

Institution: Bishop Grosseteste University
Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature
Title of case study: Blake and Physiognomy: Ways of Seeing (the Body) in Text and Image. Dr. Sibylle Erle.
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>There are two ways in which Erle's research on William Blake, Physiognomy and text-image relationships have achieved public impact. First, a display and a Scholar's Morning on "Blake and Physiognomy" at Tate Britain (2010-11) and there were also invitations to give public lectures for "Haus der Romantik", a Literature Museum specialising on Romanticism in Marburg (Germany) and for the Blake Society, a London-based but international organisation of Blake scholars and enthusiasts. Second, an online-exhibition on Lord Alfred Tennyson's copy of Blake's <i>Job</i> for the Tennyson Research Centre (2012-13) and a display on Blake, Tennyson and Anne Gilchrist in Lincoln Public Library.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Erle works on text-image relationships in the literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. The research interests revolve around the interface of literature, reception studies, cultural history, textual criticism, art history and science and began with doctoral work which commenced in the spring of 2000. Erle's PhD was funded by a three-year PhD scholarship from <i>Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes</i> (2000-03) and a Mellon Fellowship at the Huntington Library in California (2003). The primary research was on the textuality of physiognomy which was revived as a science at the end of the C18th by Swiss pastor Johann Caspar Lavater. The project's emphasis was on how Lavater's ideas and conceptual problems, as evident in the many illustrated works translated into English, either influenced or anticipated discussions about character during the Romantic Period. The approach revolved around 'vision' and 'imagination' in Blake's works as well as an analysis of viewing experiences and visual effects in contemporary visual and textual media. It connected to the larger topics in British Romanticism, such as material culture, cultural materialism, reception, sensibility as well as book-making, printmaking, engraving and portrait painting. Erle was invited by Professor Colin Jones (Queen Mary, President of the Royal Society of History) to present at "Physiognomy from Lavater to the Great War" at the Scuola Normale Superior in Pisa (2010), and invited by Dr Emma Chambers (UCL Art Collections/Tate Britain) to present at one of her "Likeness and Facial Recognition Workshops" at the Wellcome Institute (2011). The published output included a monograph and several articles and chapters on Blake's responses to physiognomy in its aesthetic, cultural, scientific medical and religious contexts. Apart from this focus on Romantic visual culture, there was research into optical technology, used to enhance and aid vision, which led to a co-edited special issue on "Literature, Science and the Senses" (<i>Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net</i>, 2008) and contributions to <i>The Panorama, 1787-1900: Texts and Contexts</i> (5 vols, Pickering and Chatto, 2012). In September 2013 Erle gave an invited paper Egyptian Panoramas at the "Visions of Egypt" Conference, organised by Dr Catherine Wynne (Hull). Erle is now co-editing <i>The Reception of William Blake in Europe</i> (under contract with Bloomsbury) with Professor Morton D. Paley of the University of California at Berkeley. This project was invited by Dr Elinor Shaffer who is the general editor of the series <i>The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe</i>. Erle has secured external funding (BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant and an MHRA Conference Grant Fund) to support the organisers/editors and contributors. The work at the Tennyson Research Centre, which is on-going, began in the autumn of 2012, after the re-discovery of Tennyson's copy of Blake's <i>Job</i> and the discovery of a booklist. The project on character in the Romantic Period has so far generated one invitation to the Literature and Science Series at the Grant Zoological Museum in London.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Erle, S. and C. Capancioni, "Have you no compassion?": Danny Boyle's and Nick Dear's Re-examination of Monstrosity in <i>Frankenstein</i>", Special Issue on "Gothic Frontiers" ed. Francesca Saggini and Glennis Byron <i>Textus</i>, 3: 2012, pp. 133-45</p> <p>Erle, S., [contributor] <i>The Panorama, 1787-1900: Texts and Contexts</i>, ed.L. Garrison, 5 vols, (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), http://www.pickeringchatto.com/major_works/panoramas_1787_1900</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Erle S., "Introducing the *Songs with Inspiration: William Blake, Lavater and the Legacy of Felix Hess*", in *(Re)Writing the Radical: Enlightenment, Revolution and Cultural Transfer in 1790s Germany, Britain and France*, ed. Maïke Oergel (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter: 2012), pp. 250-69

Erle, S., *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* (London: Legenda, 2010); also available as an e-book:

