

Narrating Love and Care in Global China of Our Time

11-13 October 2024

**Mok Yu Yan Conference Hall F1202,
12/F, HKMU Jockey Club Institute
of Healthcare**

Convenors and Organizers

Convenors:

**Professor Eva Kit Wah MAN, Acting Dean
School of Arts and Social Sciences, HKMU**

**Professor Amy Wai-sum LEE, Professor
School of Arts and Social Sciences, HKMU**

Organizers:

Dr Xuying YU,

Dr Kaby Wing-Sze KUNG,

Dr Timmy Chih-Ting CHEN,

and Dr Penn Tsz Ting IP

School of Arts and Social Sciences, HKMU

Panel I: Narrating Chinese Diaspora: Identity Issues, Cultural Variations and Representation

Convenor: Professor Eva Kit Wah Man

Description

This panel proposes to review various forms of narration among Chinese diaspora in different areas of the world that are articulating subjectivities. Speakers will discuss new identity formation and cultural variations the Chinese diaspora groups have formed and developed. The panelists will review biographical writing, curatorial narration in public displays, song compositions in Chinese languages, visual arts and moving images reflecting on their living in diaspora. The panel will look at 1) how the representations of diaspora are constituted by the sensual and performative media through which diasporans enact their felt autonomy, and a “space” they claim to own; 2) how the narratives mediated are subjectified through circulation in the networks of Chinese diaspora to create new forms of aesthetics, disseminating care and support for social existence.

Panelist Session

Professor Henry YU, Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of British Columbia, BC Canada.

<https://acam.arts.ubc.ca/henry-yu/>

“Hope and Sacrifice and Networks of Desire: An Affective History of the Cantonese Pacific for the Last Three Centuries”

Beginning in the early 19th century, a geographically limited set of Cantonese-speaking migrants went through the ports of Macau, Guangzhou, and then Hong Kong across and around the Pacific Ocean, creating a coherent century long migration process that was persistent, recurring, and unique in its effect on global history. This singular process of migration, which we can label the “Cantonese Pacific,” developed a powerful conception of affect and time that defined both geographic and social mobility, defining axes of spatial and temporal change through narratives of aspiration. Creating a future-orientation that was markedly different from the dynastic cycles of time that defined official histories of the rise and fall of Chinese imperial states, the “Cantonese Pacific” organized a powerful “futuraity” that shaped the ideal “life cycle” of hundreds of thousands of long-distance migrants and the families that they left behind in rural villages.

This sense of a temporally-bounded future through migrating across unbounded space clashed with the innovation of spatially bound national time that defined geographic belonging in new “white settler-colonial” nations such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States in the 19th century. This conflict in definitions of the future created a century of racially exclusionary national politics all around the Pacific, as discriminatory anti-Chinese (and eventually anti-Asian) laws and practices curtailed and constrained the networks of the Cantonese Pacific. Ultimately, however, anti-Chinese policies could only bind Cantonese migrants to a limited extent. The affective power of the Cantonese Pacific’s conception of a prosperous future ignited aspirations for physical and social mobility and a desire for the acquisition of material wealth that was more effective in generating and sustaining mobility than the definitions of spatial and temporal belonging associated with the development of white settler nationhood, where a boundless undisciplined notion of time and bounded national space emphasized settlement and the acquisition of land and property.

This presentation explores the role of affect both in understanding Cantonese migration history in its initial contexts of mobility as well as in how diasporic imaginations both evoke and revoke the original affective histories that defined the movements of bodies, ideas and goods.

Professor Eva Kit Wah Man, School of Arts and Social Sciences,
HKMU, Hong Kong

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Representational Aesthetics of Chinese Diaspora in North America: A Case Study in the Museum Exhibition, “The Paper Trail to the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act”

The storytelling of Chinese diaspora always focuses on the complex interplay between individual experiences and the community structures they built, in the midst of the discursive happenings they met. and the miserable treatments they had received in the history of their migration. It is very revealing to examine the storytelling and the media representation in understanding the narratives of migrant experiences from the aesthetical perspective. This study aims to analyze the visual representation effect in shaping migration narratives, and the challenges faced by migrants in navigating cultural identity and the social norms in real lives. The case chosen in this study is the storytelling aesthetics of the life of the Chinese bachelors living under the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act in Canada. The discussion touches on gender dimension, Chinese diaspora and the visual depiction of this particular group of diasporan community, who was marginalized under the specific Act. It reviews the impacts of the visual narratives on the generalization of the reception of Chinese diaspora from the contemporary reflective points of view.

Professor Stephen Yiu Wai Chu, School of Chinese, HKU
<https://repository.hku.hk/cris/rp/rp01773>

“Include Me Out”: The Diasporic Imaginaries of Hong Kong Cantopop

In the aftermath of the social unrest in 2019, Hong Kong experienced a new wave of emigration. Meanwhile, Cantopop, widely considered to be declining in the new millennium, went through a revival despite the heavy blow dealt by the global pandemic. Having been the voice of the city for decades, it started producing songs about Hong Kong’s migration - leaving and staying - in this special context. Renowned lyricist Wyman Wong, among others, said in an award presentation ceremony that he launched an experiment of writing Cantopop while living away from his hometown, trying to construct an undisturbed, self-sufficient “metaverse” of Cantopop. This paper explores how Cantopop lyricists, whether they chose to leave or stay, strive to shape the diasporic imaginaries of Hong Kong people in the 2020s, which will help theorize the trend by situating its importance in the larger framework of Hong Kong Studies.

