



MULTISENSORY DISSENT AND ALLIANCE BUILDING:
THE INAUGURAL BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY OF SINOPHONE STUDIES

APRIL 22-24, 2021
HOSTED ONLINE VIA ZOOM BY
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
DORNSIFE COLLEGE OF LETTERS, ARTS & SCIENCES

CONFERENCE PROGRAM
&
ABSTRACTS

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Society of Sinophone Studies <<https://www.sinophonestudies.org/>>
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Society of Sinophone Studies

The Society of Sinophone Studies (3S) promotes the study of Sinitic-language communities and culture around the world. We seek to provide support for scholars with an interest in Sinophone studies and welcome any regional, disciplinary, and topical expertise. 3S was created on May 4, 2019 following the successful “Sinophone Studies” conference held in April that year at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Since the initial conceptualization of Sinophone studies over a decade ago as a field that examines Sinitic-language cultures and communities marked by difference and heterogeneity around the world, scholarly work in the field has become more and more interdisciplinary, involving not only literary and cinema studies, but also history, anthropology, musicology, linguistics, art history, dance, and others. Now we routinely see “Sinophone” as a specific marker with multiple implications that are no longer merely denotative, enabling, on the one hand, marginalized voices, sites, and practices to come into view, and, on the other hand, an expanded conversation with such fields as postcolonial studies, settler colonial studies, immigration studies, ethnic studies, queer studies, and area studies. There have been vibrant debates at the definitional and conceptual level about critical issues and standpoints, such as the pros and cons of the diasporic framework (diaspora as history versus diaspora as value), the difficulty of overcoming Chineseness, the strength and pitfalls of language-determined identities, imperial and anti-imperial politics, racialization and self-determination of minority peoples, place-based cultural practices, the dialectics between roots and routes, and many others, and presently, scholars in disciplines other than literary and cinema studies have begun to join these conversations. The increasingly interdisciplinary nature of Sinophone studies compels us to take stock, at this particular historical conjuncture, of where this inherently interdisciplinary field has been, where it is going, and where it might go in the future.

3S Mission Statement

The Society of Sinophone Studies (3S) is an international, nonprofit scholarly society founded on May 4, 2019. Our main goal is to promote the study of Sinitic-language communities and cultures around the world. Through fostering communication across the humanities and social sciences, we encourage the development of new conceptual frameworks and methods that enable, on the one hand, the visibility of marginalized subjects and, on the other, the synergy with fields as diverse as (but not limited to) postcolonial studies, migration studies, ethnic studies, media studies, gender & queer studies, science studies, indigenous studies, and area studies. Membership in 3S is open to anyone with an interest in Sinophone studies and any regional, disciplinary, and topical expertise.

3S Inaugural Governing Board

Chair: Howard Chiang, University of California, Davis

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**Multisensory Dissent and Alliance Building:
The Inaugural Biennial Conference of the Society of Sinophone Studies**

April 22-24, 2021

University of Southern California

Dornsife College of Letters, Arts & Sciences

Conference Theme & Overview

Multisensory Dissent and Alliance Building is the inaugural conference of the Society of Sinophone Studies (3S). The concept for the conference was motivated by increasing authoritarian and ethnic/race-based repression in key Sinophone sites around the world: the holding of democratic elections in Taiwan ROC in the face of PRC social media interference and disinformation campaigns; anti-extradition bill protests in Hong Kong SAR that were met with increasingly hostile state violence; the PRC's intensified regime of surveillance and internment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang while enacting a new National Security Law for Hong Kong; and the flaring anti-Asian racism, rhetoric, and violence in the United States (under an administration perpetuating anti-immigrant policies and emboldening white supremacy) and the West, as well as anti-African actions taken in Guangzhou, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to these challenges, popular demonstrations against systemic racism and against authoritarianism grew stronger worldwide as they adapted to the "new normal" of engaging a "socially distanced" civil sphere. Recognizing that this rapidly changing reality cannot but influence our academic culture, this conference takes seriously the need to analyze, historicize, and theorize interconnected and creatively adaptive Sinophone expressions of dissent and alliance building across geopolitical boundaries. By mobilizing interarea, interdisciplinary, and cross-methodological perspectives on multisensory modes of expressing dissent and ally-ship across the Sinophone world (including Taiwan, Hong Kong, mainland China, Southeast Asia, North America, Africa, and Europe), our interdisciplinary conference seeks to generate new cross-disciplinary frameworks for understanding, interpreting, and amplifying the broader theoretical, methodological, and relational salience of such multisensory expressions.

The conference highlights perspectives that exceed or depart from the reductive discursive frameworks of liberal humanism vs. nationalist/racialist difference (i.e. pan-Chinese or East Asian exceptionalisms) that often dominate the lens through which Sinophone conditions are viewed. It also foregrounds research that includes but also goes beyond audiovisual sensoria to consider haptic, tactile, or kinetic perception (touch, taste, smell, etc.) or different (meta)physical states and activities (pain, disability, hallucination, exercise, dreaming, etc.). Key questions include: How might multisensory approaches to Sinophone conditions evoke novel or unintuitive intimacies or relations that bring other actors/agents into play, such as the transpacific, "other" Asias, the indigenous or minoritarian, or the non-Sinophone? How might a multisensory approach to Sinophone dissent and ally-ship transform Sinophone studies or other disciplinary conventions?

The conference features one keynote speech and six panels spread across three days.

