

ENG 650
Fall 2017
Professor Pyle

Nineteenth-Century British Culture: Image of Feeling

This seminar will explore nineteenth-century British culture as an extended response to the following question: how does this historical period -- one that includes cultural forms we call Romantic as well as those we classify as Victorian -- become the *epoch* of feeling? To respond to this question we will pose another one: why and how is "feeling" (or emotion or sensibility or affect) principally represented as -- or in -- "images"? From the agitations of William Blake through the provocations of Oscar Wilde, we will explore the period's cultural representations of feeling through the medium of the image. If nineteenth-century British culture epitomizes the very "image of feeling," is this the result of a fundamentally affective dimension of the literary and visual image? To address these questions, we will read poets (Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, Percy Shelley, Hopkins, Dante and Christina Rossetti), novelists (Mary Shelley, and Emily Bronte), essayists (Wordsworth, Pater, Wilde), and a playwright (Wilde). And we will look at paintings and photographs of the period, especially pictures by Blake and the Pre-Raphaelites. To frame these questions and to measure their "afterlives," we will read some influential treatments of "feeling" and the "image" in contemporary literary and film theory (Benjamin, Barthes, Bataille, Berlant, Brinkema, Copjec, Zizek, Mulvey, Ranciere, and others).

Schedule of Readings

- 28 Sept) Introduction. Image & Affect. **Wordsworth**, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. **Pater**, Introduction and Conclusion to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. **Goldsmith**, "The Future of Enthusiasm." **Nancy**, "The Image -- the Distinct." **Deleuze & Guattari**, "Concept, Affect, Percept."
- 5 Oct) **William Blake**, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." **Mitchell**, "Visible Language: Blake's Art of Writing." **Goode**, "Blakespotting."
- 12 Oct) **William Wordsworth**, "Tintern Abbey," "I wandered lonely as a cloud," "A slumber did my spirit seal," "Strange fits of passion have I known," "Ode. Intimations of Immortality," from *The Prelude*. **Samuel Coleridge**, "Kubla Khan," "The Eolian Harp," "Frost at Midnight," "Constancy to an Ideal Object." **Zadie Smith**, "Notes on Attunement." **de Man**, from "The Rhetoric of Temporality." **Ranciere**, from *The Future of the Image*.
- 19 Oct) **Lord Byron**, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto 3. **Christensen**, from *Lord Byron's Strengths*. **Copjec**, "The Invention of Crying." **Mulvey**, "Visual

Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," "Notes on Sirk." **Keach**, "Byron Reads Keats."

26 Oct) **Percy Shelley**, *The Triumph of Life*, "On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci at the Florentine Gallery," "Lift not the painted veil," "Ozymandias," "Mont Blanc," "To a Skylark," "Adonais." **Jacobs**, "On Looking at Shelley's Medusa," **Khalip**, "As if that look must be the last." **Edelman**, "The Pathology of the Future; or the Endless Triumph of Life."

2 Nov) **John Keats**, "the pleasure thermometer," from *Endymion*, "On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again," "Drear-Nighted December," "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles," "La belle Dame Sans Merci," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode to Psyche," "Ode on Indolence," "Ode on Melancholy," "This Living Hand." **Wilde**, "The Grave of Keats." **Ricks**, from *Keats and Embarrassment*. **De Man**, "The Negative Path." **Terada**, "Emotion after 'The Death of the Subject.'"

9 Nov) **Mary Shelley**, *Frankenstein*. **Brooks**, "What is a Monster?" **London**, "The Spectacle of Masculinity." **Heffernan**, "Looking at the Monster: *Frankenstein* and Film."

16 Nov) **Emily Bronte**, *Wuthering Heights*. **Charlotte Bronte**, "Preface to *Wuthering Heights*." **Bataille**, from *Literature and Evil*. **Jacobs**, "At the Threshold of Interpretation." **Nussbaum**, "The Romantic Ascent." **Haire-Sargeant**, "Sympathy for the Devil."

23 Nov) **Thanksgiving Holiday**

30 Nov) **Oscar Wilde**, *Salome*. preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, selections from *De Profundis*. **Dante Gabriel Rossetti**, selected sonnets. **Christina Rossetti**, *Goblin Market*, "In an Artist's Studio." **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**, selected paintings. **Zizek**, "Lynch as Pre-Raphaelite." **Barthes**, "The Image," "The Third Meaning."

Assignments Students taking the course for credit will write two brief (2-3 single-space) close readings. The first of these will focus exclusively on a brief passage from the assigned readings. For the second close reading assignment, I want you to pair another brief literary passage along side a brief passage from a critical or theoretical text: the point is not an application or a rebuttal but an opportunity to generate a focused critical dialogue. These brief papers are due on the Tuesday prior to the seminar. I'd like for you to post them as discussions on the canvas site for others to read. I'll respond to them individually and make every effort to incorporate them into our seminar discussion Thursday: this won't be a formal report, but you should be prepared to say something about your choice of passage and the direction your reading took. (15% each)

Students taking the course for a grade will also write a 10-13 page seminar paper on a topic of your choice (with my consultation). A thesis, brief outline, and textual example (1-2 pages) are due November 21st. Final versions of the seminar paper are due Friday, December 9th.