Dr Kit Hung, Independent Film Maker (UK and Switzerland)

<https://cream.ac.uk/people/kit-hung/>

Carrying Home: Family Artefact and Personal Storytelling, an audio-visual diary

This practice-based research, *Carrying Home: Family Artefact and Personal Storytelling*, is presented as an essay film that portrays the lives of three Hong Kong diasporic individuals, each of whom carries a family artifact or object that evokes a profound sense of "home" in their new surroundings. These objects serve not merely as reminders of the place left behind but as intimate anchors of identity and belonging, allowing them to recreate the feeling of home while living abroad. Through personal interviews, the film explores their reasons for leaving the place where they grew up and the strength they discovered in rebuilding their lives in foreign lands.

As an essay film, the work employs audiovisual language to enhance a sense of sensuality and connection, with the details of these artifacts and their emotional significance taking center stage. Layered visuals and soundscapes immerse the audience, while the storytelling—intertwining personal reflections with the artifacts—evokes Derrida's hauntology (1993), where the past "haunts" the present through memory. Engaging in memory work (Kuhn, 2002), the film shows how identity is shaped not only by the act of leaving but also by the emotional ties carried forward. It further draws on diasporic hauntings (Gordon, 1997), revealing how artifacts and memories intertwine absence and presence, mediating the tension between loss and continuity.

Keynote Speaker Session

Professor Gregory Lee, School of Modern Languages, St. Andrew University, UK

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/modern-languages/people/chinese/gbl1/>

Loving Ghosts: Is it ever too late to honour the dead?

For generations migrants attempted to hide themselves away, to make themselves small, to bury their stories. It is the storyline of many a diasporic story-teller attempting to write the story of those who never spoke.

Whether recounting personal, family stories, or attempting to address collective, national and global wrongs, the weight of the present often seems even heavier than the past. Added to such obstacles, the current geopolitical configuration and the changed perception of China in the Western imaginary renders inaudible voices seeking the West's reassessment of its own historic mistreatment of China and its people.

As for the USA's nineteenth-century exclusion from entry and citizenship of Chinese, the UK's forced repatriation of thousands of Chinese seamen after World War 2, and more generally xenophobic hate campaigns against an imagined Yellow Peril, and more recently COVID-related anti-Asian hatred, the prospects of wrongs done to Chinese people in the diaspora being righted or even simply addressed becomes more difficult.

Against the odds, can story-tellers, playwrights and poets make a difference in illuminating the woes suffered by those now long dead?

Panel II: Gender and Affects: Diversity, Dislocation, and Decolonization

Moderator: Dr Penn Tsz Ting Ip

Description

Mobilizing affect theory, this panel will explore how gender has been constantly and intensely shaped and reshaped in the wake of decolonization in 21st-century global China. How can indigenous mental health issues reflect the political economy of our time? How do rural women experience and imagine their affective lives when staying in the villages in China? What kind of challenges will rural women endure when they opt for migrant work in the cities? Lastly, how can migration create agencies and potentiality of change, especially for the gender minorities and the queer communities? Focusing on gender across various social classes and stratifications, this panel discuss topics related to indigenous psychology, queer mobility, rural women, and rural-to-urban migrant women workers in tandem with the affective experiences and encounters of love and care.

Keynote Speaker Session

Professor Jie Yang, Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
Simon Fraser University, Canada

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***Guanchang Meixue* “Bureaucratic Aesthetics”:** Xin/Heart, Aesthetic Attunement, and Decolonizing Euro-American Psychology

Traditional Chinese aesthetic principles have been widely practiced in Chinese officialdom since ancient times. These include *anshi* “suggestiveness,” *hanxu* “reticence,” *liubai* “intended blank,” and key aesthetic methodologies like *chayan guanse* (scrutinize one’s speeches and facial expressions). These practices both intensify and expose the opaqueness of organizational power, and unintelligibility of widespread *qian guize* “hidden rules” in China’s officialdom. Adhering to aesthetic principles requires acculturation and a high level of artfulness on the part of bureaucrats. Such artfulness based on personal aesthetic judgement is anchored in *xin*, the heart—the ground of cognition, emotion, virtue, and bodily sensation and the moral core for achieving equanimity and peace. Such aesthetic attunement allows officials to achieve success, gain respect from peers and superiors, and bridge untenable contradictions. It constitutes a hegemonic means of political reproduction, solidifying and extending the continued rule of the party while masking the human cost and limits of its bureaucrat power. While smooth, artful behavior can be gratifying, it has led to a crisis of *xinlei* “heart exhaustion” among officials. Paradoxically, everyday artfulness/aesthetic attunement might also be a resource for alternative healing. I discuss this paradox between *xinlei*/heart distress and the prospect of aesthetic healing. Since *xinlei* or heart distress cannot be fully captured by any of DSM-related psychiatric diagnostic categories like depression and anxiety, my analysis highlights the decolonial and therapeutic potential of *xin* and its rich neutrality. As a non-binary and paradigm-defying force, a *xin*-centered mode of care exceeds, conceptually and clinically—the psyche-based Euro-American psychology.