**Multisensory Dissent and Alliance Building:
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Conference Registration

- Conference attendance is restricted to members of the Society of Sinophone Studies: to register for your free membership, please visit <https://www.sinophonestudies.org/membership>
- This conference will use Zoom. There are two Zoom links for the entire conference, one Zoom Webinar link for the conference keynote on Friday, April 23, and one Zoom Pro link for all other sessions:
 - Keynote (register to receive Webinar link):
https://usc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wlMzejilQoWoRyOSQ106hQ
 - Zoom Pro Link for all sessions except keynote:
<https://usc.zoom.us/j/99729974245>

Conference Guidelines

- Audio/Video for Panelists & Attendees:
 - Panelists should mute their microphones when not presenting.
 - During the introduction, discussant, and audience Q&A portion of each panel, it is preferred that all panelists (including the discussant) turn their video camera on as long as it is safe to do so. Only presenters may share screen.
 - Attendees should keep their microphones muted throughout the conference unless asking questions during the Q&A portion.
 - Those who violate these guidelines, or who are generally disruptive (via the chat function or otherwise), will be removed from the conference and not readmitted.
- Presentation & Q&A Format:
 - Each panel should include 20-25 minutes of Q&A.
 - An assigned moderator (not the discussant) will keep time for the panel and handle comments and questions. Attendees may send questions/comments directly to the moderator via the type chat function during and after the presentations. Attendees may also use the raise hand function to ask questions.
 - Panelists should keep their presentations between 12-15 minutes. Moderators will ensure that presentations do not exceed 15 minutes. The moderator will chime a (hopefully unintrusive) “doorbell” as a courtesy. Presenters are encouraged to set a 15-minute timer while presenting.
 - Discussants will have 5-7 minutes to raise questions for the panel after the presentations finish.
- Recording:
 - Video recording of any session is prohibited. The conference will not be recorded, so please make every effort to attend the livestream. With participants from multiple continents, the organizers have made every effort to schedule conference activities at a reasonable hour for panel participants but realize that not every event will be scheduled at an ideal local time for all attendees.

**Multisensory Dissent and Alliance Building:
The Inaugural Biennial Conference of the Society of Sinophone Studies**

Inaugural Keynote

Shu-mei Shih, “Major and Minor Commons in Empire”

Friday, April 23, 13:00-14:30 PDT (16:00-17:30 EDT; Sat, Apr 24, 04:00-05:30 HKT)

Register to receive Webinar link:

https://usc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wlMzejilQoWoRyOSQ106hQ

Keynote Abstract

This lecture will address how in the global condition of empire, major commons that maintain various discursive regimes are as much communities of affect as are minor commons. “National humiliation” is one such Chinese discourse that has engendered an expansive affective community within and beyond China, in addition to serving as the basis of a particular kind of Chinese postcolonial discourse. Sinophone minority literature in China directly or obliquely engages with such hegemonic emotions as national humiliation and postcolonial indignation, offering us a glimpse into the expressive potentialities of the victims of victims even in severely restricted discursive spaces, while searching, waiting, and feeling for the emergence of a minor common to come.

About the Speaker

Shu-mei Shih is 2021-2022 President of the American Comparative Literature Association (as of April 12, 2021) and Edward W. Said Professor of Comparative Literature, Asian Languages and Cultures, and Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is recipient of the distinguished alumna award from National Taiwan Normal University. She also directs the UCLA Asia Pacific Center’s UCLA-NTNU Taiwan Studies Initiative, which organized the 2019 Sinophone Studies: Interdisciplinary Reflections Conference at UCLA. Shih’s list of publications “spans three monographs, ten co-edited volumes and countless journal articles and book chapters,” representing “a concerted, interdisciplinary effort to free cultural and literary analysis from hierarchical paradigms of power (whether of European colonialism, gender, race, center-periphery or Cold War hierarchies). Her books have been published in English and in Mandarin (with certain titles already in third printings), as well as in French, Japanese, Turkish, Spanish and, most recently, Korean.”¹ Her second monograph, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific* (U of California P, 2007), along with several book chapters and articles engaging with the concept of the Sinophone (including those in the 2013 Columbia UP *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader* volume), helped usher in and pioneer the emergent field of Sinophone studies. Along with Françoise Lionnet, Shih also co-edited *Minor Transnationalism* (Duke UP, 2005) and *The Creolization of Theory* (Duke UP, 2011) while directing the UCLA Mellon Postdoctoral Program in the Humanities, “Cultures in Transnational Perspective,” helping to inspire and launch the careers of numerous scholars across a wide range of humanities fields.

¹ UCLA Pacific Asia Center <<https://www.international.ucla.edu/asia/article/225703>>.

**Multisensory Dissent and Alliance Building:
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Schedule & Abstracts

Link for all sessions except keynote: <<https://usc.zoom.us/j/99729974245>>

Day 1: Thursday, April 22

16:20-16:45 PDT (19:20-19:45 EDT; Fri, Apr 23, 07:20-07:45 HKT)

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Brian Bernards (3S Program Director) and **Howard Chiang** (3S Chair)

Sonya Lee (Director, USC East Asian Studies Center)

Janet Hoskins (Co-Director, USC Center for Transpacific Studies)

17:00-18:45 PDT (20:00-21:45 EDT; Fri, Apr 23, 08:00-09:45 HKT)

Panel 1: Inter-Asia Migrant Labor, Literature, and Art

1) **Nicholas Y. H. Wong** (U of Hong Kong), “Staying Put or Running Away: Economic Migrants in Mahua Literature”

- Politically legible figures such as the cosmopolitan self-exile or forced repatriate tend to structure narratives of migration in Mahua, or Chinese-Malaysian, literature. Yet those who reshape local and global economies in mines, plantations, and border towns, such as indentured laborers and undocumented or LGBT sex workers, remain in the shadows. In this essay, I discuss Mahua descriptions of economic migrants who “run away” or “stay put” in the face of exploitation and persecution. How do Mahua writers represent “non-productive” and “illegal” activities and relations, bearing in mind that the historical types of labor recruitment and organization for tin and rubber industries also controlled the “vice” economies of gambling, opium, prostitution, and drinking? I will closely read short stories by Xiao Hei (featuring a prostitution den run by old village men, also plantation owners), YS Chan (one about transgender sex workers; another about a newspaper man who dates a Yunnan sex worker in Hat Yai, Thailand), and Shang Wanyun (about a woman living with disability who cannot get married). Interestingly, these examples of mobility and intimacy, or the lack thereof, in borderlands tend to gather in the same narrative space as those outside of state recognition. The ending of YS Chan’s story, for example, reveals the Yunnan sex worker to be married to a mute man and raising an orphan as her daughter. Beyond allegory, the heightened presence of minorities and their intersectionality suggest alternative thinking in Mahua literature about the figurative claims of identity and solidarity.
- Nicholas Y. H. Wong holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Chicago. As a postdoctoral fellow in the Society of Fellows in the Humanities at the University of Hong Kong, he will deepen his study of

global networks of commodities and industries as they transact the writing of literary history. His current book project examines the impact of tin and rubber on the Malay Peninsula and the aesthetic forms of minority relations and differences they generate in Chinese-language writing. In short, he is writing a materialist and geoeconomic history of Mahua literature and intellectual culture.

