

Asylo- phobia

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Asylophobia

Act One - Inferno

The first time we heard of this new attraction, this strange non-creature that our friend called Freihaus, we felt repelled by it. Disgusted by what we had been told behind closed doors.

And still, there we were now. Standing not right in front of it, as that would look suspicious, but observing it out of the corner of our eyes. Watching people stepping out of the main entrance. Always out. Never in. An inconstant stream of individuals flowing out of the building.

Wasn't it supposed to be a place of madness? We are reminded of the prototype picture of a madhouse we have in our heads where people go in. Not out. They never get out.

We stare a little longer. Maybe to wait for someone to go in, but more likely just to see for ourself that there really is a way out.

When we finally feel ready and approach the Freihaus we are led around the building to a side entrance.

Holding our breath we step over the threshold, the heavy door closing behind our backs. Cutting us off from the city.

We are greeted by blueish flickering lights and as we get used to the dim lighting we become aware of the seemingly infinit corridor in front of us, where shadows of human silhouettes appear and disappear without any pattern in their movement from right to left, from left to right, in the distance or right in front of us. As if madness were *„the manifestation (...) of a dark, disorderd, shifting chaos, the germ and death of all things as opposed to the luminous' outside, the „adult stability of the mind'.* (1)

We turn left and push through a thick black curtain and suddenly we are surrounded by a flowing cloud of white fog. Without orientation we stagger through the space, hitting our foot on a soft cushion that is lying around. This room is filled with whispering voices and silent individuals who press their ears to walls and floor as if the room itself was talking to them. Bewildered we look at them, some snickering to themselves, others concentrated and serious.

What are they listening to? Our curiosity is piqued. And since the fog gives us some semblance of privacy we lean against the wall and listen. And listen. And listen.

Silence. We hear nothing but silence.

„And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music’ (2). But they can’t all be mad, can they?

We see someone leave so we take their place. Our ear touches the wall again. And there it is, the endless loop of a voice saying:

„I’m not mad. I don’t feel mad. From my point of view you are mad. The whole world is. Who are you to decide what madness is? I’m not mad.”

And somehow we are fascinated. Not by what the voice is saying but by the way we are hearing the voice. With the cool surface pressed to our ear we feel like eavesdropping on a ghost.

We must be getting mad.

But then again there is only one way *„to escape suffering’* madness. (...)

„Accept the’ madness *„and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it.’ (3)* So we assimilate to the others in the room for a while and enjoy the confused faces of the newcomers until we have listened to enough ghosts and are ready to move on.

We leave the first room and are back in that horribly long corridor where we become one of the humanshaped, faceless shadows.

The second room is bright and spacious. At the far end we see a stage on which a presenter is about to announce the next act. The audience is scattered around the room sitting on the floor like children.

„*What’* you *„shall meet now is the theoretical and practical unveiling of the truth of madness on the basis of a being which is non-being, since this madness only expresses itself visibly through signs such as (...) vain language, devoid of meaningful content (...).’ (4)* Please welcome our wild-card to freedom, the Joker!”

The small crowd applauds and we join them and sit down as an impishly smiling figur takes the place of the presenter and opens its mouth:

„Let me tell you something”, it starts, pointing accusingly at the audience with its finger. „*The age of reason’* (...) is *„not at all reasonable, but’* is *„rather a fierce regime of oppression that subjects those who’* have *„lost their reason to a massive confinement based on trumped-up moral grounds’ (5).* And I’m talking literally trumped-up, here! Who even has reason nowadays?”, it exclaims and jumps from the stage, surprising the ones sitting too close. „Do you still have your reason?”, it points at a couple that had quickly moved aside as the joker left its assigned sphere.

They nodded their heads. „You must be part of the regime then.” The Joker

concludes annoyed. And like that it goes on and on until the Joker finally returns to the stage.

Act Two - Purgatorio

For room three we have to take the stairs to the next floor and it feels like progress. We are in a good mood and feel freed from our initial inhibitions. A tiny, nagging, so typically swiss thought remains though: Is that allowed? As if it were programmed into our brains. Is it allowed to make jokes about this?