Panelist Session

Professor Esther Peeren, Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
<https://www.uva.nl/en/profile/p/e/e.peeren/e.peeren.html>

Leaving the Village/Staying in the Village: Affect and Gender in Xu Zechen's Beijing Sprawl and Li Ruijun's Return to Dust

In the wake of massive rural-to-urban migration, with migrants dreaming of better lives in the cities, the substantial “left-behind” population in the rural continues to be framed as a problem. At the same time, romanticized ideas of the Chinese rural increasingly drive tourism and counter-urbanization. To explore the way affects like hope, love, happiness, exhaustion and resignation become attached to the urban and the rural in different contemporary Chinese “good-life fantasies” (Berlant), I look at Xu Zechen's portrayal of young male rural-to-urban migrants in the 2023 novel *Beijing Sprawl* and at Li Ruijun's depiction, in the 2022 film *Return to Dust*, of an older couple entering into an arranged marriage and trying to build a life in their home village. I focus on the role gender norms plays in what affective lives the rural and urban are seen to afford.

Dr Hongwei Bao, School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
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Queering the Asian Diaspora: East and Southeast Identity, Sexuality and Cultural Politics in Europe

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated global geopolitical tensions and exposed rising Sinophobia and anti-Asian racism worldwide. At the same time, there has been a nascent Asian diasporic consciousness emerging globally, celebrating Asian identity and cultural heritage. In the space between anti-Asian racism and Asian Pride, queer people's voices have been largely missing. How is queer Asian diaspora situated in-between mainstream Asian and LGBTQ politics? Is a queer Asian diasporic cultural politics possible? This talk will be based on Hongwei Bao's forthcoming book *Queering the Asian Diaspora: East and Southeast Identity, Sexuality and Cultural Politics* (Sage, 2024), an interdisciplinary book draws on a broad range of case studies since the 2010s to illustrate how an emerging queer Asian diasporic politics is articulated through cultural production such as art, film, digital media, fashion photography, performance as well as social and political activism. Through conjunctural analysis and a case studies approach, situated at the intersection of sociological and cultural studies, migration and diaspora studies, queer studies and Asian Studies, the talk advocates a post-identitarian, intersectional and transversal queer Asian diasporic cultural politics.

Dr Lucetta Yip Lo Kam, Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, Hong Kong Baptist University

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Navigating Queer Self and Intimacy in Transnational Migration: Experiences of Queer Women Migrants from Hong Kong

The project studies the mobility and migration experiences of self-identified queer women migrants from Hong Kong. It traces the formation of an emergent generation of Hong Kong queer diaspora in the West and Asia. I use semi-structured interviews and participant observation as the major research methods, and informants' journal writing as a supplement source of data. Major research areas include the demographic backgrounds of queer women migrants; their migration motivation and plans; their aspired future and lived experiences in the host societies; the role of gender and sexuality in their migration process and the perception of self; the ways of connecting with Hong Kong after migration; and the formation of overseas Hong Kong queer migrant communities. In this presentation, I am going to share some preliminary findings on how queer women migrants articulate their queer selves and manage their intimate relationships in the context of transnational migration.

Dr Penn Tsz Ting IP, Department of Humanities, Language and Translation, Hong Kong Metropolitan University
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***Hanfu* as an Affective Apparatus: The Happiness of Mainland Chinese Students in Hong Kong**

Shedding new light on the reinvention of Chinese traditional fashion (*Hanfu*), this paper probes the ways in which mainland Chinese students studying in Hong Kong find moments of happiness by dressing up in *Hanfu* styles. Drawing on qualitative data collected in Hong Kong, including in-depth interviews and participant observation, the paper zooms in on affective moments of happiness (Ahmed 2010) to explore how fashion can not only promote positive affects in mainland students, but also allow them to cope with negative affective experiences, for instance, homesickness, isolation, and depression. The paper argues that feeling such happiness is the result of the (im)materiality of *Hanfu*, intertwined with a sense of *aiguo* (i.e., love of the nation) and the desire for *lijia* (i.e., leaving home)—an affective liminality that mainland students in Hong Kong experience.

Panel III: Narrating Posthumanism in Chinese Science Fiction: Rethinking Boundaries, Subjectivity and Relationships

Moderator: Dr Xuying Yu & Dr Kaby Kung

Description

How does science fiction challenge and redefine the boundaries between human and non-human, real and virtual, in the context of posthumanism? How do concepts such as AI consciousness, uploaded consciousness, and bioengineered identities contribute to the reimagining of individual subjectivity? With the blossoming of Chinese science fiction in the global context, especially within the scope of global Asia, this panel seeks to examine the depiction of the posthuman condition in Chinese science fiction. The panel will primarily focus on future notions of relationships, love, and care, particularly as human interactions may extend to cyborgs, clones, and other non-human entities.