2) **Myron Chun-chieh Tsao** (National Chung Hsing U), “Translating in Coalition: Reading Yu-Ling Ku’s *Our Stories: Migration and Labour in Taiwan* as Storytelling of Healing”

- This essay looks into the pivotal role of cultural translation in storytelling about Southeast Asian migrant workers in Taiwan. I focus on Yu-Ling Ku’s *Our Stories: Migration and Labour in Taiwan* to address her representation of Southeast Asian migrant workers in Taiwan by writings of bodies in pain to give witness to their atrocious living conditions. Reading Ku’s storytelling as a healing politics, I burrow Benedict Anderson’s notion of the “imagined community” to demonstrate Ku’s intention to develop a coalitional bond, premised upon empathy, between the Taiwanese self and the Southeast Asian other to summon a future of racial equality in togetherness. That is to say, Anderson’s correlation of language to national identity nicely elaborates on Ku’s successful manipulation of Chinese, hybridized with Southeast Asian languages, to engage with her readers to create a more inclusive nationalness. As a result, this essay takes issues with the language in use to explore how Ku considers Chinese to be a common language for Southeast Asian workers in Taiwan (because of their multiethnic and multilingual nature) to not only develop interpersonal relationships with each other but also attain effective communication with Taiwanese people so as to ameliorate the sense of diaspora from both internal and external facets. Within the context of cultural translation, this paper argues that to heal is not to cure the bodies in pain but, more importantly, to call for mutual understanding and thus to deconstruct the I-other colonial dichotomy once and for all.
- Myron Chun-Chieh Tsao is a Master Student of Taiwan Literature and Transnational Cultural Studies at National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan. His research interests include sociology of literature, diaspora literature, memory studies, and women’s writing. He is currently working on a thesis about the worlding possibility of pandemic literature in order to position Taiwan literature in a global context.

3) **Junting Huang** (Cornell U), “Bordering ‘Domesticity’: Filipina Domestic Workers in Hong Kong’s Contemporary Art”

- Where is home? The domestic, as Amy Kaplan argues, defines “the geographic and conceptual border of the home”—be it the familial household or the national boundary. This double meaning of “domesticity” has become particularly important in understanding the movement of bodies and labor, as well as the porous borders in the Sinophone world. Since the 1970s, hundreds of thousands of domestic workers from Southeast Asia moved to Hong Kong,

as they contributed to the economic growth of the city during capitalism's crisis of care. In the past two decades, artists in Hong Kong began to reflect on how these migrant workers have changed the city's urban and cultural landscape. Focusing on Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong's contemporary art, this paper proposes to consider "domesticity" as an invisible border that regulates the distinctions between public and private, foreign and native. In *Filipina Heterotopia* (2008), Cedric Maridet contests the public space by juxtaposing the sound recordings from the domestic workers' gathering with the photographs of the HSBC building in Central. In a similar fashion, public art projects such as *Afterwork Readings* (2016) deposit "the domestic space" of Hong Kong as a problematic spatial relation between "the foreign" and "the native." Lastly, Eisa Jocson's *Stainless Borders* (2010) points to the relationship between affective labor and domestic space in Hong Kong. In conclusion, I argue that domesticity is contemporary art's response to not only the separation of social spheres, but also the movement of borders.

- Junting Huang is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature at Cornell University. His research focuses on Sinophone literature, cinema, and media culture, Chinese diasporic culture in the Caribbean, as well as their intersections with new media studies, sound studies, and critical race theory. His dissertation project, "The Noise Decade: Intermedial Impulse in Chinese Sound Recording," examines an artistic encounter across the Taiwan Strait between the 1990s and 2000s, where an aesthetic and political discourse on "noise" intersected with the convergence of media. At Cornell, he is also the Assistant Curator at the Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art.

➤ Discussant: **Kun Xian Shen** (U of California, Los Angeles)

- Kun Xian Shen is a PhD student from the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he is advised by Professor Shu-mei Shih. Before arriving at UCLA, he received an M.A. degree in Foreign Languages and Literatures from National Taiwan University. Prior to that, he studied as an exchange student at UC-Berkeley for a year with the support of the Study Abroad Programme for Future Scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences, funded by the Ministry of Education and Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

❖ Moderator: **Lily Wong** (American U)

19:00-20:30 PDT (22:00-23:30 EDT; Fri, Apr 23, 10:00-11:30 HKT)

Panel 2: **Technologies of Protest, Popular Media, Countercultural Lyrics**

1) **Aubrey Tang** (Chapman U), "Focalizing the E-Sinophone Body through *Reversed Front*"

- This paper reclaims cultural identities in electronic representations of the body. It draws on the Taiwanese game project, *Reversed Front*, to demonstrate how electronic games can promote consciousness of political resistance. We will examine the game against established concepts in media phenomenology and

discover how they vary in a digital Sinophone context. *Reversed Front* is a currently developing board/smartphone/PC game project, in which anti-China dissidents from Hong Kong, Mongolia, Tibet, Kazakhia, Uyghuria, Manchuria, and Taiwan overthrow Chinese communist tyranny. Players assuming these roles must ally themselves with one another to strategically reverse the process of Sinicization in their cultures. For example, Taiwanese spies can marry heirs of Party members in China; tech-savvy Hongkongers can anonymously organize anti-government revolts. Marketed to young, straight male players in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the electronic versions of *Reversed Front* will offer simulated sensuous experiences, such as tactile contact with sexualized Chinese women and kinetic mobilizations in Hong Kong protests. The style of the game evokes different anti-China perceptions, e.g. the image of a Hong Kong girl eating curry fishballs—a signature Hong Kong experience of smelling and tasting—recalls the bloody Fishball Revolution on 2016 Lunar New Year’s Eve, when the locals defended the food vendors against the police. Media phenomenologists believe electronic representation, unlike cinema, “diffuses the fleshy presence of the human body and the [surrounding] dimension” (Sobchack 2004). This paper investigates whether *Reversed Front*’s representation diffuses the body and dimension or focalizes the diverse e-Sinophone body in the dissident dimension.