- "A Study like Sibylle Erle's *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* has been long overdue in the Anglo-Saxon academic context ... Erle's subtle lesson is that, firstly and lastly, Blakean visions were rooted in the day of concrete reality." **Catalin Ghita**, *BARS Bulletin & Review* (42, 2012, pp. 27-28)
- "The account of the publication of Lavater's several writings is detailed and fascinating" **Martin Butlin** *The Burlington Magazine*, CLIII, September 2011, p. 608.
- "Erle's conclusion is that Lavater could be seen by Blake to be superficial, and that Blake was more interested in showing how identity was constructed through the body, rather than through a given soul: bringing back the body means showing how that is connected to historical and material circumstances and culture operating, for instance, in the 1790s, the decade of Blake's creation myths." **Jeremy Tambling** *Modern Language Review* (106.4, 2011, pp. 1132-33)
- 'By developing this art-historical context [i.e., of Henry Fuseli], Erle produces many informative analyses of the ways in which both Blake's poetry and his prints reveal an abiding interest 'in how the human form acquires its embodied identity and the pitfalls inherent in likeness-making'. **Joseph Bristow** *Studies in English Literature* (51.4, Autumn 2011, p. 927)
- "Erle deserves great credit for returning the role of Lavater to Blake studies — especially as Blake's interests in physiognomy remained with him all through his life, surfacing again in his late *Visionary Heads*—and her chapter on the editing that took place in transforming the *Physiognomische Fragmente* into the *Essays on Physiognomy* is a superb piece of scholarship on this often neglected text." **Unsigned review** *Years Work in English Studies* (91.1, 2012, p. 673)

Erle, S., "The Lost Original: Blake and Lavater's search for Divine Likeness". In *In the Embrace of the Swan: Anglo-German Mythologies in Literature, the Visual Arts and Cultural Theory*, ed. Angus Nicholls and Ruediger Goerner (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 211-30

Erle, S., "Shadows in the Cave: Refocusing Vision in Blake's Creation Myth". In *Blake and Conflict*, ed. Sarah Haggarty and Jon Mee (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 144-63

Erle, S., "Johann Caspar Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*". In *Kindlers Literature Lexikon*, 3rd new and revised edition, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2009), 9, pp. 690-91

Erle, S., "Blake, Colour and the Truchsessian Gallery: Modelling the Mind and Liberating the Observer," *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net (RaVoN)*, guest, co-edited with Laurie Garrison (November 2008), Special Issue on Science, Technology and the Senses <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ravon/2008/v/n52/>

Erle, S., "William Blake's Lavaterian Women: Eleanor, Rowena, and Ahania," in *Women Read William Blake "Opposition is true Friendship"*, ed. Helen P. Bruder (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan: 2007), pp. 44-52

Erle, S., "Leaving their Mark: Lavater, Fuseli and Blake and their imprint on *Aphorisms on Man*," *Comparative Critical Studies*, Special Issue on Reception Studies, 3:3 (2006), pp. 347-69

Erle, S., "Representing Race: The Meaning of Colour and Line in William Blake's 1790s Bodies," in *The Reception of Blake in the Orient*, ed. Steve Clark and Masashi Suzuki (London/New York: Continuum, 2006), pp. 87-103

Erle, S., "Face to Face with Johann Caspar Lavater," *Blackwell Literature Compass*, 2:1 (2005), www.literature-compass.com/viewpoint.asp?section=7&ref=475

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Erle's research, begun in 2000, revolved around the textual and artistic dimensions as well as the literary and scientific interfaces of the cultural exchange between Britain, Germany and Switzerland. It focused particularly on Blake's creative engagement with contemporary science and more specifically with the ideas of Johann Caspar Lavater. The monograph, recommended for publication to Legenda by the British Comparative Literature Association, was published in 2010. Dr Erle co-curated a display on "Blake and Physiognomy" (2010-2011) and ran a Scholar's Morning at Tate Britain. In attendance were Blake scholars, curators and art historians as well as Blake enthusiasts. Erle was invited to present at "Physiognomy from Lavater to the Great War" at the Scuola Normale Superior in Pisa (2010), and also invited to present at a "Likeness and Facial Recognition Workshop" at the Wellcome Institute in London (2011). On both occasions, the audience (approx. 50 people) included academics (Historians, Art Historians, Historians of Science and Literature) as well as curators, health workers, psychologists and visual artists. Erle's research also resulted in a number of published academic outputs and in extramural terms, impact was created through a number of diverse opportunities for public engagement with the European context of Blake's approach to 'character'. Erle gave a public lecture at the Blake Society (2011), where she had previously given public lectures in 2001 and 2006. Approximately 20 people attended. She gave a public lecture at "Haus der Romantik" in Marburg, Germany (27 April 2011), where approximately 40 people attended. The event was advertised through the organisation's website and was listed in the regional news outlet *Marburger Express*.

