and how institutions shape patient experience. We have also considered patient understandings of illness and well-being within this process. **Using class materials and course readings from Weeks 1-5, analyze Mann's novel alongside Bethune's artwork and commentary by applying these ideas. Describe and analyze the processes by which Hans Castorp and Norman Bethune took on the identity of "the patient." How is the sanatorium differentiated from the world outside the institution in these interpretations? What role do the institutional culture of the sanatorium, the power of medicine, the expertise of medical professionals, and the characteristics and activities of fellow patients play in the transformation of Bethune and Castorp into patients?**

Your answer should be approximately 1,500 words, typed and double-spaced in 12 pt font. Please note that although you are welcome to read more broadly if you wish, you should be able to write this essay by drawing on material from course lectures, films, texts and class readings. Reference lectures, films and readings by indicating at the end of a particular sentence the source of information or analysis, i.e. (Mini-Lecture, title, date) Western Biomedicine – the Professionals) or (Film, date, title) or (text, date, item.) Then the source of your ideas will be clear. **Be sure to email me a copy of your paper and keep an extra copy of the paper which you hand in.**

Essays are due by 4:30 pm on 27th October 2011. They should be placed in the AP/SOSC3116 assignment drop box in the Division of Social Science – 7th Floor South Ross. Late essays will be penalized by the loss of 1% per day unless an alternative due date has been negotiated with the course instructor prior to 27th October 2011.

NOTES FOR WRITING YOUR ESSAY:

An essay is an **argumentative** piece of writing and should clearly address the question or task posed in the essay handout. Begin by thinking globally about the essay topic, making rough notes of your ideas and of points that you think your answer should cover. Organize your argument in a logical fashion, supporting each point that you present with evidence drawn from the artwork, novel and course materials. Then you are ready to begin framing your essay, using this basic essay structure:

- Introduction
- Main body
- Conclusion

The **introduction** should provide some background, briefly respond to the essay question and outline the argument to follow. The introduction should be no more than 10% of the total words required. The introduction should aim to provoke the interest of the reader.

The **main body** of the essay should answer the question and develop the arguments outlined in the introduction.

The **conclusion** should be concise and summarize the arguments presented. It should not contain any new material, but it may suggest possible future directions. Ideally, the conclusion should have a certain strength and depth of conviction which persuades the reader.

Essays should also have:

- Paragraphs which contain one main developed idea or argument.
- Links between paragraphs.
- A logical organization (start out by making an outline for your paper).
- Include appropriate facts and examples to back up your arguments.
- Ideas that are referenced.

Once you have finished writing: remember to go back and proof read your essay – read it out loud – get a friend to read it. Go through the following checklist:

- Are there any spelling errors in my essay?
- Are there any awkward phrases that I can edit?
- Have I covered the points listed in the handout, i.e. **have I done what I have been asked to do in this assignment?**
- Do I have a solid introduction and conclusion?

A NOTE ON GRADING:

Your essay will be graded on the following criteria.

Content: I will be looking to see if your paper demonstrates that you have understood the relevant course material and have used ideas, concepts and information from the course in your essay.

Critical Analysis: Here you need to show evidence of academic thought, of having interpreted the course material in a way which shows you have worked with the ideas. Do not simply restate lecture material. Good essays show originality of thought – pulling together different topics and presenting fresh interpretations.

Structure: This is very important in an essay. I will be looking to see if your ideas are organized to present a clear, logical argument, with a strong, clear thesis statement, continuity from paragraph to paragraph and a good introduction and conclusion.

Presentation: Good ideas and good analysis deserve good presentation. We will also be taking into account spelling, grammar, and good sentence structure when we review your essay. Remember that this is an academic paper and should be written in a formal style, avoiding jargon, clichés, and slang.