Keynote Speaker Session

Professor Kin-Yuen WONG, Author and Independent scholar, United Kingdom

<https://ra.lib.hksyu.edu.hk/jspui/browse?>

[type=author&authority=rp00817&authority_lang=en_US](https://ra.lib.hksyu.edu.hk/jspui/browse?type=author&authority=rp00817&authority_lang=en_US)

The Posthuman and Organological Ontology in Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction

This paper proposes to register an encounter between posthumanism and contemporary Chinese science fiction. It is operationally guided by two correlated conceptualizations as its major thematic statements. First the paper traces, through textual analysis of a number of compelling examples, a progressive track from what Cary Wolfe calls the humanist posthumanism towards the posthumanist posthumanism. Whereas the former is still tethered to some humanistic aspiration such as exceptionism or mastery over other life forms; the latter is determined to stick to a horizontal line of human-nonhuman relationship. Wolfe's posthumanist posthuman, therefore, is achieved in the second concept, namely Deleuze and Guattari's "transversal communication" among all life forms on earth. This is further reiterated, say, by Rosi Braidotti in her critical posthumanist studies, urging us to assume a "transversal subject" position in our acquiring knowledge with a posthumanist way of thinking. Following this dynamics of posthumanist posthumanism, the paper sums up its argument by concentrating on Chen Qiufan's *Waste Tide*, with reference to the theory of organological ontology. The whole "event" of "becomingcyborg" the protagonist Mimi undergoes in the novel can well be put alongside Zukauskaitė's "organism-oriented ontology," which problematizes the human-machine interface through a three-fold priority of processuality, multiplicity and potentiality. Here we are to work in tandem with what Chinese SF has contributed in rethinking our reciprocally determining relation with the non-human living beings including the machine.

Keywords: posthumanist posthumanism, transversality, becoming-cyborg, organology, structural coupling

Panelist Session

Professor Hua Li, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures,
Montana State University, US

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Traditional Handicraft, Datafication, and Digital Capitalism in Chinese Science Fiction “By Those Hands”

When the Guzheng can play by itself without human hands, and when machines can precisely replicate handmade bamboo tea ware, what will become of those who still cherish traditional craftsmanship? This is one of the questions that Chinese science fiction writer Mu Qing 慕明 (the pen name of Gu Congyun 顾从云) explores in her short story “By Those Hands” 假手于人 (2018). The narrative delves into the essence of craftsmanship, examining the intricate interplay between human creativity, labor, and machine-driven precision. It navigates the delicate balance between the soulful warmth of artisanal craftsmanship and the calculated efficiency of AI. The story prompts readers to reflect on our evolving relationship with technology as AI and robotics increasingly permeate every aspect of our lives and work. As these technologies continue to advance, they promise to reshape various industries and foster more intuitive and emotionally attuned interactions between humans and machines. At the same time, the rise of datafication and the digital economy raises ethical and social concerns, potentially leading to a cyberpunk future of “high tech, low life.” This essay critically examines “By Those Hands” through the lenses of the datafication of traditional skills, digital capitalism, and their impact on everyday life in the digital economy.

Dr Xi Liu, Associate Professor, Department of China Studies, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China.

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Technology, Reproduction, and Female Subjectivity In Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction

In recent years, contemporary Chinese sci-fi writers have experimented with fresh ideas on relations among science, technology, politics, and gender in their fantastical or speculative works. Their stories offer inspiring insights into the future of new biotechnology regarding procreation, gene engineering of cloning humans, as well as new familial, spousal, and parent-kid relationships and ethics along with new reproductive technologies. Using three representative sci-fi works written by Zhao Haihong, Han Song, and Chen Qiufan as cases, this study has found that these socially engaged and aesthetically innovative texts have done pioneering works in envisioning new epistemologies of technoscience and new female subjectivities. By imagining the possible positive and negative consequences of new technologies, they have contested the existing male-dominated gender structure, especially the regime and ethics of human reproduction. They explore resistant subjectivities, female agency, and new possibilities in terms of gender and sexuality. Setting their stories on techno-utopias or techno-dystopias in a gendered environment, the three writers have successfully explored feminist ways of understanding and employing technology with their gender thought experiments.

Keywords: Technology, Reproduction, Female Subjectivity, Chinese Science Fiction, Thought Experiment

Dr Xuying Yu, Department of Humanities, Language and Translation,
Hong Kong Metropolitan University

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Rethinking Subjectivity in Dung Kai-Cheung's Posthuman Sci-fi

This paper examines Dung Kai Cheung's strategic deployment of comedy and "pseudo-science fiction" to engage in the rise of posthumanism in Sinophone literature. Focusing on his novels *Beloved Wife* (2018) and *The Posthuman Comedy* (2020), the research analyzes how Dung employs posthuman concepts to address contemporary human crises while maintaining a critical distance from traditional science fiction tropes.