- Aubrey Tang teaches popular culture and film aesthetics at Chapman University. She earned her doctorate at UC Irvine. Her research interests include film phenomenology as well as Chinese and Sinophone cinemas. Her academic publications cover the topics of sensations, perception, disability, independent films, Chinese cinema, and Hong Kong cinema. She has taught composition and film studies at undergraduate and graduate levels in multiple institutions. She is currently revising her book chapter on Johnnie To’s *Blind Detective* and her book manuscript, a phenomenological study of Johnnie To’s cinema. Raised by her blind grandmother in Hong Kong, she finds her passion in phenomenology.

2) **Nathanel Amar** (CEFC Taipei), “Sinophone Music and Social Movements, 1989-2019”

- While global circulation of music in Sinitic languages has been studied in academic papers and books, mainly through the popularization of Cantopop and Mandopop, Sinophone music is a relatively new sub-field of global Sinophone studies. While Sinophone singers have long collaborated and participated in global events shaping the musical landscape of the region, these songs have been mainly produced by the Chinese state in order to promote its regional and international image—for the Beijing Olympics Games in 2008 or the Shanghai International Expo in 2010 for instance—forcing singers from different places to sing together in Mandarin. This paper aims at analyzing cases of Sinophone musical collaborations outside the scope of the State related to social movements and protests. This paper looks at two main events where Sinophone music played a major part: the 1989 Chinese student

movement, which led to the organization of the “Concert for Democracy in China” in Hong Kong on May 27, 1989 (attended by nearly one million people), attended by prominent Hong Kong and Taiwan popular singers and bands. More recently, the Hong Kong anti-extradition law protests of 2019 have also sparked a new wave of Sinophone solidarity and musical collaboration between artists in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia, each singing in their own language to support the social movement. Are these grassroots musical collaborations, linked to social movements, the embodiment of what Sinophone music could be?

- Nathanel Amar is researcher and director of the Taipei antenna of the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC). He received his Ph.D. from Sciences Po Paris in political science on the political use of culture in contemporary China. His research includes popular music and ethnicity in the Sinophone world, underground music and the global circulation of Sinophone music. He recently edited two issues of *China Perspectives* on “Sinophone Musical Worlds” (2019/3 and 2020/2).

3) **Lillian Ngan** (U of Southern California), “The Logic of Racial Misrecognition: Are the Hong Kong Protests seen as a Vietnamese Threat?”

- In 2019, mainland Chinese cybernationalists created a new social media propaganda campaign claiming that Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong’s mother was a Vietnamese refugee and that Wong himself was of Vietnamese origin. These allegations are false. However, many other pro-democracy Hong Kong activists have also been labelled “Vietnamese” by pro-CCP supporters, suspected of being spies who are seeking to destabilize the state. This misidentification of *Hongkongers as Vietnamese* shows that the Chinese state is recycling the “Vietnamese boat people” trope. Sinocentric Anti-Vietnamese sentiments have a deep history, but the “boat people” trope was inflamed by the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1978-1979. The Chinese government and their supporters are therefore weaponizing old prejudices. This is damaging to the Hong Kong protesters, the ethnic Vietnamese who live there, and Sino-Vietnamese diplomatic relations alike. Blaming the protests on “Vietnamese boat people” drives mainland Chinese to hate both Hong Kong and Vietnam. I argue that this racialized discourse around the “Vietnamese” has a strong overlap with the ethnic and cultural nationalism that has long been part of Chinese state ideology. China uses this racialized conspiracy theory to legitimize its claim over Hong Kong and the South China Sea. This paper places Hong Kong as the site of racial confrontation between China and Vietnam. I explain that Vietnam has not only been the victim of French colonialism and US occupation and war aggression, but it has also experienced China’s own imperial Sinocentric racial logic. Coinciding with the Cold War and current geopolitical disputes, ethnic and cultural nationalism collides with racial constructions. This paper reveals that China’s racializing framework is turning the Hong Kong protests into a Vietnamese scapegoat in the name of national pride.

- Lillian Ngan is a second-year Ph.D. student in East Asian Languages & Cultures at the University of Southern California. Her current research focuses on race and language politics in Sinophone communities. She is interested in examining how race operates in a completely different grammar than the West, residing in certain narratives in order to make the existence of race invisible in Sinophone areas. She is especially paying attention to the practice of Cantonese romanization, the racial misrecognition of “Vietnamese” in the 2019 Hong Kong protests, the intersections of colonialism, critical race theory, and translanguaging practice.
- Discussant: **Ka Lee Wong** (U of Southern California)
 - Ka Lee Wong is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Southern California. Her research interests include the dialectical relationship between language and identity in transnational Chinese media.
- ❖ Moderator: **Howard Chiang** (U of California, Davis)

Day 2: Friday, April 23, 2021

13:00-14:30 PDT (16:00-17:30 EDT; Sat, Apr 24, 04:00-05:30 HKT)

Inaugural Keynote: **Shu-mei Shih, “Major and Minor Commons in Empire”**

Register to receive Webinar link:

https://usc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wLMzejilQoWoRyOSQ106hQ

