

Literary History: A Systematic Approach

Lecture 2:

Received Opinion about English Literary History and the Basic Outline of a Systematic Approach

1) A History of Literary History

2) Received Opinion about English Literary History: Commonly Accepted Designations for Periods of English Literature

3) The Larger Picture: "Western Culture"

- a) antiquity
- b) the middle ages
- c) modernity

4) The Basic Outline of a Systematic Approach

1) A History of Literary History

1) extrinsic approaches

- "objective" history vs. "subjective" literature
- "history" authorizes what "literature" can "say"

2) intrinsic approaches

- reaction against the privileging of the historical insistence on the autonomy of literature, history relegated to the "background"
- formalist concepts of literary evolution

3) new extrinsic approaches

- literature as a social practice
- social functions ↔ literary conventions
- continuity between literature and other writings
- "literature" (writing) authorizes what "history" can "say"/"be"

2) Received Opinion about English Literary History

Literature in English (Carter/McRae 2001)

The Beginnings of English: Old and Middle English 600-1485

The Renaissance: 1485-1660

Restoration to Romanticism: 1660-1789

The Romantic Period: 1789-1832

The Nineteenth Century: 1832-1900

The Twentieth Century: 1900-45

The Twentieth Century: 1945 to the present

Periods of English Literature (Poplawski 2008)

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 500-1500 | Medieval English |
| 1485-1660 | The Renaissance |
| 1660-1780 | The Restoration and Eighteenth Century |
| 1780-1832 | The Romantic Period |
| 1832-1901 | The Victorian Age |
| 1901-2004 | The Twentieth Century (1901-1939/1939-2004) |

Literature in Britain and Ireland (Nowak 2010)

Medieval Literature (up to c.1500)

Renaissance Literature (c.1500-1660)

The Long Eighteenth Century:

Neoclassicism and Romanticism (1660-c.1830)

The Literature of the Victorian Age

and of the Early Twentieth Century (c.1830-c.1920)

Modernism and Beyond (c.1920 to the Present)

British Literary History (Middeke et al. 2012)

The Middle Ages

The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

The Eighteenth Century

Romanticism

The Victorian Age

Modernism

Postmodernism

Englische Literaturgeschichte (Seeber 2012)

Altenglische Literatur

Mittelenglische Literatur

Die frühe Neuzeit: Von Morus bis Milton

Von der Restauration zur Vorromantik

Romantik und viktorianische Zeit

Vormoderne und Moderne

Die Zeit nach 1945

Die neuen englischsprachigen Literaturen

Englische Literaturgeschichte aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung

(Schabert 1997/2006)

Das elisabethanische Zeitalter und das frühe 17. Jahrhundert

Restauration und Aufklärung (1660-1760)

Die nachaufklärerische Zeit (1760-1830)

Die viktorianische Epoche (1830-1900)

Die Zeit der klassischen Moderne (1900-ca. 1930)

Jahrhundertmitte: Aufstieg und Fall der engagierten Literatur (ca. 1930-1970)

Postmoderne (1970-2000)

Kinds of Period Designation (cf. Abrams/Harpham 2012)

| | extrinsic | intrinsic |
|--------------|--|--|
| c. 450-1066 | Old English (Anglo-Saxon) Period | |
| c. 1066-1500 | Middle English Period | |
| c. 1500-1660 | Early Modern Period (Elizabethan Age 1558-1603) (Jacobean Age 1603-25) (Caroline Age 1625-49) (Commonwealth Period/ Puritan Interregnum 1649-60) | Renaissance |
| c. 1660-1785 | [Enlightenment] (Restoration 1660-1700) | Neoclassical Period (Augustan Age 1700-45) (Age of Sensibility/Age of Johnson 1745-85) |
| c. 1785-1830 | | Romantic Period |
| 1837-1901 | Victorian Period | The Age of Realism (Pre-Raphaelites 1848-60) (Aestheticism/Decadence 1880-1901) |
| 1901-1914 | Edwardian Period | |
| 1914-1945 | | Modernist Period |
| 1945- | | Postmodernist Period |

3) The Larger Picture: “Western Culture”

mimetic theories (Plato, Aristotle)

pragmatic theories (Horace)

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expressive theories (Romanticism)

objective/reflexive theories (modernism/postmodernism)
(Abrams 1953ff.)