Dung's exploration of posthuman and human subjectivity covers a wide range of philosophical and ethical concerns. *Beloved Wife* discusses mind-body dualism through sci-fi symbols like uploaded consciousness and multiple consciousnesses coexisting within a single body. This exploration extends to related dichotomies such as love and desire, matter and spirit, and reality and illusion. By exploring building the "Kant Machine" and the struggle for the rights of the posthuman "Thing-in-Itself," the novel *The Posthuman Comedy* sparks a debate around the potential for a society controlled by a "governing machine" inspired by Hobbes' Leviathan, versus the need for "enlightened despotism" to create "ideal citizens" capable of rational decision-making. This debate ultimately interrogates the nature of free will and its potential for rationality.

Both novels feature the recurring motif of the writing machine, exemplified by the "Ye Lingfeng machine" and "Ghost Writer," to further reflect the role of writing in shaping posthuman subjectivity and textual utopias, as well as the complex relationship between narrative and historical writing.

Dr Kaby Wing-Sze Kung, Department of Humanities, Language and Translation, Hong Kong Metropolitan University

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The Human/Posthuman in Liu Cixin's The Three-Body Problem and Its Subsequent Television Adaptations

According to Daniele Rugo, the term “posthuman” is used to describe modes of being resulting from potential enhancements to human nature generated through applied science and technological developments. However, it is equally adopted to identify the decentering of human exceptionalism and the overcoming of the principles of humanism. These two definitions are evident in Liu Cixin's *The Three-Body Problem* trilogy, a renowned Chinese Science Fiction series.

The English translation of the first book, *The Three-Body Problem*, by Ken Liu in 2014, sparked a craze for Liu Cixin's work. It then became the first Chinese science fiction to win the Hugo Award for Best Novel. Due to its immense popularity both in mainland China and overseas, two television adaptations were produced in 2023 and 2024 respectively. The first was a Chinese production by Tencent, one of China's largest technology companies, which faithfully adapted the first book of the trilogy. The second adaptation, *3 Body Problem*, was produced by Netflix, the world's largest streaming service, and provided a radical interpretation of the original text of the first book by shifting the context from China to Britain.

Based on Daniele Rugo's definition of posthumanism, this paper aims to explore the human/posthuman relationship in Liu Cixin's *The Three-Body Problem* and its subsequent television adaptations. It will also compare and contrast the two adaptations by examining the different approaches used in adapting the original novel for the screen, influenced by cultural and societal boundaries, as well as the anticipated viewership of Tencent and Netflix.

Panel IV: Collective Chinese Cinephilia: Spectatorship and Filmmaking as Community Building

Moderator: Dr Timmy Chih-Ting CHEN

Description

Film spectatorship and filmmaking are simultaneously solitary and collective. This panel proposes to revisit specific instances of collective Chinese cinephilia in Hong Kong, mainland China, and the global Chinese diaspora from the 1950s until present. Speakers will discuss the practice of film spectatorship and filmmaking as community building in relation to a Hong Kong Cantonese left-wing film classic; experimental film clubs in Hong Kong; a Chinese artists' collective's global tour across university campuses; and the New Wave film movement in the Chaoshan region of Guangdong, where a collective of emerging filmmakers, researchers, and other cultural workers spearhead self-organized filmmaking, exhibition, and research activities.

Keynote Speaker Session

Professor Jean Ma, Department of Comparative Literature, University of Hong Kong.

<https://complit.hku.hk/index.php/faculty/trzcacak-rs-side-profile-png-244905-2/>

Cinema in Community: New Histories of Chinese and World Cinephilia

In the decades following Susan Sontag's 1996 declaration of "the decay of cinema" along with "the very specific form of love that cinema inspired," cinephilia is not only still alive, but also more robust than ever. A growing body of writing has affirmed its endurance while also challenging rigid definitions of which films and how films can be loved, and embracing more inclusive spectrums of demography, geography, and technology that give rise to new expressions of cinephilia that contrast with the elitism of the past. Throughout these discussions, a tension persists between cinephilia as a singular phenomenon – as highly personal and therefore individualized as love itself – and cinephilia as a socially and culturally shared relationship with cinema. Against a dominant tendency to frame cinephilia in terms of the singular possessive, new histories that turn to its Chinese contexts emphasize the ways that cinephilia involves the formation of publics, collaborative networks, and structures of community. This talk explores the expanded understanding of cinephilia's multiple histories and present transformations that Chinese cinephilia brings into view.

