

MA in English & Comparative Cultural Studies
ENG700 *Aesthetics and Literature: From Romanticism to Postmodernism*
Spring Semester 2018

Course Leader: Evy Varsamopoulou
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Office-Hours: Monday 14:30-17:15
& Thursday 13:30-14:15
(or otherwise by appointment)

Course Description

This course investigates the emergence of the modern discourse of aesthetics in philosophical and literary texts in 18th century Europe, with particular attention to the developments and debates surrounding the beautiful and the sublime due to their crucial significance from the 18th to the present. The questions of aesthetics and, especially, of the sublime are implicated in, and often shape, European thought of the past two centuries on truth, ethics, transcendence, beauty, Nature, sensibility, education, politics, literature, the role of art and of the artist. The course selection of theoretical texts attempts to balance the coherence of a dialogic unity of recurrent preoccupations with the diversity of emphases and interpretations given to issues in aesthetics as well as the category of the aesthetic as such, which was contested in some postmodern accounts. The selected literary texts that feature in the course either had or continue to have an enormous impact and influence on the understanding of the above issues; their authors purposefully set out to investigate the interrelation between literature and philosophy in the problematic yet enduring discourse of aesthetics. Conversely, their work has given rise to a great deal of philosophical or other theoretical commentary. The initial period of the course (Weeks 1-4) will focus on philosophical and theoretical writing; thereafter, literary texts will be studied alongside further philosophical writing on aesthetics. This latter period will begin with the reading of Germaine Necker's (Madame de Staël) Romantic *Künstlerroman* (female artist novel), *Corinne or Italy*. This novel, published in 1807, together with her popularisation of German literature and philosophy in *Of Germany* (1810), significantly advocated the convergence of various national Romantic discourses into a European Romantic movement in the early 19th century.

Primary Literary Texts & Recommended Editions

Coetzee, J.M. *Elizabeth Costello*. Vintage, 2004.
Kafka, Franz. *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*. Trans. Michael Hofmann. Penguin, 2007.
Madame de Staël. *Corinne or Italy*. Trans. Sylvia Raphael. Oxford World's Classics, 2008.
Mann, Thomas. *Death in Venice*. Trans. David Luke. Vintage, 2001.
Proust, Marcel. *In Search of Lost Time*, vol.1, *Swann's Way*. Trans. C.K. Scott Montcrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised by D.J. Enright. Vintage, 1996.
Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Nausea*
Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; The 1818 Text*. Penguin, 2018 (kindle edition available from January; other editions of the **1818 text** are acceptable).
Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Penguin, 2003.

Primary Theoretical Texts

Course Reader, *Aesthetics and Literature* (available at Antoniou Bookshop, Kallipoleos Street).
Handouts & e-texts (if available)

Programme of Sessions

Week 1: Introduction

Thursday 18/01/18: Introductory Session I

Welcome Session, Course Design and Objectives

Week 2:

Thursday 25/01/18: No Class (Absence due to conference abroad)

Week 3:

Thursday 01/02/18 : Introductory Session II

Handout Selection: from Iris Murdoch, *The Fire and The Sun*; from 'Introduction' to Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*; from 'Introduction' to A. Ashfield & P. de Bolla, eds, *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Theory*.

Edmund Burke, *Enquiry into the Origin of Our Feelings of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, in **Reader**

Week 4:

Thursday 08/02/18: The Sublime and the Beautiful: Ancient and Modern I

Pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime* (Sections I-II, V-XV, XXXV-XXXVI, XLIV) in **Reader**

Samuel Johnson, 'Sublime', from *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), in **Reader**

Week 5:

Thursday 15/02/18: The Sublime and the Beautiful: Ancient and Modern II

Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, in **Reader**

Friedrich Schiller 'On the Sublime', in **Reader**

Week 6:

Thursday 22/02/18: Romantic Themes in Aesthetics & Philosophy

Friedrich Schlegel, *Atheneum Fragments*, **Reader**

Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute* **Reader**

Week 7: TWO SESSIONS

Monday 26/02/18 (3-5:30pm): Gender and Genius

Madame de Stael, *Corinne or Italy* **Primary Text**

Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, in **Reader**

Recommended Supplementary Reading:

A.A. Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, from *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711)
& F. Hutcheson, from *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1726) (handout)

Thursday 01/03/18: Romantic Aesthetics & Aesthetic Education

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* **Primary Text**

Friedrich Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, in **Reader**

J.J. Rousseau, from *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (1776-1778) (Handout)

Week 8:

Thursday 08/03/18: Aestheticism

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Week 9: **Thursday 15/03/18: Thomas Mann, Nietzsche & Modernism**

Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice* **Primary Text**

Recommended Supplementary Reading:

Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* & Plato, *Symposium, Phaedrus*

Week 10: Proust and Romantic Modernism

Thursday 22/03/18

Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, vol.1, Part 1, 'Combray'* **Primary Text**

Week 11: Modernism: Kafka, Benjamin and Blanchot

Thursday 29/03/18

Franz Kafka, *The Hunger Artist* (Four Stories) **Primary Text**

W. Benjamin & M. Blanchot on Kafka (Handout)

Maurice Blanchot, 'The Future and the Question of Art' & 'The Original Experience', in *Reader*

Easter Break (2-15 April)

Week 12: The Writer & the Role of Art in Post-WWII Europe:

Thursday 19/04/18

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* **Primary Text**

Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?* ['Why Write?'], in *Reader*

Week 13: Truth & The Origin of the Work of Art:

Thursday 26/04/18

M. Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', *Reader*

Week 14: Aesthetics, Politics, Ethics: Contemporary Perspectives

Thursday 03/05/18

J.M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* **Primary Text**

Jean-François Lyotard, 'Answering the Question: What is the Postmodern?', Appendix, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*

Recommended Supplementary Reading (an extra session to discuss these texts may be arranged –optional attendance)

Jean-François Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde'

Jean-François Lyotard, 'After the Sublime, the State of Aesthetics'

J. Rancière, 'Are Some Things Unrepresentable?' (Handout)

Assessment

The course will be assessed through the following three (3) components:

- (1) Critical Analysis of a Theoretical Text (2000 words). Weighting 30%. Due Thursday, Week 12
- (2) 20 minute Presentation on a Literary Text followed by Co-ordination of Seminar Discussion (20 minutes) on the basis of the presentation. Weighting 20% **Weeks 7-14** (date of earliest presentation to be arranged by Week 6)
- (3) Critical Essay (4,000 words). Weighting: 50%. The student will choose the topic and formulate the question in collaboration with the course leader (by Thursday of Week 12). The essay must not coincide or have any significant overlap with either of the previous two assessments (content of analysis or presentation).

Recommended Further Reading

1. Behler, Ernst, *German Romantic Literary Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1993)
2. Blanchot, Maurice. *The Work of Fire*. Trans. Charlotte Mandel. Stanford University Press, 1995.
3. Blanchot, Maurice. *The Space of Literature*. Trans. A. Smott. Nebraska University Press, 1990.
4. Burke, Edmund, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (Oxford University Press, 1990)
5. Gadamer, Hans Georg, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, translated by Nicholas Walker and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge UP, 1986)
6. Hegel, G.W.F., *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*. Trans. Bernard Bosanquet. London: Penguin, 1993.
7. Isbell, John Clairborne, *The Birth of European Romanticism: Truth and Propaganda in Stael's 'De l'Allemagne', 1810-1813* (Cambridge University Press, 1994)
8. Kant, Immanuel, *The Critique of Judgement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952; 1988)
9. Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe & Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988)
10. Lyotard, J-F, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Stanford University Press, 1994)
11. Kirwan, James, *Sublimity: The Non-Rational and the Irrational in the History of Aesthetics* Routledge: 2005
12. Mulhall, Steven, *The Wounded Animal: J.M. Coetzee and the Difficulty of Reality in Literature and Philosophy*. Princeton University Press, 2008.
13. Nietzsche, F.W., *The Birth of Tragedy*. Trans. C.P. Fadiman. New York: Dover, 1995
14. Pillow, K. *Sublime Understanding: Aesthetic Reflection in Kant and Hegel*. MIT Press, 2003.
15. Schiller, Friedrich. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a Series of Letters*. Trans. E.M. Wilkinson & L.A. Willoughby. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967.