Shu-mei Shih is American Comparative Literature Association President and Edward W. Said Professor of Comparative Literature, Asian Languages and Cultures, and Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles

17:00-18:45 PDT (20:00-21:45 EDT; Sat, Apr 24, 08:00-09:45 HKT)

Panel 3: The Cold War Legacies of Global South Sinophone Alliances

1) **Shuang Shen** (Penn State U), “Refiguring Empires from the Sinophone South”

- This presentation juxtaposes the Singapore playwright Kuo Pao Kun’s imagining of ancient maritime trade with evocations of similar histories in the discourse of Afro-Asian solidarity that was inspired by the Bandung Conference of 1955. At the first “Afro-Asian Writers’ Conference” held at Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 1958, the Chinese delegation framed the cultural exchange among Third World nations in terms of the Silk Road. These allusions bring to attention the deep memory of non-Western empires while reminding us that the conventional discourse of Third Worldist exchange must be embedded within a longer circulatory history, which transcends the nation-state as a dominant political form and intellectual framework for most existing discussions of “Global South” alliances. Trying to articulate the discourse of Afro-Asian solidarity of the 1950s and ’60s with some recent concerns in Chinese studies with Sinophone culture, I draw attention to the “Sinophone South” as both concept and geography. Sinophone intellectuals and authors’

(Kuo Pao Kun being one example) intersections with the Third-Worldist, anti-imperialist, nationalist movements in the mid-20th century delineate a vastly uneven and non-monolithic geography where the “South” overlapped with the world of Sinitic languages. The occlusion of these histories and archives from most existing discussions of the global sixties and global Maoism attest to the limits of existing political and theoretical discourses. The legacy of the Sinophone South in contemporary articulations of dissent in Sinophone localities has been largely an untapped resource that demands critical reflections.

- Shuang Shen is an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Asian Studies at Penn State University. She is the author of *Cosmopolitan Publics: Anglophone Print Culture in Semicolonial Shanghai* (Rutgers UP, 2009). She has published articles and essays in *Comparative Literature*, *MLQ*, *Modern China*, *MCLC*, and *PMLA*. She is the recipient of various fellowships, from the Fulbright Foundation, the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation, the Asia Research Institute in the National University of Singapore and the National Humanities Center. She is currently working on a book project that studies trans-Pacific circulations of Sinophone literature during the Cold War period.

2) **Derek Sheridan** (Academia Sinica), “The Limits of Solidarity: Translating ‘Chinese Imperialism’ Between Sinophone and African Contexts”

- “Chinese imperialism” is a contentious category for the Sinophone left. The critique of contemporary China as “imperialist” challenges an enduring global left geography locating the People’s Republic of China at the forefront of Third World anti-Imperialism, while also attempting to legitimate political struggles in places like Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang by locating them in a new geography of global left solidarity. From this regional standpoint, there is a natural affinity for the narrative of Chinese imperialism, or “neocolonialism,” in Africa. This narrative, however, is contentious for an entirely different set of reasons than (East) Asia. These include problems of racialized simplification erasing African agency, Sinocentric decontextualizing of Chinese capital from Africa’s broader relationship with global capitalism, and a reliance on a set of recurrent factual claims (e.g. “debt traps”) which regularly fail empirical scrutiny. Nonetheless, stories about a Chinese empire in Africa (and the global South more broadly) find receptive audiences within the Sinophone left, reinforcing existing anxieties and interpretations of regional threats, if not promising new forms of global solidarity (i.e. “milk tea alliance”). In this paper, I reflect on the limits of translating “Chinese imperialism” between incommensurable regional contexts, examining the divergence of anti-imperialism as political subjectivity between the Sinophone left and the Third World internationalist left. Drawing on a critical comparative review of the use of “empire” in China-Africa versus Taiwan studies scholarship, informed by ethnographic fieldwork experience in both Tanzania and Taiwan, I disentangle the universalizing assumptions and historical contingencies which haunt the dream of new alliances.

- Derek Sheridan is an Assistant Research Fellow with the Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica (Taiwan). His research focuses on geopolitical imaginaries and the ethics of global inequalities in China-Africa relations. His first book, currently in preparation, is an ethnography of Chinese entrepreneurial migrants in Tanzania. Based on fieldwork in Dar es Salaam, a key trading node with a long history of Afro-Asian connections, the book examines how Chinese migrants and ordinary Tanzanians have come to depend on each other for their livelihoods within an uneven and hierarchical global political economy.
- 3) **Jessica Siu-yin Yeung** (SOAS London), “Hong Kong Literature and the Taiwanese Encounter: Literary Magazines, Popular Literature, and Shih Shu-ching’s Hong Kong Stories”
- My paper examines how literary adaptations between Hong Kong and Taiwanese writers shape literary subjectivities in both places. Between the 1950s and 1980s, southbound intellectuals arriving in Hong Kong and overseas Chinese studying in Taiwan contributed to a literary magazine culture in both places. The 1950s and 1960s were also the time when Hong Kong and Taiwan cinemas witnessed their first waves of literary adaptation. After the literary magazine culture dwindled in the 1970s, the new generations of writers in both places became established. Hong Kong-Taiwan literary influences began from the 1950s magazine collaboration and they coincided with the most significant waves of adaptation between the 1970s and 1990s. This maturation of literary subjectivities followed Taiwan’s lift of Martial Law and Chinese writers arriving at and settling in Hong Kong in the 1950s. These writers may not have been born in Hong Kong, but their subject matters are Hong Kong, such as the Taiwanese writer Shih Shu-ching. She published five titles of Hong Kong stories and the first volume of the Hong Kong Trilogy during her stay in Hong Kong between 1977 and 1994. Shih was a contributor of *Modern Literature* (1960-1983) and *Literary Quarterly* (1966-1970) in Taiwan and a film programmer of the Hong Kong Arts Centre in 1977. After returning to Taiwan, she published the rest of her Trilogy and the Taiwanese playwright Wang Chi-mei staged its adaptation *Remembering Hong Kong* (1997). Hong Kong and Taiwanese literary subjectivities can be studied more comprehensively by understanding their literary relations from adaptation history.
 - Jessica Siu-yin Yeung is a Ph.D. candidate in the Centre for Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies at SOAS University of London. Her essays have appeared in *Humans at Work in the Digital Age* (Routledge), *Cultural Conflict in Hong Kong* (Palgrave Macmillan), *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, and *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. Her article on Taiwan literature, Taiwan New Cinema, and Chu Tien-wen appears in the Winter 2020 *Journal of World Literature* special issue on “Scale Shifting: New Insights into Global Literary Circulation.”
- 4) **Mark McConaghy** (National Sun Yat-sen U), “The Historical Afterlives of Sinophone Socialism: Yang Kehuang, Xie Xuehong, and Gu Ruiyun in Cross-Straits Historical Memory”

