

International Visiting Scholar Academic Seminar Tour (106.1: 17-25 October 2017)

Professor Jeremy Tambling
Formerly Chair Professor of Literature, University of Manchester, UK

Seminars:

1. Phantasmagoria and Physiognomy: Spectral Reality, the City, and the Detective

18 October (Wednesday)

1500-1700

DEFF Conference Room, Gallery of University History,
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature,
National Taiwan University

2. Iron Architecture: Reading the Nineteenth Century

19 October (Thursday)

1000-1130

Room 5117, College of Planning & Design Building
Department of Architecture & Institute of Creative Industries Design,
National Cheng Kung University

3. Blake and Milton: Torments of Reason and Jealousy

19 October (Thursday)

1330-1530

LA R3005, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, College of Liberal Arts,
National Sun Yat-sen University

4. Reading Stains: Leonardo da Vinci, the Grotesque, and the Baroque

23 October (Monday)

1530-1730

Room 406, Graduate Institute of Art History,
National Taiwan Normal University

5. Dickens and Poe: Mysteries of Paris and London

24 October (Tuesday)

1010-1200

Room 401, General Studies Building, Department of English,
National Taipei University of Technology

6. Lawrence, Cézanne, and Merleau-Ponty

25 October (Wednesday)

1330-1530

LA302, College of Foreign Languages, Department of English,
Fu Jen Catholic University

Open Lectures (at Taipei Tech)

1. On 'Punch and Judy' ('Western Drama' BA class)

17 Oct (Tuesday)
1500-1800
Room 606, General Studies Building

2. On Benjamin's 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century' ('Reading the City' evening MA class)

23 Oct (Monday)
1830-2110
Room 301-1, General Studies Building

3. On Shakespeare's *The Tempest* ('Western Drama' BA class)

24 Oct (Tuesday)
1500-1800
Room 606, General Studies Building

All are welcome

For inquiry about course materials please contact Dr Louis Lo (louislo@ntut.edu.tw)

Speaker Bio:

Jeremy Tambling has been Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong and Chair Professor of Literature at the University of Manchester, UK. He is author of over twenty books on literary and cultural theory. His latest publications include a monograph *Histories of the Devil: from Marlowe to Mann and the Manichees* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and an edited volume *The Palgrave Handbook of Literature and the City* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Personal webpage: <https://jeremytambling.com/>

Abstracts:

1. Phantasmagoria and Physiognomy: Spectral Reality, the City, and the Detective

‘The crowd is the veil through which the familiar city beckons to the *flâneur* as phantasmagoria – now a landscape, now a room.’
– Walter Benjamin, ‘Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century’

What is meant by the ‘phantasmagoria’, the optical displays that were put on in cities throughout the nineteenth century? What is meant by the concept of physiognomy – the idea of reading faces to detect a person’s character, or a way of describing a face itself in order to think about the character of the person? The phantasmagoria was principally used for the display of ghosts, and spectrality, and is important for thinking about the city in relation to death, and the image of the dance of death. The physiognomy could be used for caricature, or for fixing faces and identities, or for suggesting that no face is like anything else except itself – or else is unlike itself, a concept which compares with Freud on the uncanny. These are two ways of reading the visual culture of the city, and this paper will use several extracts to suggest ways in which writers experienced the city. I will discuss E.T.A. Hoffmann’s ‘My Cousin’s Corner Window’, chapter 32 of Dickens’ *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *A Christmas Carol*, Edgar Allan Poe’s short story ‘The Man of the Crowd’ and ‘The Philosophy of Furniture’, and hope to draw in discussion of Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*, to examine how this theorist of the city approaches the phantasmagoria and the physiognomy, as two ways of thinking about what is absent, and what is present, in a face, in a street, in a room, and how all urban reality is simultaneously alive, and dead, ghostly.

Chair: Dr. Chi-she Li
(Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures,
National Taiwan University)

2. Iron Architecture: Reading the Nineteenth Century

One of the great divides in nineteenth century thought came with the introduction of iron and glass construction into buildings: this, replacing the Gothic and the classical, produced an urban world of railway stations and iron tracks, exhibition spaces, new spaces for the display of the commodity, and such an extravagance as the Eiffel Tower, and above all a new concept of speed. All this came attended by a new thinking which stressed transparency, and redefined ‘speed’, and the ephemeral. John Ruskin (1819-1900) hated it, and wrote against the use of iron, just as Charles Dickens wrote about the railway in *Dombey and Son* (1848) and the Ironmaster in *Bleak House* (1853). This paper looks at the substantive reasons for Ruskin’s hatred of iron, and at the conflicts of discourse that iron architecture led to, including such a concept as ‘iron necessity’, since iron was so often used in buildings which stressed stone and classical form, as in Haussmann’s redesigned Paris, as if attempting to disguise some of the revolutionary and democratising implications of this new architecture. Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*, and his discussions of Sigfried Giedion in his book on architecture in the nineteenth-century, and the unconscious values circulated through it, I hope to give a way of thinking about the nineteenth-century, and nineteenth-century cities, and to give a trope for considering its literature through observing the uses of iron, and the imagery to which it lent itself.