Selected Further Reading (In UCY library)

- Adorno, Theodor, *Aesthetic Theory*, translated by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (London: Athlone Press, 1997)
- Agamben, Giorgio, *The Man Without Content*, translated by Georgia Albert (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999)
- Armstrong, Isobel, *The Radical Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000)
- Atwell, David. *J.M. Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)
- Behler, Ernst, *German Romantic Literary Theory* (Cambridge UP, 1993)
- Bernstein, J.M., *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant and Derrida to Adorno* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992)
- Bloch, Ernst, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, translated by Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1988)
- Bowie, Andrew, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester University Press: 2003)
- Bronfen, Elizabeth, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester University Press, 1992)
- Coetzee, J.M. *Inner Workings: Literary Essays 2000-2005* (Harvill Secker, 2007)
- Cooper, David Edward et al, (eds.), *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995)
- Descombes, Vincent, *Proust: philosophie du roman* (Paris: Minuit, 1987)
- Del Caro, Adrian, *Dionysian Aesthetics: The Role of Destruction in Creation as Reflected in the Life and Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1981)
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, translated by Dana Polan (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986)
- Deleuze, Gilles, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 2003)
- De Man, Paul, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia UP, 1984)
- Derrida, Jacques, *The Truth in Painting*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

- Eagleton, Terry, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994)
- Engell, James, *The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1981)
- Ferguson, Frances, *Solitude and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individuation* (London: Routledge, 1992)
- Fenves, Peter D., *Premises: Essays on Philosophy and Literature from Kant to Celan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996)
- Figal, Gunter, *For a Philosophy of Freedom and Strife: Politics, Aesthetics, Metaphysics* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1998)
- Foster, Hal, (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983)
- Gadamer, Hans Georg, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, translated by Nicholas Walker and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)
- Graham, Gordon, *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 1997)
- Guyer, Paul, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality* (Cambridge UP, 1993)
- Hegel, Georg W.F., *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, translated by T.M.Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998)
- Heidegger, Martin, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Hofstadter, Albert (New York: Harper & Row, 1975)
- Isbell, John Clairborne, *The Birth of European Romanticism: Truth and Propaganda in Staël's 'De l'Allemagne', 1810-1813* (Cambridge UP, 1994)
- Japaridze, Tamar, *The Kantian Subject: Sensus Communis, Mimesis, Work of Mourning* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000)
- Kerney, Richard & David M. Rasmussen, (eds.), *Continental Aesthetics: Romanticism to Postmodernism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)
- Kreuz, Roger, J., & Mary Sue MacNealy, (eds.), *Empirical Approaches to Literature and Aesthetics* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publications, 1996)
- Kristeva, Julia, *Proust: Questions d'identité* (Oxford: Legenda, 1998)
- Kristeva, Julia, *Le temps sensible: Proust et l'expérience littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994)
- Lehner, Herbert & Wessell, Eva (eds.), *A Companion to the Works of Thomas Mann* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2004)
- Livingston, Ira, *Arrow of Chaos: Romanticism and Postmodernity* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997)
- Lyotard, Jean-François, *Postmodern Fables*, translated by Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997)
- Makkreel, Rudolf, A., *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgement* (University of Chicago Press, 1994)
- Menke-Eggers, Christoph, *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998)
- Mellor, Anne K., *Romanticism and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1993)
- Nalbantian, Suzanne, *Aesthetic Autobiography: from Life to Art in Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Anais Nin* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994)
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy*, translated by Clifton P. Fadiman (New York: Dover Publications, 1995)
- Novitz, David, *Knowledge, Fiction and the Imagination* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1987)
- Poulet, Georges, *L'espace proustien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982)
- Rancière, Jacques, *The Flesh of Words: The Politics of Writing*, translated by Charlotte Mandell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004)
- Rancière, Jacques, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, translated by Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2006)
- Robertson, Ritchie, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge UP, 2002)
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Essays in Aesthetics*, translated by Wade Baskin (London: Peter Owen, 1963)
- Sheppard, Anne D.R. *Aesthetics: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art* (Oxford UP, 1987)