The Western Tradition

Antiquity (c 500 B.C. – 500 A.D.):

mimetic and pragmatic criteria begin to dominate the production and reception of art and literature

⇒ the traditional Western attitude

The Middle Ages (500 A.D. – 1500 A.D.):

break in continuity because of cultural difference perceived as 'poverty' in the Renaissance period.

Modernity (1500 A.D. - ????):

⇒ modern (Western) attitudes

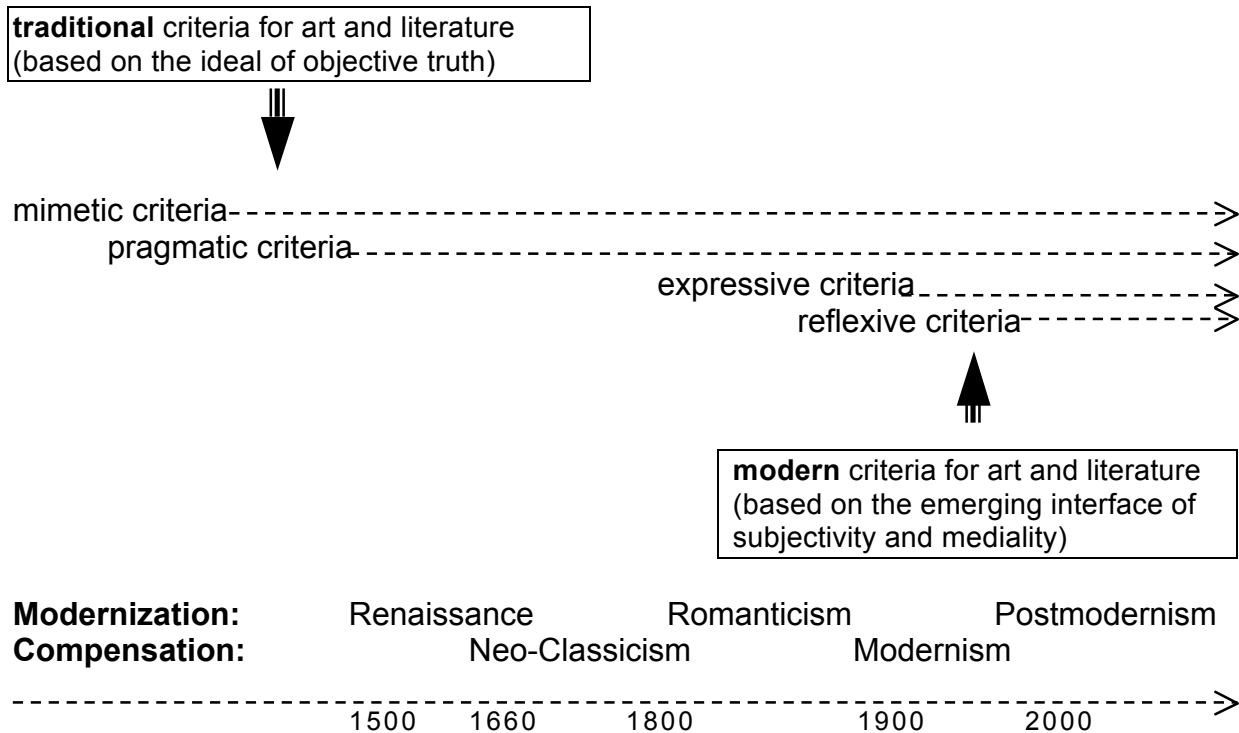
marked by an ongoing negotiation of

traditional "objective", i.e. mimetic and pragmatic dimensions of cultural meaning

on the one hand and, on the other,

modern "subjective", i.e. expressive and reflexive dimensions of cultural meaning

4) The Basic Outline of a Systematic Approach to English Literature (c. 1500-2014)



Bibliography Lecture 2:

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