**The Spectacular Enlightenment**

Dr. David Taylor

In this course we will consider spectacle from the invention of spectacular public theatre in the Restoration to the pantomimes of the early nineteenth century. We will think about theatre not only as a visual art but as a medium, practice, and figure perhaps singularly equipped to probe the nature of visual experience and knowledge. In doing so, we will work across and bring into comparative relation the histories of dramatic form and theatrical production, on the one hand, and the intellectual history of the theatre as a constitutive constellation of Enlightenment metaphors: performance, the stage, and, perhaps most important, the spectator. We’ll read plays – tragedies, comedies, pantomimes – alongside works of philosophy, polemic, and prose fiction; we’ll encounter and reflect upon such cultural modes as empiricism, sentimentalism, and romanticism; and we’ll ask what it means to understand spectacle as a vital if always suspect epistemology.

Texts to purchase

You will need to purchase the following editions:

* Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, ed. Paul Salzman (Oxford)
* William Earle, *Obi; or, The History of Three Fingered Jack*, ed. Srinivas Aravamudan (Broadview)
* Helen Maria Williams, *Letters Written in France, in the Summer of 1790*, ed. Neil Fraistat and Susan S. Lanser (Broadview)

Week-by-week overview

**1. The new regime of/as spectacle**

Primary texts:

* William Davenant, *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie, by a New Way of Entertainment of the People*(1653)
* \_\_\_\_, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658)
* Elkanah Settle, *The Empress of Morocco* (1673)

Critical text: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977)

**2. Science as spectacle**

Primary texts:

* Thomas Shadwell, *The Virtuoso* (1676)
* Elizabeth Inchbald, *Animal Magnetism* (1788)

Critical text: Barbara Maria Stafford, *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1994)

**3. Society as spectacle, the self as spectacle**

Primary texts

* Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator* (1711-12), nos. 1, 10, 69, 73, 206, 257.
* Adam Smith, excerpts of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759)
* Joseph Addison, *Cato* (1713)

Critical text: David Marshall, ‘Adam Smith and the Theatricality of Moral Sentiments’, *Critical Inquiry*, 10.4 (1984), 592-613.

**4. Race as spectacle**

Primary texts:

* Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)
* Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko* (1695)
* William Earle, *Obi; or, The History of Three Fingered Jack* (1800)
* John Fawcett, *Obi; or, Three-Finger’d Jack: A Serio-Pantomime, in Two Acts* (1800)

Critical text:Ramesh Mallipeddi, *Spectacular Suffering:* *Witnessing Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic* (Charlottesville : University of Virginia Press, 2016).

**5. Revolution as spectacle**

Primary texts:

* John St. John, *The Island of St. Marguerite* (1789)
* Excerpts from Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (1791)
* Helen Maria Williams, *Letters Written in France, in the Summer of 1790* (1790)

Critical text: W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986)

**6. The Popular as Spectacle**

Primary texts

* David Garrick, *Harlequin’s Invasion* (1759)
* William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), Book 7

Critical text: John O’Brien, ‘Harlequin Britain: Eighteenth-Century Pantomime and the Cultural Location of Entertainment(s)’, *Theatre Journal* 50.4 (1998), 498-510

Further reading

Altick, Richard D., *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1978).

Backscheider, Paula R., *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

Baugh, Christopher, ‘Philippe de Loutherbourg: Technology-Driven Entertainment and Spectacle in the Late Eighteenth Century’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 70 (2007), 251-68

Blakemore, Stephen (ed.), *Burke and the French Revolution: Bicentennial Essays*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

Bratton, Jacky, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Buckley, Matthew S., *Tragedy Walks the Streets: The French Revolution in the Making of Modern Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

Burks, Deborah G., *Horrid Spectacle: Violation in the Theater of Early Modern England* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2003).

Carlson, Julie A., *In the Theatre of Romanticism: Coleridge, Nationalism, Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Coppola, Al, *The Theater of Experiment: Staging Natural Philosophy in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Crary, Jonathan, ‘Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory’, *October*, 50 (1989), 96–107.

De Bolla, Peter, *The Education of the Eye: Painting, Landscape, and Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Debord, Guy, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1970).

Fried, Michael, *Absorption and Theatricality:* *Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

Gibbs, Jenna M., *Performing the Temple of Liberty: Slavery, Theater, and Popular Culture in London and Philadelphia, 1760–1870* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014)

Hindson, Paul, and Tim Gray, *Burke’s Dramatic Theory of Politics* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1988).

Keenan, Tim, *Restoration Staging, 1660-1674* (London: Routledge, 2016).

Marsden, Jean, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Mallipeddi,Ramesh, *Spectacular Suffering:* *Witnessing Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic* (Charlottesville : University of Virginia Press, 2016).

Marshall, David, *The Figure of Theater: Shaftesbury, Defoe, Adam Smith, George Eliot* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

Nuss, Melynda, *Distance, Theatre, and the Public Voice, 1750-1850* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Nussbaum, Felicity A., *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

O’Brien, John, *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment, 1690-1760* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

O’Quinn, Daniel, *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770–1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

\_\_\_\_, *Entertaining Crisis in the Atlantic Imperium, 1770-1790* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

Pascoe, Judith, *Romantic Theatricality: Gender, Poetry and Spectatorship* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

Rancière, Jacques, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Elliot Gregory (London: Verso, 2009).

Russell, Gillian, *Theatres of War: Performance, Politics and Society, 1793-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

Stallybrass, Peter, and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).

Swindells, Julia, and David Francis Taylor (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Taylor, David Francis, ‘Wordsworth at the Theater: Illegitimate Spectacle in Book 7 of *The Prelude*’, *European* *Romantic Review*, 20 (2009), 77-93.

\_\_\_\_, *Theatres of Opposition: Empire, Revolution, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

\_\_\_\_, *The Politics of Parody: A Literary History of Caricature, 1760-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

Taylor, George, *The French Revolution and the London Stage, 1789-1805* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Thomas, Sophie, *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle* (London: Routledge, 2008).

Wilson, Kathleen, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

Worrall, David (2007), *Harlequin Empire: Race, Ethnicity and the Popular Drama of the Enlightenment* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007).