- Singer, Alan & Allen Dunn, (eds.), *Literary Aesthetics: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000)
- Sparshott, Francis Edward, *The Future of Aesthetics: The 1996 Ryle Lectures* (University of Toronto Press, 1998)
- Taminiaux, Jacques, *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgement: The Shadow of the Work of Art from Kant to Phenomenology*, translated by Michael Gendre (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993)
- Varsamopoulou, Evy, *The Poetics of the Künstlerroman and the Aesthetics of the Sublime* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002)
- Varsamopoulou, Evy, 'Et in Arcadia Ego: Philosophical Aesthetics and the Origins of European Romanticism in Shaftesbury's Characteristics and Rousseau's Reveries', in Clark, Steve and Connolly, Tristanne (eds), *British Romanticism in European Perspective: Into the Eurozone* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) (not in UCY library; available from me on demand)
- Wellmer, Albrecht, *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics and Postmodernism*, translated by David Midgley (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991)
- Winchester, James J., *Nietzsche's Aesthetic Turn: Reading Nietzsche after Heidegger, Deleuze, and Derrida* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994)

Recommended Bibliography on Mary Godwin Shelley and on British Romanticism

- Abrams, M.H., *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford UP, 1985)
- Abrams, M. H., *Natural Supernaturalism* (W.W. Norton & Co, 1980)
- Alexander, Meena, *Women in Romanticism: Mary Wollstonecraft, Dorothy Wordsworth, and Mary Shelley* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1989)
- Bainbridge, Simon, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge UP, 2006)
- Botting, Fred (ed), "Frankenstein", New Casebook Series (Palgrave Macmillan, 1995)
- Brown, Marshall (ed), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Vol.V, Romanticism* (Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Butler, Marilyn (ed), *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy* (Cambridge UP, 1984)
- Butler, Mary, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford Paperbacks, 1981)
- Day, Aidan, *The New Critical Idiom: Romanticism* (Routledge, 1995)
- Dickinson, H.T., *British Radicalism and the French Revolution 1789-1815* (Blackwell, 1985)
- Furst, Lilian, *Romanticism* (1976)
- De Man, Paul, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (Columbia UP, 1986)
- #Farrett, Mary A., & Nicola J. Watson (eds), *At the Limits of Romanticism: Essays in Cultural, Feminist, and Materialist Criticism* (Indiana UP, 1994)
- Jones, Chris, *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s* (Routledge, 1993)
- Kelly, Gary, *The English Jacobin Novel 1780-1805* (Oxford UP, 1976)
- Kelly, Gary, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period* (Longman, 1989)
- Kelly, Gary, *Women, Writing, and Revolution: 1790-1827* (Clarendon Press, 1993)
- Levine, George & UC Knoepfmacher (eds), *The Endurance of Frankenstein: Essays on Mary Shelley's Novel* (University of California Press, 1992)
- Mellor, Anne K., *Mary Shelley: her Life, Her Fiction, her Monsters* (Routledge, 1990)
- Mellor, Anne K. (ed), *Romanticism and Feminism* (Indiana UP, 1988)
- Rajan, Tilottama, *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism* (Cornell UP, 1986)
- Rajan, Tilottama & Julia M. Wright (eds), *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre* (Cambridge UP, 1998)
- Weiskel, Thomas, *The Romantic Sublime* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1986)