Panelist Session

Dr. Kristof Van den Troost, Centre for China Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong

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In the Face of Demolition: Hong Kong Community Values and Their Cinephiliac Mythologization

In the Face of Demolition (Lee Tit, 1953) has come to be regarded as perhaps the prime exemplar of the 1950s “golden age” of Cantonese cinema. Produced by the storied Union Film Enterprise (also known as Chungluen), the film’s left-leaning politics—crystallized in its most famous line “All for one and one for all!”—have been of enduring interest to film critics and scholars, who have interpreted it as embodying a “Hong Kong ethic” of communal self-help, as offering insight into the unique politics of post-war Hong Kong intellectuals, or even as exemplifying a “poetics” distinct from the classical Hollywood system. In this paper, I will excavate the different narratives around this film since its release in the early 1950s, analysing how it came to be mythologized as a manifestation of Hong Kong community values, with the interpretation of these values exhibiting both remarkable continuity and subtle transformation over time.

Dr. Timmy Chih-Ting Chen, Department of Humanities, Language and Translation, Hong Kong Metropolitan University.

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“Hong Kong New Cinema” and Chinese Cold War Cinephilia: From the College Cine Club, the Film Guard Association, to the Phoenix Cine Club, 1966–1977

Building on film critics Ada Loke-Lay’s and Kam Ping-hing’s articles on *The Chinese Student Weekly*, this paper attempts to propose an alternative “Hong Kong New Cinema” of the mid-1960s vis-à-vis the Hong Kong New Wave of the late 1970s through the concept of collective “Chinese Cold War Cinephilia” before the institutionalization of cinephilia in Hong Kong with the establishment of Hong Kong International Film Festival, Hong Kong Arts Centre, and Film Culture Centre of Hong Kong in 1977. Founded in 1967, College Cine Club was Chinese in the anticolonial sense of self-consciously differentiating itself from British-dominated Studio One, The Film Society of Hong Kong Limited established in 1962. The avant-garde film society Film Guard Association was organized in 1971 in response to Ada Loke-Lay’s article while Phoenix Cine Club’s establishment in 1973 inherited the legacy of College Cine Club. This paper concludes with a call for the urgency of employing the methodology of oral history in the research of a now diasporic and gerontic Chinese Cold War Cinephilia.

Dr. Wesley Jacks, Department of Digital Arts and Creative Industries, Lingnan University, Hong Kong.

<https://www.ln.edu.hk/daci/faculty/details/wesleyjacks>

Four films, three dancers, and a surfing session: The immersive practices of the Folk Memory Project on tour

In 2010, Wu Wenguang launched the ‘Folk Memory Project’ at the Caochangdi Workstation in Beijing as a collective center for training DV documentarians before sending them back to family hometowns to shoot. The dozens of films made by the collective offer an invaluable corpus of testimony preserving local histories.

The concept *xianchang* (‘on the spot’) has been used by several scholars (Robinson, Kissel) to describe the training and filmmaking style of Caochangdi Workstation. Wu defines the quality of *xianchang* as “being in the ‘here’ and ‘now.’” This talk seeks to extend analyses of CCD Workstation beyond their films to their practices touring college campuses. Drawing from my own experience as host for a CCD Workstation visit as well as gathered reflections from other hosts and participants, I argue that collective challenges institutional and audience expectations for guest speakers and embodies *xianchang* through a commitment to extended engagement at each campus.

Dr. Ma Ran, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Humanities, Nagoya University, Japan.

https://profs.provost.nagoya-u.ac.jp/html/100007162_en.html

Overspilling New Waves

The multi-sited and often topolect-/ethnic minority language-speaking new “New Wave” cinemas (*xin langchao*) have emerged since the 2010s from locales and regions such as Hangzhou, Guizhou, Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi. Often independently produced and distributed, the new New Waves are perceived as diverging from the politicized “Chinese indie” apparatus and its microhistory, while they increasingly intersect with the still-developing institution of “yishu dianying” (art cinema) in China. This study leverages kinopolitics to inquire the “overspilling” from the ongoing New Waves’ translocal (local to local) imaginaries and their modes of production and circulation. Emphasis is on the Teoswa New Wave (CNW) from the Teoswa region in eastern Guangdong Province. CNW has spurred the tidalectical potentialities and oceanographic imaginaries of Sinophone filmmaking, through carefully re-aligning multivalent connectivities with Southeast Asian places and beyond. Such endeavors have been reinforced via local-based activities that assemble and mobilize younger-generation Teoswa filmmakers from within China and migrant and diasporic filmmakers of Teoswa descent overseas.

Panel V: Narrative as Therapy: Personal Stories and Self Care

Moderator: Professor Amy Wai-sum LEE

Description

While personal experiences have been given the due respect of being something privately owned by the individuals, their potential therapeutic value for the individuals, in some cases for a community, is increasingly appreciated. Writing and art therapy have been well established mechanisms for reflecting on personal stories and leading to better self-understanding and acceptance. In the context of the stressful life situations in global societies, much intensified during the pandemic, this panel explores the possibility of deploying personal stories in various formats to create therapeutic experiences and cultivate resilience in contemporary life. The transcendence of the personal to achieve possibly a collective or communal care is especially pertinent in the Global Chinese context.

