

Week 1: Intro

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge poems

<https://allpoetry.com/The-Other-Side-Of-A-Mirror>

<https://poets.org/poem/witch>

Judy : To what extent do we apply our ethical understanding of history (such as those histories silenced) in the present as we grapple with the history available in the past?

Trey: Is historical authenticity the same as historical accuracy?

Lauren: How do “heritage industry” conventions affect our national identity, particularly in an election cycle like the one we are currently facing?

Kayelynn: Moore mentions that oppressed people are drawn to the Victorian literature and often find “ventriloquism”, what are some examples of this?

Kendra: So I know we brought it up and one of the readings mentions this, but I'm really curious about how memory functions as a type of history. So I guess my question is, is memory actually considered a type of history, or is it more of a tool to get to historical "truth?"

Ian: This has to do with what I DON'T remember about Victorian literature: Mitchell mentions that Victorians trusted metanarratives, like the modernists, and distrusted them, like the postmodernists. What are some examples of each attitude in fiction or historiography in the Victorian era?

Jenaya: When thinking about the images/history that was left out were children often left out in historical rendering of the Victorian era. I imagine that would also include POC, and impoverished people. This is in reference to when you were talking about women being excluded in history.

Meghan: How can present day ideals and movements be used to provide new insight into the hidden aspects of the past eras and how do we avoid judging the outdated social norms and ideals from a modern view?

Preston: To what extent might the definition of neo-Victorian, or even our idea/assumptions/stereotypes/etc. of what the time period and its literature, change/grow/etc. as we move further away from this time period in time?

Judy: Considering it [photography] would be the latest technology, I assume questions of privilege would affect accessibility to that technology.

Jenaya: It's interesting because there were black upper class citizens. We just don't typically see/hear about those people.

Kayelynn: Hamilton 2.0

Preston: Yes! I just finished season 4 of The Crown and in it Thatcher says, "Make Britain great again"

Trey: Flags [as example of heritage industry]

Meghan : Has anyone seen that video of conservatives asked when they thought America was great and the responses generally focused on the 50s (minus the segregation) the post civil war era (minus slavery) and every time named had to have a minus something terrible

Judy: Also interesting how some think that we have reckoned with our past simply by erecting a statue, without addressing the systemic corruptions

Meghan: I think that's true for the most part but like my grandparents grew up in the great depression so they think that the present is AMAZING compared to their childhood and that technology is so cool to them, so if you grow up in the worst time any other time is better

Jenaya: It comes back to propaganda around that time, I imagine.

Trey: Blade Runner 2049 is a great movie that revolves around the accuracy of memories.

Lauren: Kendra, to your mention of memoir: Mary Karr, a contemporary memoirist and poet, teaches a seminar on memoir writing, and her first exercise is asking students to write down a play-by-play of a staged fight between Karr and a colleague...Karr says no one has ever accurately depicted the interaction lol

Week 2: A.S. Byatt, Possession (Ch. 1-14)

Judy: So much of this novel considers Roland and Maud's exploration of the relationship between Ash and Cristabel. Based on Byatt's representation of the pursuit of knowledge in this novel, to what extent do scholars seem to expose the subject's private life for personal scholarship gain (knowledge and acclaim as we see with Copper), versus comprehensive understanding of the artist behind the art? How does the blossoming connection between Roland and Maud complicate this pursuit of knowledge within the narrative?

Kayelynn: Early on, page 10, we see Roland stealing something that may lead to a huge breakthrough. He could have copied the letters but didn't. The implications on his character of taking the letter and keeping that from others are clear, though his character in this is not isolated to this incident. How is this reflected in his relationship with Val? What can be made of his self-insertion?

Meghan: How has Cristabel's identification as an independent, female poet been influenced by her Breton heritage, specifically by the stories and strong female icons such as Anne de Bretagne (who worked to retain Bretagne's independence as a nation from the French) and

Marie de France, also believed to be from Bretagne (the first known female French poet who worked specifically with Breton mythology and knights and fairies)?

Lauren: It seems as though Maud both reinforces and complicates the stereotypes about women's lib and scholarship in the 70s and 80s (obtaining traditionally "masculine" power as a form of resistance, for example). How does everyone see Maud interrogating or participating in these sometimes misguided gendered pursuits?

Kendra: So I didn't even really connect that Christabel refers to Coleridge's poem until Ash actually brings it up in one of the letters. That being said, I looked over Coleridge's poem Christabel. I think it's safe to say Byatt's Christabel alludes back to Coleridge's Christabel in her innocence and purity, but what I'm interested in is why Byatt would name her character after an UNFINISHED poem. Just like how Byatt's characters keep calling letters as a beginning, I'm just not quite sure if this allusion to an unfinished poem also leads to this idea of mystery (since we will never have the ending to the poem)

Preston: How might we think of the letter as an especially Victorian mode of communication? Do privacy and excavation factor into this? How might we think of Maud/Roland's work as Victorian even outside of working with Victorian texts?

Trey: What is the significance of Byatt's metaphor of a "clean empty bed in a clean empty room, where nothing is asked or to be asked" (290)? In relation to Roland and Maud specifically?

Ian: Does postmodernist technique exist in Victorian literature in the forms of Christabel using ancient fairy tales in a feminist manner, Ash using some fragmentary technique in his poetry, and Ash mentioning in his letters that the world is "palimpsest upon palimpsest"?

Jenaya: I'm really interested in the idea of legacy and how it is recorded and treated in this novel. For example, how the older Bailey and his wife being hesitant to give over the letter to Roland and Maude and why that would be? Would that have precedent?

Kayelynn: To quote Eliza from Hamilton, "Let future historians wonder how Eliza reacted..."
Jenaya: Hamilton is always welcome.

[Tone of last two letters on p. 220]

Meghan: Very abrupt she switches from dearest sir to simply dear sir

Judy: What is FIAT – [decree]

Kayelynn: The mention of the proposition she is facing makes it like a very unfair request has been asked of her.

Meghan: Sometimes, I think that to discover the inspiration for the work can change the perspective of the work once the subject has been discovered. I've been working on Baudelaire

Zoom Chat: Neo-Victorian Novel

this week in my poetry class and we focused a lot on his three loves and how the three types of love he professed to have inspired different themes in his love poetry

Preston: As a fairy tale lover myself, I also loved the reference to Hans Christian Andersen earlier in today's reading

Ian: Tennyson wrote a poem called Maud (I just found out on Wikipedia)

Ian: Is the pregnant servant's name Bertha? – [Yes, possible reference to Jane Eyre?]

Ian: La Belle dame sans merci – [by Keats—read this alongside Coleridge's Christabel]