

GLASGOW COLOUR STUDIES GROUP

Notes following the Fifteenth Meeting, 2nd November 2011

The fifteenth meeting of the GCSG took place in Room 1, English Language, University of Glasgow. Thanks are due to Carole Hough, who acted as master of ceremonies, and to Christian Kay who organized the refreshments.

Our speaker was Liam Paterson, Assistant Curator of the Scottish Screen Archive.

Liam Paterson spoke on ‘The Colour of Memories / The Colours of Memory’

His abstract is as follows:

“Our visualisation and perception of the ‘reality’ of periods in the past is often filtered through the film technologies of the time. The 1930s is the pivotal decade in terms of moving images, when Kodachrome film became commercially available mid-decade, and the perception of the world very gradually started to move from monochrome to colour. Every so often I am struck by a new film from this period coming into the Archive, usually shot on Kodachrome and well filmed, which looks much more ‘real’ than most because of its colour quality. These thoughts and impressions will be illustrated with a selection of films and clips.”

Commentary (Carole Biggam):

Liam discussed how our memories or impressions of the past can be affected by the film technology of the time, especially the quality (or lack) of colour. He considered whether that technology influences our sense of the ‘reality’ of the past. To illustrate the changes in film, he showed a number of clips ranging across the twentieth century. A busy street scene in Hawick in the 1900s was restricted to black and white, and had no accompanying sound but, in the 1910s limited colour was introduced. A clip of boats at Yarmouth at this date is blue, but with no other colours. Liam explained this effect could be achieved by shooting the film on tinted black and white stock, and/or toning could be added by replacing silver particles in the film with dyes. Although this adds colour, the feeling of reality is not enhanced, but the intention was probably simply to create an emotive effect. More realistic colour appeared in the 1930s, especially with the introduction of Kodachrome film in 1935. Liam showed a clip of the Empire Exhibition, held in Glasgow in 1938, which showed a distinctively Art Deco palette of red, white and green. However, it has a rather ‘washed out’ look today which may be because the film has faded, or because the weather was bad at the time, or perhaps even because the buildings and exhibits actually *were* in these faint colours. This points out the difficulty of interpreting ‘reality’ in the colours of old films. A film of Tarbert and Lamlash from 1936 also showed a dominant red and green, but a maritime clip of 1937 showed strong ‘normal’ colours. Liam showed two clips from 1939 with good colours: firstly, the launch of a new lifeboat at Wick; and, secondly, a sea trip from Musselburgh, filmed by Alexander Lowe. Finally, we saw a clip from 1947, taken at Berwick by Richard Irvine, in which even the texture of the coats worn by people in the crowd could be clearly seen.

News

- The proceedings of the 'Progress in Colour Studies' (PICS) conference, held in the University of Glasgow in 2008, has just been published by John Benjamins. The title is *New Directions in Colour Studies*, and the editors are Carole P. Biggam, Carole A. Hough, Christian J. Kay and David R. Simmons. The book contains many of the papers presented at PICS08, and offers a range of colour-related topics. **The contents list can be found at the foot of this page.**
- Members are reminded that the next PICS conference, PICS12, will take place in the University of Glasgow from the 10th to the 13th July 2012. See: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/research/seminarsandevents/glasgowcolourstudiesgroup/pics12/>
- The next GCSG meeting will take place on Wednesday, 1st February, when we will have two short talks: 'Colours in Scottish Languages' by David Robinson, and 'Gaelic Colour Words in the Landscape' by Peter Drummond.
- Please help everyone by announcing any colour-related conferences or publications that come to your attention, on our discussion list at ColourStudies@jiscmail.ac.uk Please also raise there any of your colour queries or problems, as our multidisciplinary membership is very likely to be able to help.

Contents of *New Directions in Colour Studies* (for publication details, see under 'News' above)

Theoretical Issues:

Illusions of colour and shadow, *Frederick A. A. Kingdom*.

Universal trends and specific deviations: multidimensional scaling of colour terms from the World Colour Survey, *David Bimler*.

Touchy-feely colour, *Mazviita Chirimuuta*.

Towards a semiotic theory of basic colour terms and the semiotics of Juri Lotman, *Urmaz Sutrop*.

Languages of the World:

Basic colour terms of Arabic, *Abdulrahman S. Al-Rasheed* et al.

Red herrings in a sea of data: exploring colour terms with the SCOTS Corpus, *Wendy Anderson*.

Towards a diachrony of Maltese basic colour terms, *Alexander Borg*.

Rosa Schätze – Pink zum kaufen: stylistic confusion, subjective perception and semantic uncertainty of a loaned colour term, *Claudia Frenzel-Biamonti*.

Kashubian colour vocabulary, *Danuta Stanulewicz and Adam Pawłowski*.

Colour terms: evolution via expansion of taxonomic constraints, *Ekaterina V. Rakhilina and Galina V. Paramei*.

Preliminary research on Turkish basic colour terms with an emphasis on blue, *Kaidi Rätsep*.

Terms for red in Central Europe: an areal phenomenon in Hungarian and Czech, *Mari Uusküla*.

Colour in Society:

Colours in the community: surnames and bynames in Scottish society, *Ellen S. Bramwell*.

Hues and cries: Francis Bacon's use of colour, *Nicholas Chare*.

Colour appearance in urban chromatic studies, *Michel Cler*.

Aspects of armorial colours and their perception in medieval literature, *Michael J. Huxtable*.

Warm, cool, light, dark or afterimage: dimensions and connotations of conceptual colour metaphor/metonym, *Jodi L. Sandford*.

The power of colour term precision: the user of non-basic colour terms in nineteenth-century English travelogues about northern Scandinavia, *Anders Steinvall*.

Categorical Perception of Colour:

Investigating the underlying mechanisms of categorical perception of colour using the event-related potential technique, *Alexandra Clifford et al.*

Category training affects colour discrimination but only in the right visual field, *Gilda Drivonikou et al.*

Effects of stimulus range on colour categorization, *Oliver Wright*.

Individual Differences in Colour Vision:

Colour and autism spectrum disorders, *Anna Franklin and Paul Sowden*.

Red-green dichromats' use of basic colour terms, *Julio Lillo, Humberto Moreira and Ian R. L. Davies*.

Synaesthesia in colour, *Julia Simner*.

Towards a phonetically-rich account of speech-sound → colour synaesthesia, *Rachel Smith et al.*

Perceiving 'grue': filter simulations of aged lenses support the Lens-Brunescence hypothesis and reveal individual categorization types, *Sebastian Walter*.

Colour Preference and Colour Meaning:

Age-dependence of colour preference in the U.K. population, *Yazhu Ling and Anya Hurlbert*.

Ecological valence and human colour preference, *Stephen E. Palmer and Karen B. Schloss*.

Look and learn: links between colour preference and colour cognition, *Nicola J. Pitchford, Emma E. Davis and Gaia Scerif*.

Effects of lightness and saturation on colour associations in the Mexican population, *Lilia Roselía Prado-León and Rosa Amelia Rosales-Cinco*.

Colour and emotion, *David R. Simmons*.

Colours and colour adjectives in the cortex, *Alessio Plebe, Marco Mazzone and Vivian De La Cruz*.

Colour Vision Science:

Chromatic perceptual learning, *Paul T. Sowden et al.*

Unique hues: perception and brain imaging, *Sophie M. Wuerger and Laura Parkes*.

A short note on visual balance judgements as a tool for colour appearance matching, *Lucia R. Ronchi*.