

SEMINAR 7

JOSEPH WRIGHT: KEY CONCEPTS & IDEAS

- was born, raised and worked in and around Derby in the English Midlands
- was one of the foremost painters of the Industrial Revolution in England
- established himself as a travelling portrait painter of the Midlands
- painted members of the rising middle class, professional people and local landed gentry
- explored the themes of mass production, mechanisation, technology, labour and agriculture

VOCABULARY TO DESCRIBE WRIGHT AND HIS PAINTINGS

- to be one of the most unjustly obscure painters in the history of British painting
- to be an established portrait painter by the age of 22
- to take up drawing at the age of 11
- to sketch classical sculpture and architecture
- to be interested in mechanical and scientific inventions
- to do commissions for members of the Lunar Society in Birmingham
- to experiment with interiors lit by candles and other sources of light
- to establish a portrait painting practice
- not to be like other artists grinding out likenesses of the rich
- his subsequent landscapes illustrate the tranquillity of an Italian landscape
- to be elected to the Royal Academy
- to develop more romanticism in his works
- to be stunning in its detail and eerie in its mysterious light
- to suffocate an expensive cockatoo
- to anticipate the worst
- a child weeping in horror
- to begin to explore the machinery of realism
- a belief that we live in a rational world and we learn its workings through rational analysis
- to be a contemporary parlour trick of scientific showmen
- an aging scientist demonstrating an air pump
- a demonstration of pneumatics
- a bird in a glass jar
- one is left with the dilemma of whether the bird lives or dies
- the painting leaves the viewer in awe
- human dimension putting limits on the cold use of intellect