Room three consists of many little chambers. We step through the nearest open door and are instantly hit by a nauseous feeling of claustrophobia. The clunk of the door falling shut is the last thing we hear before we're all alone. A deafening silence surrounding us like a vacuum. The thumping sound of our own heart almost painfully loud.

We take one look around and we've had enough. Turning back to the door we grip the handle, we push and pull and tug with all we have but the door doesn't open.

We take a deep breath while we try not to panic. There has to be another exit. But in all the gray padded surfaces that encapsulate the chamber there isn't a single irregularity. Just the door we came through and a sign on it with 2 words written in thick black letters: 3 Minutes.

3 Minutes, then what? We think. 3 Minutes are nothing, right?

So we lean against the soft wall and wait. With nothing to distract our eyes, our thought start to wander.

Is it possible that *,the fear of madness and the isolation to which it was condemned'* (6) turned it into an even more powerful demon in our own minds then it really was? Our thoughts go round and round. Turning and spinning like a mouse in the treadmill while we try to ignore the feeling of the walls closing in. It's an illusion of course.

But *,If one sets aside the class of ,abnormal forms of madness', the three principal orders are formed by hallucinations, strangeness and delirium.'* (7)

We are most definitely getting mad.

After an eternity the door finally opens and we hurry to leave this cell. Convinced that we left the worst part behind us we explore the other rooms on this floor.

We come across an artist who is in the middle of creating a mural full of

alien symbols and grotesque creatures.

„All art is exorcism.’ ” He mumbles. „*I paint dreams and visions too; the dreams and visions of my time. Painting is the effort to produce order; order in yourself. There is much chaos in me, much chaos in our time.*’(8)”

Another room has been transformed into a chaotic, destructive organism. Sticking to its boundaries like a parasite.

We reason that while for the painter chaos seems to mean madness *for them freedom means chaos.*’(9) As a result there has to be some madness in freedom. Happy with our conclusion, we go on.

Act Three - Paradiso

We climb the stairs to the top as we near the end of our journey. A double swing door opens automatically, welcoming us to the final room.

„Inside’ of the market, madness appeared filtered of anything that might have provided an illusion, offered to an absolutely neutral gaze; for it was no longer the interest of a’ community, that was speaking, nor power and its arbitrary nature, nor the prejudices’ (...). (10)

All that was left to do, was to sit down and start trading. Using this new language we just learned.

When we step out of the Freihaus again, proudly using the main entrance, the sun has long set.

(...) „The phantasms of the surface have replaced the hallucination of depth’ (11) and we realize that our friend, who had told us about this place, had been an Ambassador of the Freihaus all along.

- (1) Foucault - History of Madness
- (2) Friedrich Nietzsche
- (3) Calvino - Invisible Cities
- (4) Foucault - History of Madness
- (5) Yanni - The Architecture of Madness
- (6) Foucault - History of Madness
- (7) Foucault - History of Madness
- (8) Otto Dix
- (9) Hayek - The Constitution of Liberty
- (10) Foucault - History of Madness
- (11) Deleuze - The Logic of Sense

Structure

Act 1: becoming mad/ blurring the boundaries

(Room 1) Wherein the visitor is still an outsider and feels safe in the group which is slowly dissolving. Is it madness if everyone behaves mad? Question of majority and about who defines the norm.

(R2) We are still a part of the group. The joker is the mad one, not the visitors. This is about losing inhibition towards the subject through humor and about initiating thinking without being able to blame someone.

Act 2: Growth or learning the language

wherein the visitor struggles with the new situation. As this journey is about prejudice and ignorance the visitors first need to be given enough time to build their opinions and questions.

(R3) The first battle is against themselves as they might refuse the „call to adventure“. They must become ready to talk.