Chair: Dr. Sheng-Fen Nik Chien
(Associate Professor, Department of Architecture & Institute of Creative Industries Design, National Cheng Kung University)

3. Blake and Milton: Torments of Reason and Jealousy

William Blake (1757-1827) was a keen reader of John Milton (1608-1674), whom he loved and criticised in equal measure, responding to *Paradise Lost* (1667) with intensity, seeing in it an antagonism between Reason and Desire. Exactly in what ways Milton was a revolutionary poet, in the Civil War (1642-1649), and in the Commonwealth (1649-1660) and threatened as to his own life in the Restoration of the monarchy (1660) will be explored. Blake's own poems, in *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789-1793) may be seen as a re-reading of key aspects of that tension, and lead to discussion of the place that Reason and Jealousy, have with each other, Jealousy being seen as both a desire, a feeling, and as an intellectual force, a way of thinking, and both being related to the idea of hypocrisy. This paper will bring in the critiques of both poets by F.R. Leavis, and in particular, his linking of Blake to Dickens.

Chair: Dr. Chia-Jung Lee
(Assistant Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, National Sun Yat-sen University)

4. Reading Stains: Leonardo da Vinci, the Grotesque, and the Baroque

This paper draws on some of the seminal insights in Walter Benjamin's 1928 book *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (which it introduces) to discuss three concepts central to it. First is the baroque, which is, initially, seen as a moment of conflict and unease and disparity between the inner and the outer self, focused in the discussion of Alois Riegl's reading of Michelangelo's Medici tombs. Second is allegory, as a form of imagery and way of thinking which undoes the sense of any organic unity in the work of art; which splits it apart, and exists to undo the thought of 'nature' being representable in art. The third concept is the grotesque. This, Benjamin connects, unusually – it is not the standard definition - with what is buried, and so with repression, and, because buried, with death. Examples will be given of grotesque images in art and literature. Death itself becomes a dominant but non-discussable, because non-representable subject within the baroque, and receives a new accentuation in the plurality of allegorical images used for it. The European and American seventeenth-century, the age of colonialism and warfare – the century saw only nine years in Europe which were without war somewhere – becomes baroque in a response to political and religious crisis, and in the desire to impose authority. This paper draws on examples of Metaphysical and Baroque emblematic images in the arts, while attempting to analyse the usefulness of Benjamin's terms for the idea of reading art as that which either responds to crisis, or which is in crisis.

Chair: Professor Dr. Candida Syndikus
(Professor and Director, Graduate Institute of Art History, National Taiwan Normal University)

5. Dickens and Poe: Mysteries of Paris and London

What was the relationship, in historical, and literary terms, between Edgar Allan Poe, the master of the uncanny, of night-walking, of writing about the city, and of the detective novel, and Dickens, also a pioneer in all these subjects, and the master of plot which would put all these things into play? How did both writers settle on the importance of the detective, and of writing as detection? This paper will discuss all these topics, and attempt to think about their one meeting in America, with special reference to ‘The Man of the Crowd’, ‘The Masque of the Red Death’, and the Dupin stories (‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ and ‘The Purloined Letter’), and Poe’s poem ‘The Raven’, putting these alongside Dickens’ *Great Expectations* (1861), though reference will be made to a wide range of Dickens’ texts as well, including *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), and *Bleak House* (1853).

Chair: Dr. Louis Lo
(Associate Professor, Department of English, Taipei Tech)

6. Lawrence, Cézanne, and Merleau-Ponty

D.H. Lawrence’s ‘Introduction to these Paintings’, written as a catalogue for his own paintings, approaches not so much them, nor his own novels, but Cézanne’s work in painting, whose greatness it sees in its fighting the cliché, in an attempt to paint the ‘appleyness of the apple’: giving an approach to ‘things’ and to ‘thinginess’ which tries to see things not with the objectivity as defined by science, but as attempting to see the object in all its potentiality and ‘otherness’. This paper introduces, and compares, Lawrence’s insights with those of Merleau-Ponty, in one of his last and most attractive essays, ‘Eye and Mind’ (1961), which, engaging with Cézanne, became, alongside his posthumously published work on *The Visible and the Invisible*, fundamental to Lacan’s discussions of the gaze, the real, and the *objet petit a* in *The Four Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis* (1964), one of whose motivating questions is, ‘what is a picture?’. In Merleau-Ponty, whose phenomenology is an attempt to escape from a scientific outlook which gives up living in things, but which objectivises them, Cézanne is a key figure, and I will compare him with Lawrence and Lacan on the subject of what this modernist painting consists of, and what it does, in the hope of contributing something to an understanding of modernism, and modernist writing, and looking at the relevance of each figure for a non-reductive account of the work of art.

Chair: Dr. Joseph Murphy
(Associate Professor and Chair of Department, Department of English, Fu Jen Catholic University)