

REALISM AND THE PAINTING OF MODERN LIFE:

Courbet, Realism, and Popular Images

- I. Realism and “The People”
 - A. Realism (popular) and Allegory (elitist) – shades of gray
 - B. Description as a literary strategy (Champfleury, Balzac, Zola)
 - C. Abandoning academic allegory (Gericault, Daumier versus Delacroix)
 - D. High Allegory (David? Ingres, Couture)
 - E. Gustave Courbet’s pictorial populism
 - 1) materiality of paint
 - 2) even, “gothic” light versus chiaroscuro
 - F. Battle of the artistic schools (line versus color, classicism versus populist realism)

- II. “Images d’Epinal” – Popular Prints as Courbet’s sources
 - A. Economics and demographics of print consumption
 - B. The iconography of the outcast (*juif errant*)

- III. “Real” Allegory in the Studio
 - A. “Real” *types* at a time when caricature is illegal: the Jew (financier), the conservative catholic (journalist), the impoverished Irish, the undertaker (newspaper editor); the huntsman (Napoleon III?!)
 - B. Theories
 - 1) Herding’s theory of exhortation to the ruler, calling for the balance of power
 - 2) Nochlin’s “theater of disengagement,” allegory as an incoherent and unfinished text in a tumultuous time
 - a) Themes of sexual difference
 - b) Power and powerlessness in the figure of the artist

Slide List (selected) for 4:1

(all images are by Courbet unless noted otherwise)

Gericault, Raft of the Medusa 1818-19

Gericault, Portrait of a Woman Suffering from Obsessive Envy, (and other “Folle” portraits) ca. 1822

review of David, Oath of the Tennis Court 1791

Ingres, Apotheosis of Homer 1827

caricatures of Courbet by Andre Gill, F. Nadar, Gilbert Randon... all ca. 1867-68

Portrait of Champfleury 1854

Portrait of Baudelaire 1849

Portrait of P.J. Proudhon, 1853

Stonebreakers 1849

Cornsifters 1855

The Meeting, or, “Good Day M. Courbet,” 1854

Self-Portrait with a Pipe 1846

Rocky Landscape Near Ornans 1855

The Cliffs of Etretat after a Storm, 1869 – detail showing materiality of paint

Enterrement, Burial at Ornans 1849-50

cf. Thomas Couture, *Romans of the Decadence* 1847

The Painter's Studio: Real-Life Allegory of the Last Seven Years of My Artistic Life, 1855