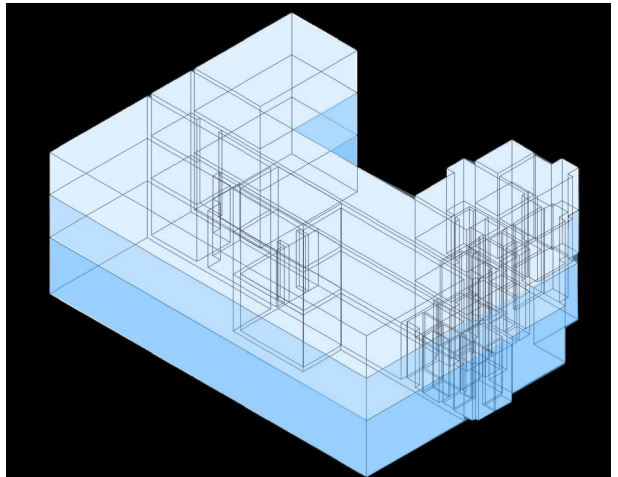
(R4) The second battle is about the struggling with this new world they are discovering, as they are led through the chaos of an alien mind. „The dark night of the soul“ or „all is lost“ phase. (The process to madness is almost completed.)

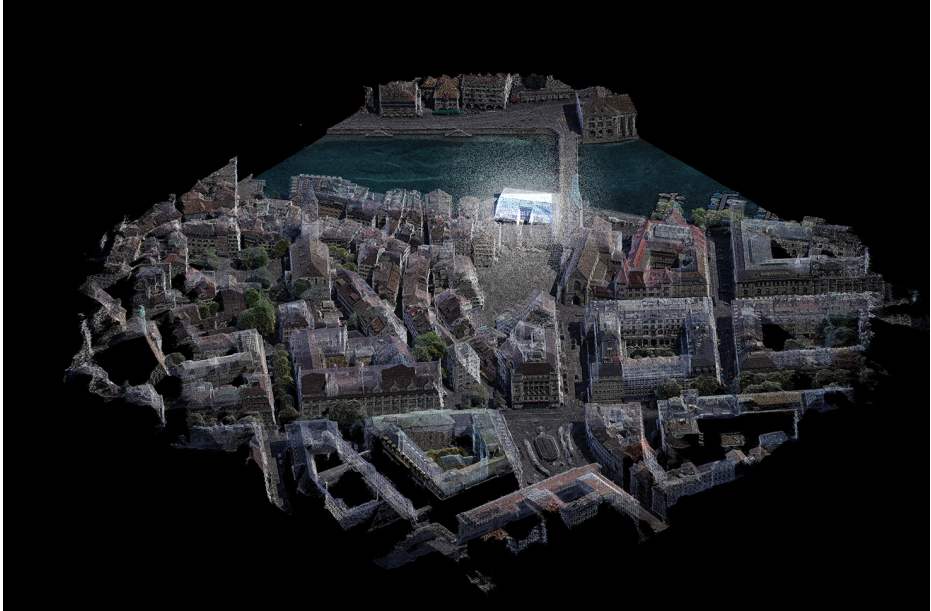
Act 3: Confrontation with the villain

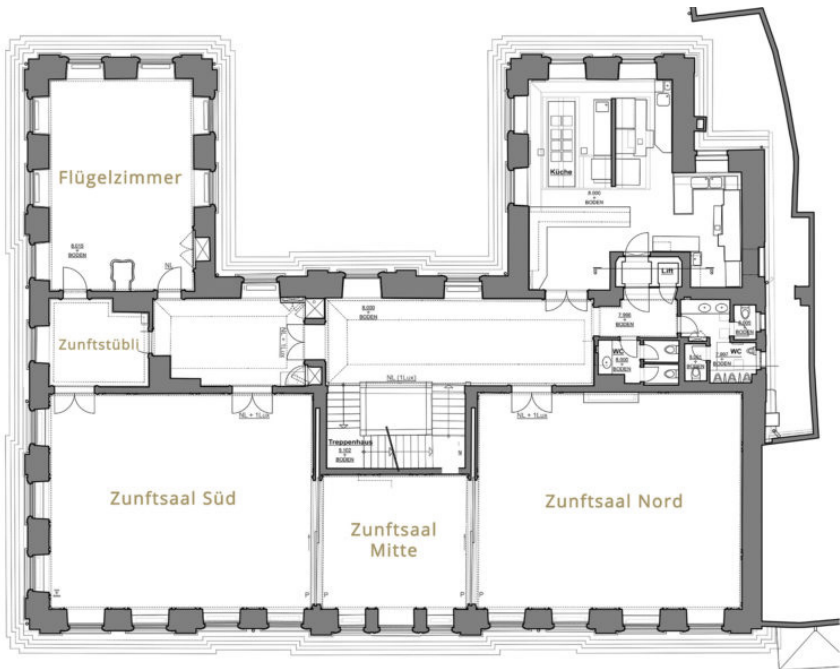
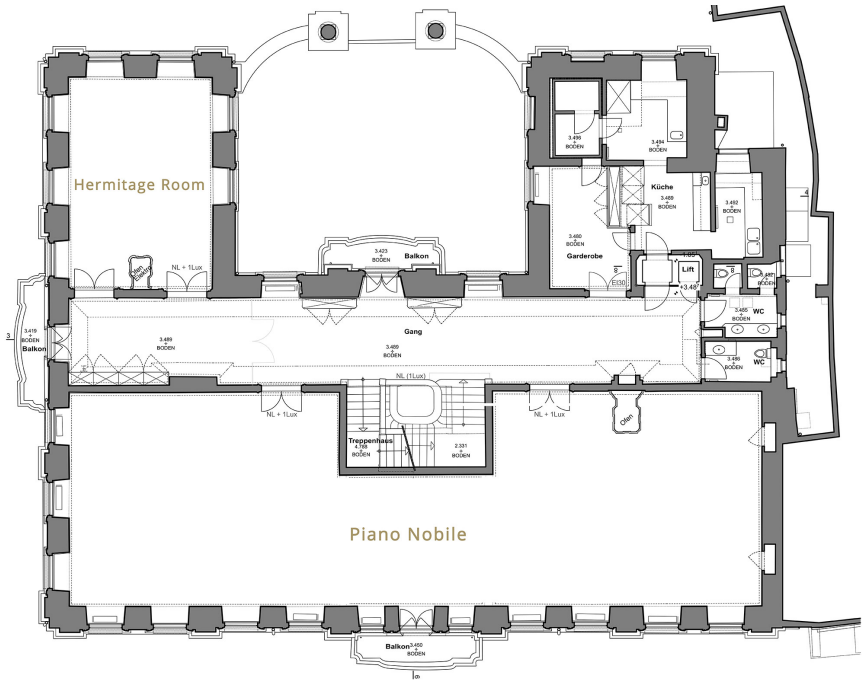
Wherein everything comes together and the visitors have to start talking and using their own language. The group does not exist anymore. The visitors can think on their own now.

(R5) The market is not about making decisions it's about exchange. Exchange of ideas, opinions, knowledge. Everyone gives and everyone takes. Shapes are soft and round and the furniture is informal. Again there are no chairs or tables but surfaces to sit on in groups or pairs. Reminding of a time in childhood when it was easier to start talking to strangers.

2. floor - Act 3
1. floor - Act 2
Groundfloor - Act 1







Archeology

Asylum (n.)

Early 15c., earlier asile (late 14c.), „place of refuge, sanctuary,“ from Latin *asylum* „sanctuary,“ from Greek *asylon* „refuge, fenced territory,“ noun use of neuter of *asilos* „inviolable, safe from violence,“ especially of persons seeking protection, from *a-* „without“ (see *a-* (3)) + *sylē* „right of seizure,“ which is of unknown etymology.

Literally, „an inviolable place.“ Formerly a place where criminals and debtors sought shelter from justice and from which they could not be taken without sacrilege. General sense of „safe or secure place“ is from 1640s; abstract sense „inviolable shelter, protection from pursuit or arrest“ is from 1712. Meaning „benevolent institution to shelter some class of persons suffering social, mental, or bodily defects“ is from 1773, originally of female orphans.

~online etymology dictionary

refuge (n.)

„Shelter or protection from danger or distress,“ late 14c., from Old French *refuge* „hiding place“ (12c.), from Latin *refugium* „a taking refuge; place to flee back to,“ from *re-* „back“ (see *re-*) + *fugere* „to flee“ (see *fugitive* (adj.)) + *-ium* „place for.“

~online etymology dictionary

prison (n.)