- Building off of recent discussions regarding the concept of Sinophone Socialism that have taken place at a variety of international conferences (UCLA 2019; AAS-in-Asia 2020), this paper analyzes the battle for discursive authority over how Taiwanese socialists Yang Kehuang, Xie Xuehong, and Gu Ruiyun are remembered across the straits today. All three of these figures played central roles in leading the martial uprising against the GMD state in Taiwan in March of 1947, as they sought to build an alliance between the fledgling Taiwanese socialist movement and the Chinese revolution across the straits. Declared fugitives in Taiwan, they fled first to Hong Kong and then to Beijing, working with the CCP under their United Front policies. However, their insistence on the need to establish Taiwanese self-governance in a confederated China quickly made them political opponents of the new CCP government, who labelled them independence advocates. Persecuted by both the PRC and ROC, these political figures died veritably stateless during the Cold War years. In Taiwan's post-Marital Law period a deluge of biographies, memoirs, theatrical works, and documentaries sought to evaluate the complex roles these figures played within cross-straits history. To this day, questions regarding their national identity and political praxis remain open to heated debate. Instead of seeking to harmonize such clashing interpretations, this paper utilizes a Sinophone lens to argue that the multi-genre archive that has emerged around such figures has become a critical battleground for shaping not simply understandings of Taiwan's past, but imaginings of its future as well. As these figures have been variously appropriated by blue, green, and red political projects, they have become ideological assemblages in their own right, revealing the clashing political logics that produce fundamentally incommensurable understandings of Taiwan as an object of historical knowledge, an impasse for critical thought that Sinophone theory can help us unbind.
- Mark McConaghy is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Chinese Literature at National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. His research focuses on modern Chinese and Taiwanese literary and cultural history. His writings have appeared (or are forthcoming) in journals such as *China Information*, *Modern China*, *The International Journal of Taiwan Studies*, and *Asian Studies Review*, among others. He also served as a contributing translator to the volume *Voices from the Chinese Century: Public Intellectual Debate from Contemporary China* (Columbia UP, 2019), and the forthcoming translation of Wang Hui's *The Rise of Modern Chinese Thought* (Harvard UP).

➤ Discussant: **Sunyoung Park** (U of Southern California)

- Sunyoung Park is Associate Professor in the departments of East Asian Languages and Cultures and Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Southern California. She is the author of *The Proletarian Wave: Literature and Leftist Culture in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* and the editor of *Revisiting Minjung: New Perspectives on the Cultural History of 1980s South Korea*.

Park is also active as an editor and translator of Korean fiction into English, which has resulted, among others, in the publication of two collections of short stories: *On the Eve of the Uprising and Other Stories from Colonial Korea* (Cornell East Asian Series, 2010) and *Readymade Bodhisattva: The Kaya Anthology of Science Fiction from South Korea* (Kaya Press, 2019).

❖ Moderator: **E.K. Tan** (Stony Brook U)

19:00-20:30 PDT (22:00-23:30 EDT; Sat, Apr 24, 10:00-11:30 HKT)

Panel 4: **Translingual Postcoloniality and Intersectional Alliance**

- 1) **Desmond Hok-Man Sham** (National Chiao Tung U), “Revisiting ‘Between Colonizers’: In Search of an Adequate Postcolonial Theory for Hong Kong”
 - Rey Chow’s famous article “Between Colonizers: Hong Kong’s Postcolonial Self-Writing in the 1990s” (1992) paved the way to understand the postcolonial condition in Hong Kong. It was criticized for failing to understand the nuanced relationship and interaction between Hong Kong and China back then (“Northbound Imagination”) and for ignoring the “petit-grandiose Hong Kongism” (Szeto 2006). Yet, when the PRC’s control of the city is tightening and autonomy and democracy are denied, I believe that it is essential to revisit Chow’s famous article written almost 30 years ago, that the “mother country” Hong Kong forced to return to was / is “itself as imperialistic as the previous colonizer” (Chow 1992: 153). Hong Kong needs to search for a postcolonial theory adequate for its situation, and postcolonial theory also needs to renew itself to offer a critique of Chinese imperialism and colonialism, as much as its critique of the Western. Mainstream postcolonial theories are often reluctant to offer a critique of the People’s Republic of China and other socialist regimes through the lens of imperialism and colonialism. Some Western leftist scholars, as well as their counterparts in East Asia, even blame the critics of the PRC and the resistance movements in Hong Kong for a lack of historical consciousness and as the running dogs of Western imperialism and colonialism. On the other hand, this paper suggests that some less mainstream postcolonial theories developed from a situation comparable to Hong Kong, e.g. a critique of Soviet colonialism in the Baltics and Eastern Europe, may provide an alternative for Hong Kong and Sinophone contexts. Thus, I argue, in order to revisit “between colonizers” as adequate for the current situation, Hong Kong needs to position itself within the Sinophone and comparatize beyond Sinophone contexts.
 - Desmond Hok-Man Sham (岑學敏) is an Assistant Professor at the International Master’s Program in Inter-Asia Cultural Studies at National Chiao Tung University in Hsinchu, Taiwan. His research interests include Inter-Asia cultural studies, postcolonial studies, cultural heritage, cultural memory, and urban studies. He is interested in seeking postcolonial theories adequate to the Sinophone and maritime Asia contexts.
- 2) **Ting Fai Yu** (Monash U Malaysia), “The Politics of Language in Queer Sinophone Malaysia”