Keynote Speaker Session

Professor Amanda Caleb, Department of Medical Education, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, US

<https://hcommons.org/members/acaleb/>

Narrative Medicine and the Development of Narrative Humility for the Care of Self and Others

Writer-physician Dr. Emily Silverman describes storytelling as “medicine’s currency,” the medium of exchange and value that bridges gaps, fosters relationships, and helps to make meaning of one’s experiences with health and illness. Perhaps more accurately, storytelling is humanity’s currency, our means of trading bits of ourselves for bits of others as a reminder of our interdependence. If humans are at the heart of medicine, surely storytelling is too. To tell a story is to expose that which is obscured, which includes not only the subject matter but the storyteller and listeners as well. The storyteller’s vulnerability is rewarded with the catharsis of the process: storytelling is a journey of discovery, one that can lead to painful and poignant insights that move us to feel and to do.

This presentation will explore the therapeutic components of storytelling through the practice of narrative medicine and narrative humility. Narrative medicine, an interdisciplinary field that integrates the practice of medicine with the study of narrative, offers a transformative approach to healthcare by emphasizing the importance of stories in clinical practice. Undergirding narrative medicine is the practice a narrative humility, which involves recognizing and respecting the complexity of another’s experiences and the limitations of one’s own understanding. By fostering empathy, improving communication, and promoting reflective practice, narrative humility not only improves patient outcomes but also supports the well-being of healthcare professionals by cultivating resilience.

Panelist Session

Dr Simon Tak Mau Chan, College of Education and Social Services,
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Reality Negotiations and the Pursuit of Hope: Cultivating Externalization for Personal and Collective Growth

In the postmodernist framework, reality negotiation and the pursuit of hope are seen as processes that integrate and manage various perspectives and challenges of the self over time, resulting in a coherent identity. This journey is purposive, subjective, and complex, where individuals continuously construct and interpret their identities through unique choices. Hope is cultivated through the narratives that shape these identities, fostering a collaborative effort among those who care and are connected. Together, they create contexts in which hope can be enacted, allowing for the interweaving of preferred identities with those of others. These multifaceted identities not only open up diverse avenues of possibility but also remain interconnected with the identities of others.

Central to this process is the concept of externalization, which serves as a transformative tool in Narrative Therapy. By externalizing disorders and disabilities, such as children with special education needs, individuals can separate it from their core identity, recognizing it as a part of their life journey rather than a defining characteristic. This practice enables clients to re-author their stories, focusing on strengths and competencies rather than limitations. Therapeutic goals are reached through techniques such as exploring unique outcomes, identifying preferred narratives, and fostering a sense of agency. This dual emphasis on hope and externalization underscores the importance of collaborative identity construction in narrative therapy, ultimately fostering resilience and connection in the face of adversity.

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Recovering the Relational Subject: On transcending Cartesian reductionism in a multi-polar global culture

This paper will elaborate and defend a radically relational model of the conscious subject. This model will critically engage with the super-influential Cartesian perspective which, intertwined with the Newtonian view of nature and emergent scientism, has deeply characterized not only Western intellectual history since the early modern period, but arguably all of modern civilization as such.

The paper will explore and argue for the merits of a radically relational model as an alternative, according to which being-in-the-world is quintessentially and ultimately something irreducibly relational. This model implies that experiences are not ultimately private, and that perceiving subjects are not isolated observers ultimately separated from each other and the world, but rather that subjectivity is, and always must be, something communal and reciprocal.

Furthermore, the paper will explore how the legacy Western views of the subject as an isolated observer whose experiences are ultimately private has limited the possible approaches of scientific and academic research, how it has negatively influenced cultural processes, and finally how harmony within geopolitical and international relations may in the long term be supported by approaching a relational model of the conscious subject and of the human person's phenomenal and reciprocal subjectivity.

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Enhancing Chinese Language Learning Through Theater-in-Education

Abstract:

Chinese language poses a challenge for many students, with Chinese composition standing out as particularly demanding among the four core skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The complexity of Chinese composition arises from its requirement for students to possess not only a strong grasp of the language itself but also a deep understanding of Chinese literature and culture to produce exceptional work. Within traditional Chinese classrooms, creating an immersive Chinese learning environment proves to be a significant challenge, encompassing curriculum design, teaching methods, and teacher-student interactions. However, the Theater-in-Education approach offers a promising solution to the limitations of conventional Chinese teaching methodologies, fostering an environment conducive to effective Chinese language learning. This research draws upon firsthand data collected during the author's fieldwork to explore how Theater-in-Education can benefit students, particularly those with specific learning needs, by enhancing curriculum design, teaching activities, and teacher-student interactions. By focusing on students with unique requirements such as hyperactivity and dyslexia, this research aims to shed light on areas where traditional Chinese language education can adapt and evolve to better support diverse learning styles.