Early 12c., from Old French *prisoun* „captivity, imprisonment; prison; prisoner, captive“ (11c., Modern French *prison*), altered (by influence of *pris* „taken;“ see *prize* (n.2)) from earlier *preson*, from Vulgar Latin **presionem*, from Latin *presionem* (nominative *presio*), shortening of *prehensionem* (nominative **prehensio*) „a taking,“ noun of action from past participle stem of *prehendere* „to take“ (from *prae-* „before,“ see *pre-*, + *-hendere*, from PIE root **ghend-* „to seize, take“). „Captivity,“ hence by extension „a place for captives,“ the main modern sense.

~online etymology dictionary

Asylum - refuge or prison

So what is it now? A place to hide?
Defining the outside as dangerous,
creating an island of apparant safety,
an outlook over a deep and malicious sea of otherness.

Or is it in reality the exact opposit?
The outside as a refuge and the island
as a tiny bone-crushing prison
isolating the real otherness from the rest of the world.

Whoever thinks to have the answer,
another will be convinced to know better.
It remains a question of perspective.

sanity (n.)

Early 15c., “healthy condition,” from Middle French *sanité* “health,” from Latin *sanitatem* (nominative *sanitas*) “health, sanity,” from *sanus* “healthy; sane” (see *sane*). Meaning “soundness of mind” first attested c. 1600.

~online etymology dictionary

or

accountability (n.)

“State of being answerable,” 1770, from *accountable* + *-ity*. Earlier was *accountableness* (1660s).

~online etymology dictionary

taboo (adj.)

Also *tabu*, 1777 (in Cook’s “A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean”), “consecrated, inviolable, forbidden, unclean or cursed,” explained in some English sources as being from Tongan (Polynesian language of the island of Tonga) *ta-bu* “sacred,” from *ta* “mark” + *bu* “especially.” But this may be folk etymology, as linguists in the Pacific have reconstructed an irreducible Proto-Polynesian **tapu*, from Proto-Oceanic **tabu* “sacred, forbidden” (compare Hawaiian *kapu* “taboo, prohibition, sacred, holy, consecrated;” Tahitian *tapu* “restriction, sacred, devoted; an oath;” Maori *tapu* “be under ritual restriction, prohibited”). The noun and verb are English innovations first recorded in Cook’s book.

~online etymology dictionary

madness (n.)

Late 14c., “insanity, lunacy, dementia; rash or irrational conduct, headstrong passion, extreme folly,” from *mad* (adj.) + *-ness*. Sense of “foolishness” is from early 15c.

~online etymology dictionary

Sanity and the taboo of madness

Sanity.

The rational, the healthy, the norm,
the default setting on 99 percent of population.

Madness.

The creative, the lateral thinker, the childish adult,
the forever cursed individual
who has so much to say to that ever deaf audience.

To find a way through deafness
and to break the taboo of madness
that is the task of the FREIHAUS.

credible (adj.)

“Believable, worthy of belief, capable of being believed, involving no impossibility; of known or obvious veracity or competence,” late 14c., from Latin *credibilis* “worthy to be believed,” from *credere* “to believe” (see *credo*). Related: *Credibly*.

~online etymology dictionary

joke (n.)

1660s, *joque*, “a jest, something done to excite laughter,” from Latin *iocus* “joke, jest, sport, pastime” (source also of French *jeu*, Spanish *juego*, Portuguese *jogo*, Italian *gioco*), from Proto-Italic **joko-*, from PIE **iok-o-* “word, utterance,” from root **yek-* (1) “to speak” (cognates: Welsh *iaith*, Breton *iez* “language,” Middle Irish *icht* “people;” Old High German *jehan*, Old Saxon *gehan* “to say, express, utter;” Old High German *jiht*, German *Beichte* “confession”).

Originally a colloquial or slang word. Meaning “something not real or to no purpose, someone not to be taken seriously” is from 1791. *Black joke* is old slang for “smutty song” (1733), from use of that phrase in the refrain of a then-popular song as a euphemism for “the monosyllable.” Lithuanian *juokas* “laugh, laughter,” in plural “joke(s)” probably is borrowed from German.

~online etymology dictionary

joker (n.)

1729, “jester, merry fellow, one who jokes,” agent noun from *joke* (v.). In generic slang use for “any man, fellow, chap” by 1811, which probably is the source of the meaning “odd face card in the deck” (1868), also often *jolly joker*. An 1857 edition of Hoyle’s “Games” lists a card game called *Black Joke* in which all face cards were called *jokers*.