Tate Britain (2010-11): The impact, underpinned by the research described above, is two-fold: Erle wrote and co-wrote texts, intended for a non-academic but educated audience for the display "Blake and Physiognomy" at Tate Britain (8 November 2010- 4 April 2011). According to the Tate Britain's visitor services during the time of the display approximately 750,000 visitors came to the Tate. They say with some degree of certainty that 500,000 visitors saw it. Erle has also been invited to contribute to the Tate's online catalogue in the future and participated in the Blake Workshop on the Eight Newly Acquired Plates, organised in co-operation with Tate Research Centre (14 July 2010), which first went on display as part of the "Romantics" exhibition (9 August 2010 – 31 July 2011). Erle ran a Scholar's Morning (14 January 2011), attended by colleagues, staff of Tate Britain and members of the public. Because of the curatorial efforts at the Tate, Dr Erle was invited to become a Fellow of the RSA on 14 May 2012. About the display Sir Nicolas Serota commented in an email: "Not easy to find new things to say about Blake, endlessly puzzling though he may be. It is very well conceived and presented." About the Scholars' Morning, Tim Heath (Chair of the Blake Society) said: it was "an initiative that enriches the entire Blake world." The public work with Tate Britain will continue through the Reception of William Blake in Europe research project. The connection between the impact achieved through Tate Britain and the Tennyson Research Centre, which will be explained next, are Erle's interest in 'likeness' and reception. While the display at Tate Britain explained about faces and their meanings in the late C18th, the online exhibition on Tennyson's copy of *The Illustrations of the Book of Job* delineate interpretations of Job's as well as Blake's relationship to the divine, which is rendered through varying degrees of likeness between Job, the Divine and Blake. The research at the Tennyson Archive has unearthed a number of documents to do with Tennyson's interest in Blake, which was welcome as evidence for a connection between them by both Tennyson and Blake Scholars.

Tennyson Research Centre (2012-13): Erle devised and created material for an online exhibition on Tennyson's copy of Blake's *Job* (online since 3 June 2013). It is concurrent with a display "Tennyson's Drawing Room Table", which includes letters sent between Tennyson and Anne Gilchrist, at the Lincoln Public Library (3 June – 30 September 2013). A second display is being planned from 4 October 2013 to 31 January 2014. Erle has been invited to talk to the Lincoln Society of Arts and to write about the significance of the discovery for the *Tennyson Research Bulletin*. A short piece has already been accepted by *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Web Presence & Endorsement:

- For Erasmus Staff Exchange with University of Greifswald, Germany / University of Zürich,

Impact case study (REF3b)

Switzerland: Dr Mascha Hansen (gemmeke@uni-greifswald.de) Dr Diane Piccitto (diane.piccitto@es.uzh.ch)

- For “Haus der Romantic” in Marburg, Germany (<http://www.romantikmuseum-marburg.de/>) and Professor Marita Metz-Becker: metzbeck@staff.uni-marburg.de; for Public Lecture; <http://www.marburg.de/sixcms/media.php/20/APRIL11..%20%20.pdf>
- For Talks for the Blake Society (<http://www.blakesociety.org/>) and Chair, Tim Heath: secretary@blakesociety.org
- For work at Tennyson Research Centre, Collections Access Officer: Grace.Timmins@lincolnshire.gov.uk; online exhibition: www.lincstothepast.com; information on display in the Lincoln Public Library on the Lincoln Council website: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-culture-and-learning/heritage/tennyson-research-centre/current-display-of-holdings-of-the-tennyson-research-centre/>
- For articles in the local press on Tennyson discovery: <http://thelincolnite.co.uk/2013/06/lincolnshire-poet-tennysons-special-link-with-william-blake/>; and jez@shootingstar-pr.co.uk (Shooting Star PR in Lincoln)
- Notice on Tennyson and the discovery in Tennyson Research Centre: “02.07.2013 Lincoln”, *TLS*, July 5, 2013 (No. 5753), p. 3.
- “Blake and Physiognomy” is listed as one of three displays of all displays between 2001-2011 on the wall of the new, permanent display of Blake’s works at Tate Britain, open since 14 May 2013. For “Blake and Physiognomy” at Tate Britain Lorna.Robertson@tate.org.uk; for continuing work Martin.Myrone@tate.org.uk
- Reviews of the display “Blake and Physiognomy”: “Blake and Physiognomy explores the relationship between Blake and the fascination with aspects of physiognomy and phrenology that developed in the late eighteenth century.” <http://zoamorphosis.com/2010/11/blake-and-physiognomy-2/>;
- Announcement of talk with Phillippa Simpson at Birkbeck: <http://enfilade18thc.wordpress.com/2011/06/13/this-weeks-romantic-objects-seminar-in-london-blake-and-varley/>
- For Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (<http://www.thersa.org/>); Chair of the East Midlands Region peterjrobinson@tiscali.co.uk

External Funding for the relevant period:

Research Grant from Bibliographical Society £189.20 (2010);

Research Grant from Wellcome Trust: £450 (2010);

Paul Mellon Research Grant: £1445 (2010-2013);

BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant: £9870 (1 April 2013 - 30 June 2014);

MHRA Conference Grant Fund (£1452.96) (for Colloquium at Tate Britain)