- In urban Malaysian cities, queer advocacy and peer-support groups commonly advertise themselves as “Chinese-(Mandarin-)speaking”, “English-speaking” or “Malay-speaking”. Other than for the convenience of participants, this organising principal based on spoken languages also facilitates multiple developments of sexual politics both within and beyond Malaysia. Drawing on interviews with Chinese-speaking queer community organisers and participants, this paper provides two arguments that work towards a new conceptual framing of queer Sinophone Malaysia. First, the role of language in queer community organising provides an intersectional perspective that is locally and regionally specific. While one could say that such a model of inclusion/exclusion based on linguistic ability is a proxy of race or racism, the paper demonstrates that queer people’s cultural backgrounds and lifestyle preferences play as significant a role as race in the linguistic practices of queer formations in Malaysia where, like other Southeast Asian countries, one’s ethnicity cannot be reduced to their spoken language or vice versa. Second, by examining the Chinese-speaking queer groups’ acceptance of non-Malaysians who speak the same languages, this paper argues that the use of language as an organising principle is productive of new relationalities that are fundamentally transnational and closely connected to societies across the Chinese-speaking world.
- Ting Fai Yu is a Lecturer in Gender Studies at Monash University Malaysia. His research explores the intersection between sexuality, race, class and mobility in East and Southeast Asia.

3) **Alvin K. Wong** (U of Hong Kong), “Towards a Queer Feminist Sense Method: Protest and the Politics of Intersectionality in Hong Kong”

- In 2019, Hong Kong captivated global attention due to the powerful protest movement that emerged in the summer. While the 2014 Umbrella Movement’s main goal was to demand universal suffrage through the democratic election of the chief executive of Hong Kong, the 2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement (Anti-ELAB) began with a more humbling aim—most Hong Kong citizens simply wanted to withdraw an extradition bill that could potentially send Hong Kong residents to the People’s Republic of China without due process due to violation of a serious crime. Even with the implementation of the national security law in Hong Kong since June 30th, 2020, the protest movement is still ongoing, with citizens moving toward even more “be water” strategies. This paper addresses the following questions: How have both movements engaged or failed to engage with feminist and queer politics? Is the political grammar of intersectionality relevant to Hong Kong and how? While both movements draw in many young women, mothers, and LGBT folks, the 2019 protest imageries, artwork, and tactics of violent burnism (burn with us!) have also invited the criticism of heteronormative masculinity and even victim blaming by scholars such as Petula Ho. My talk contributes to the current debates on inclusion and exclusion of women, racial, and sexual minorities by showing how the “be water” strategy, affective genre

of protest slogan and visuals, and sonic intensities altogether constitute a queer feminist sense method.

- Alvin K. Wong is Assistant Professor in Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong. His research covers Hong Kong culture, Chinese cultural studies, Sinophone studies, and queer theory. Wong is writing a book titled *Queer Hong Kong as Method*. He has published in journals such as *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *Gender, Place & Culture*, *Culture, Theory, and Critique*, *Concentric*, *Cultural Dynamics*, *Continuum*, and *Interventions* and in edited volumes such as *Transgender China* (Palgrave, 2012), *Queer Sinophone Cultures* (Routledge, 2014), and *Filming the Everyday* (Rowan & Littlefield, 2016). He also coedited the volume *Keywords in Queer Sinophone Studies* (Routledge, 2020).

➤ Discussant: **Hangping Xu** (U of California, Santa Barbara)

- Hangping Xu is Assistant Professor of Chinese and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He specializes in transnational and comparative studies of modern Chinese literature and film. His publications have appeared in such venues as *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China*, *Critical Multilingualism Studies*, *A Global History of Literature and the Environment* (Cambridge University Press), *Journal of Transnational American Studies* (forthcoming), and *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (forthcoming). He co-edited a special issue on disability and internet literature for *Chinese Literature Today*. He is completing his book on disability aesthetics and politics in modern Chinese culture.

❖ Moderator: **Brian Bernards** (U of Southern California)

Day 3: Sat, April 24, 2021

13:00-14:30 PDT (16:00-17:30 EDT; Sun, Apr 25, 04:00-05:30 HKT)

Panel 5: **Transpacific Literary, Documentary, and Bio-Imperial Encounters**

- 1) **Liang Luo** (U of Kentucky), “A Sinophone Documentary by a Dutch Filmmaker on the Great Leap Forward?”
 - Can a documentary film, made by a Dutch filmmaker in Mainland China at the height of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, and narrated in Mandarin Chinese, contribute to any meaningful discussions and debates on the potentials and limitations of Sinophone dissent and ally-ship, both historically and for our contemporary moment? This presentation takes the 1958 three-part short documentary film *Zaocun* (Before Spring) as its focal point and traces its filmmaker Joris Ivens’s (1898-1989) participation in Sinophone cultural productions in a broad socialist context at a crucial historical moment. It explores Ivens’s poetic, lyrical, Chinese-language documentary and its transpacific and transatlantic dissenting and allying potentials and limitations. Ivens has a long history of engaging with the Sinophone worlds across continents and bridging historical and political divides. He is also not alone in

these endeavors. The African American singer/actor Paul Robeson (1898-1976) is another key player in producing and disseminating Sinophone music and art works across geographical and political divides. By further connecting Ivens and Robeson through their shared encounter with the Sinophone worlds and their sustained engagement with each other, I hope to articulate novel and unexpected relationships and make visible contributions to the dissenting and allying powers of the Sinophone by actors and agents often considered outside the Sinophone worlds.