~online etymology dictionary

jongleur (n.)

“Wandering minstrel of medieval times,” 1779, a revival in a technical sense (by modern historians and novelists) of Norman-French *jongleur*, a variant of Old French *jogleor* “minstrel, itinerant player; joker, juggler, clown” (12c.), from Latin *ioculator* “jester, joker” (see *juggler*).

~online etymology dictionary

belief (n.)

Late 12c., bileave, “confidence reposed in a person or thing; faith in a religion,” replacing Old English geleafa “belief, faith,” from West Germanic *ga-laubon “to hold dear, esteem, trust” (source also of Old Saxon gilobo, Middle Dutch gelove, Old High German giloubo, German Glaube), from *galaub- “dear, esteemed,” from intensive prefix *ga- + PIE root *leubh- “to care, desire, love.” The prefix was altered on analogy of the verb believe.

The distinction of the final consonant from that of believe developed 15c. The be-, which is not a natural prefix of nouns, was prefixed on the analogy of the vb. (where it is naturally an intensive) ... [OED]

Meaning “conviction of the truth of a proposition or alleged fact without knowledge” is by 1530s; it is also “sometimes used to include the absolute conviction or certainty which accompanies knowledge” [Century Dictionary]. From c. 1200 as “a creed, essential doctrines of a religion or church, things held to be true as a matter of religious doctrine;” the general sense of “That which is believed” is by 1714. Related: Beliefs.

Belief meant “trust in God,” while faith meant “loyalty to a person based on promise or duty” (a sense preserved in keep one’s faith, in good (or bad) faith, and in common usage of faithful, faithless, which contain no notion of divinity). But faith, as cognate of Latin fides, took on the religious sense beginning in 14c. translations, and belief had by 16c. become limited to “mental acceptance of something as true,” from the religious use in the sense of “things held to be true as a matter of religious doctrine.”

~online etymology dictionary

the credibility of a joke or the power of the unbelievable

The joker is an actor, a performer, an artist.

The one person in the room who can say it all.

Standing in the spotlight as an outsider, as a mythical creature,
ghostlike and untouchable.

ambassador (n.)

late 14c., also ambassador, “diplomatic emissary of a ruler in the court of another,” from Old French *embassator*, *ambassateor*, which comes via Provençal or Old Spanish from Latin *ambactus* “a servant, vassal,” from Celtic *amb(i)actos* “a messenger, servant,” from PIE root **ambhi-* “around” + **ag-* “to drive, draw out or forth, move.”

~online etymology dictionary

The Ambassador

The mad, the ill, the failures of society
are being separated from humanity.
They are either treated as dangerous animals,
glass figurines, or not at all.
To learn each others language
and to become an ambassador
that is the task of the FREIHAUS.