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Learn to Tell and Tell to Learn: An Intimate Healing Experience at the Human Library

Like many other large consumer cities in the world, Hong Kong also faces a problem of waste handling. Although residents are gradually accustomed to the concept of recycling, shops which handle large amount of sales everyday such as supermarkets, and local drug stores still rely on individual collectors to recycle their cartons, boxes, and other packaging wastes. In Hong Kong scavengers are called “waste pickers” and are often seen as garbage collectors – people who do the dirty work of getting rid of the waste. In fact, these individuals are not hired by any organization, and are mostly retired people who need an income. Some of these scavengers collect waste to recycle because they want to help conserve the environment, and see themselves as contributing to the wellness of everyone on earth. Some scavengers have poor living conditions, as they also keep many objects they pick up. This presentation describes a human library activity held by an NGO which aimed to facilitate an understanding of the lives of scavengers in Hong Kong, and invited reconsideration of these contributors to environmental protection. A reading session of these human books provides us with intimate information directly from these “waste pickers”, and in turn an opportunity for these human books to encounter a respectful interaction with readers who may not be members of their daily life. The encounter between the human books and their readers can create a therapeutic understanding for the individuals among the community.

Playback Theatre

Encounter Playback Theatre

Encounter Playback Theatre (hereinafter referred to as EPT) was established in 2009 as an artistic group focusing on Playback Theatre, and it is one of the few practicing Playback companies in Hong Kong. The objective of EPT is to use Playback Theatre to promote the artistic culture of sharing stories so that everyone can be genuine with each other. Ultimately, personal values will be esteemed in this time of rapid change and hectic lives. Over the last 15 years, Encounter has been invited to collaborate with NGOs, primary & secondary schools, tertiary education, hospitals, government departments as well as corporate companies to offer more than 150 workshops and performances. In 2011 and 2019, Encounter received exchange funding from Hong Kong Home Affairs Bureau to attend the International Playback Theater Conference in Germany and India respectively, to give workshop, performance and booth presentation. We received positive feedback from participants all over the world. In 2012, Encounter received funding from Oxfam to run a project for teenagers and young adults for Global Citizenship Education through Playback Theatre. In 2015, Encounter served as a supporting organisation for the Asian Pacific Playback Theatre Conference in Hong Kong. Encounter often travels to mainland China, Taiwan and Macau to give performances or workshops, as well as to exchange with local Playback Theatre groups. Encounter just celebrated their 10th anniversary, and will continue our commitment to promote Playback in Hong Kong, and promote Hong Kong to the world. EPT currently is group member of International Playback Theatre Network and the Company Partner of Centre for Playback Theatre, USA.

【言遇劇團】成立於2009年，是專注於【一人一故事劇場】的藝術團體。劇團透過定期排練、演出及舉辦工作坊，以提昇專業水平及實踐【一人一故事劇場】。我們相信人與人之間充滿關懷和聯繫，藉故事分享及戲劇呈現，讓生命相遇，是一種美麗的祝福。在過去的15年中，劇團被邀請與非政府組織、小學和中學、高等教育機構、醫院、政府部門以及企業合作，提供超過150場的工作坊和演出。在2011年和2019年，劇團獲得香港民政事務局的交流資助，參加分別在德國和印度舉行的國際一人一故事劇場大會，並在會上進行工作坊、表演和展位展示，獲得來自世界各地參加者的積極反饋。2012年，劇團獲得樂施會的資助，通過一人一故事劇場為青少年和年輕人開展全球公民教育項目。2015年，劇團作為支持機構參加了在香港舉行的亞太一人一故事劇場大會。EPT 經常前往中國大陸、台灣和澳門進行表演或工作坊，並與當地的一人一故事劇場團體進行交流。

Playback Theatre

We live, we learn.

We earn so much throughout our journey.

Some sweet, some painful.

Some we hold on to, some we let go.

Let's unpack, uncover, breathe in & out.

Playback Theatre was founded in 1975 in New York, USA, by Jonathan Fox, Jo Salas, and members of the first Playback Theatre troupe. It is a form of improvisational theatre that combines elements of theatre, psychodrama, and the rituals and spirit of indigenous gatherings. In a Playback Theatre performance, the facilitator (also known as the conductor) invites audience members to share personal experiences. The performers actively listen and, with a respectful attitude, improvise using physical movement, music, and drama to enact the stories as a gift in return for the audience's sincere sharing. During this process, the real life experiences of different individuals seem to converse with one another, creating a space where trust and empathy flow among people.

活著，就是累積。
那些甜美的，那些疼痛的。
哪些我們想要緊緊把握，
哪些我們選擇放手。
讓我們一起打開、細味，呼吸。

「一人一故事劇場 (Playback Theatre)」(「一劇場」)，由 Jonathan Fox、Jo Salas 及首個一人一故事劇團的成員於 1975 年在美國紐約創立。她是一種即興演出的劇場形式，結合了劇場、心理劇與原始民族聚會的儀式和精神。在「一劇場」演出裡，主持人 (又稱領航員) 會邀請陌生的現場觀眾分享個人經歷，演出者隨即主動開放地聆聽、並以尊重的態度即興運用形體動作、音樂、戲劇的形式將故事演繹出來，作為禮物回饋觀眾的真誠分享。過程中，不同人士的真實生命經驗彷彿在互相對話，創造了一個空間，讓信任、人與人之間的共鳴共感，在整個群體中流動。