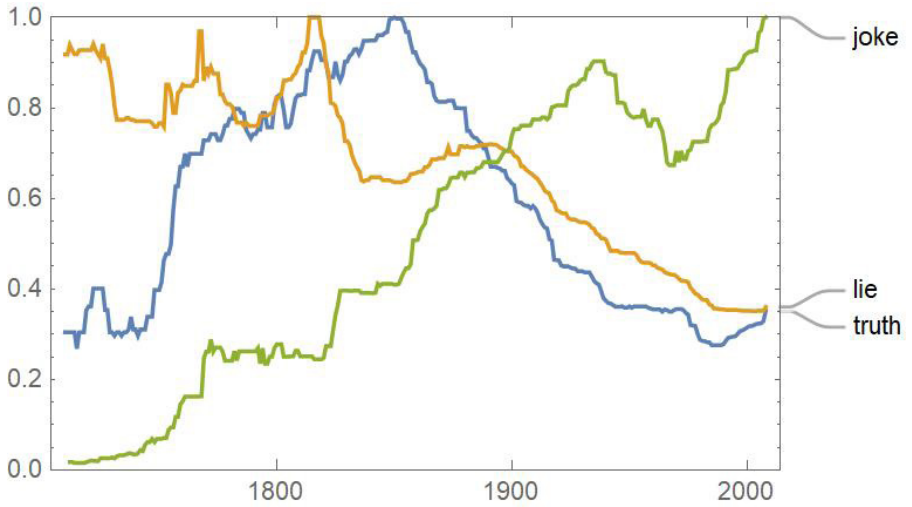
Market Scene on the Village Square

by Gillis Mostaert

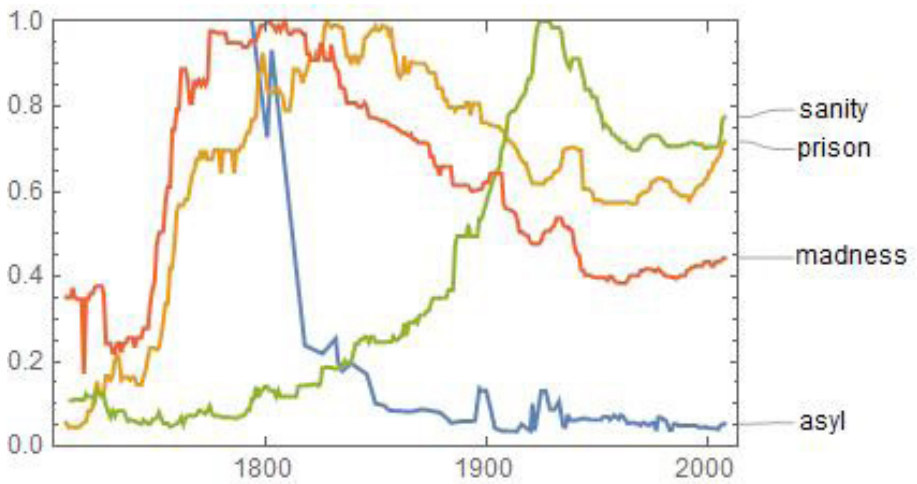
The Market

A room not for a self-help group
but instead the contrary.
A market to trade help and problems.
Wherein help is the currency
and problems are the goods.
It's not anymore about getting help
but about getting problems.
Changing perspective,
overcoming the fear of the unknown,
talking.

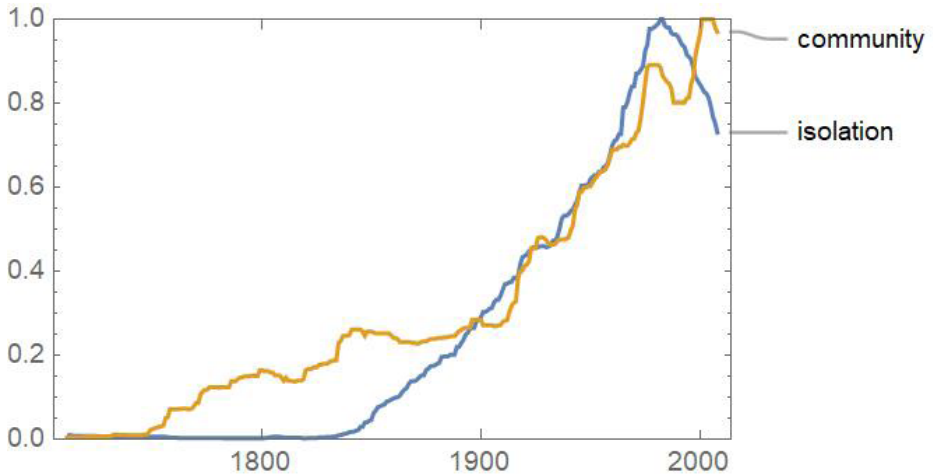




NGRAM on lie, truth and joke



NGRAM on sanity, madness, prison, asyl



NGRAM on community and isolation

(...)the happy pre-Enlightenment wandering lunatic or village idiot, whose lack of reason threatened no one and who was supposedly left to his own devices or even cared for by the community (1) now stood before the faceless industrial city. Nothing yet determined the nature of that isolation. No one knew whether it would be closer to correction or hospitality. At that time, only one thing was certain: as the world of confinement collapsed, bringing liberty to inmates and restoring the poor to their families, the mad found themselves in the same position as prisoners who were condemned or awaiting trial, together with the poor and the sick who had no family to look after them. (2)

(1)Yanni TAM

(2) Foucault HM