- Liang Luo is an associate professor of Chinese studies at University of Kentucky. She is the author of *The Avant-Garde and the Popular in Modern China* (U of Michigan Press, 2014). Her second book, *The Global White Snake*, is forthcoming from U of Michigan Press. She is working on a new project, *Profound Propaganda: The Interwar International Avant-Garde and Modern China*.

2) **Jih-fei Cheng** (Scripps College), “Cold Blood: Translations and Transmissions of Race/Ethnicity across the United States and the People’s Republic of China”

- This paper draws upon the visceral invocations of “cold blood” to historicize viral transmissions through the global supply chain of blood plasma between the US and PRC. The American Red Cross initiated blood plasma donation to serve US armed forces in 1941. Since then, privately exported US blood products have built into a globalized industry, totaling \$21 billion in sales by 2017. A constant surplus of blood has been necessary to treat traumatic injuries, especially those derived from ongoing armed conflicts. Blood banking also led to the massive transmission of HIV and/or Hepatitis C across the PRC, Canada, and elsewhere. In 1996, an HIV epidemic was revealed in Henan, resulting from a constellation of plasma products coerced from US prisoners and PRC rural farmers. On August 23, 2020, the Trump administration pressured the US Food & Drug Administration to approve the use of blood plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients to treat others, despite early research showing little results and the need for further study. To analyze the implications for COVID-19 blood biotechnologies, this paper historicizes “cold blood” in four key ways: to understand the science that produces blood in extracted, refrigerated, and bankable form; to hold ethically responsible the illnesses and murders enacted by the profit-making blood banking industry; to consider the role of blood biotechnologies in US-PRC cold war relations; and to historicize the socioeconomic value of blood as it translates and transmits ideas about race/ethnicity, gender, nationality, citizenship, and class across the US and PRC.
- Jih-Fei Cheng is Assistant Professor of Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Scripps College. He has been involved in HIV/AIDS social services, media production and curation, and queer and trans of color community-based organizations in Los Angeles and New York City. He is completing his first book manuscript, *Queer Code: AIDS and Reproductive Labor in the Time of Virology*, which analyzes HIV/AIDS media activism in relation to the colonial

history of virology. A second project addresses the roles virology and genetics play in developing ideas about race/ethnicity, gender, and kinships across the United States and the People's Republic of China.

3) **Clara Iwasaki** (U of Alberta), “A Place for Everyone and Everyone in their Place: North American Nikkei through the Eyes of Lao She and Helena Kuo”

- This paper examines the tenuous moment of literary collaboration between the Republic of China and the United States from 1946 to 1949. The Chinese writer Lao She and the Chinese American journalist and writer Helena Kuo were literary collaborators while being ideologically opposed. Both writers depicted *nikkei* (North Americans of Japanese descent) in their work as a means of exploring the limits of community and belonging. In Lao She's novel, *Sishi tongtang* (1981), a *nikkei* woman plays a key role in the denouement of the novel as she is simultaneously incorporated and cast out of the community. In Kuo's novel *Westward to Chungking* (1944), the *nikkei*'s incarceration is a cautionary tale if Chinese Americans cannot properly assimilate. This article examines the function of the *nikkei* in both works, Chinese and Chinese American, and how they use them to explore the limits of nationalism, community, and belonging during a brief period when communication and travel between the United States and China were still fluid. Lao She and Kuo present two very different visions of how Sinophone communities envisioned nationalism and belonging in a multiethnic world and offer an illuminating perspective of the possibilities and limits of this vision.
- Clara Iwasaki is an assistant professor at the University of Alberta. Her work has appeared in *Cross-Currents*. Her book, *Rethinking the Modern Chinese Canon*, was recently published by Cambria Press.

➤ Discussant: **Li-Ping Chen** (U of Southern California)

- Li-Ping Chen is the Postdoctoral Scholar & Teaching Fellow in the East Asian Studies Center at the University of Southern California. Her research interests include culture identity, literary translanguaging, diaspora experience, war memory, and political activism of Taiwanese writers in transnational context. Her article about the Taiwanese diaspora writer, Guo Songfen, was recently published in *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*.

❖ Moderator: **Rebecca Ehrenwirth** (U of Applied Sciences/SDI Munich)

17:00-18:45 PDT (20:00-21:45 EDT; Sun, Apr 25, 08:00-09:45 HKT)

Panel 6: Body Politics, Cinema, Ecology, Movement

1) **Emily Wilcox** (William & Mary), “Ethnic Presence and Ethnic Absence: Qemberxanim's Bodily Discourse and the Making of ‘Uyghur Dance’”

- Female-gendered “Uyghur dance” is a familiar performance trope in contemporary China. Its face-framing hand gestures, drum-driven footwork, and, of course, the indispensable horizontal head shift have all become iconic signifiers in the public performance of Uyghur people, culture and the Xinjiang

region in Chinese cultural imaginaries. As such, these movements have been reified into a bodily discourse capable of circulating beyond the people, culture, and places it represents. By performing these movements, any dancer in China today can seemingly conjure into being a Uyghur ethnic identity in the absence of actual Uyghurs. This paper examines the historical construction of this Uyghur dance vocabulary in modern China through a focus on the bodily discourse of Qemberxanim (a.k.a. Kangba'erhan, Qambarkhan, Kemberhan Emet, 1914?–1994), China's first nationally-famous Uyghur dancer. Qemberxanim was born in Kashgar and established herself as a professional dancer in Tashkent and Moscow before she returned to Xinjiang in the early 1940s and became one of China's leading dance performers, pedagogues, and art administrators. As the architect of the Uyghur dance curriculum taught at the Beijing Dance Academy, the Xinjiang Arts Institute, and other leading dance conservatories across China, Qemberxanim devised the ideal body image that would come to constitute a transferrable performance of Uyghur ethnicity. By personally training dancers of diverse ethnicities to perform and teach these dances, Qemberxanim condoned and facilitated the practice of non-Uyghur dancers embodying Uyghur culture in dance classrooms and on stage. In this way, Qemberxanim's ethnic presence made ethnic absence possible and vice versa.

- Emily Wilcox is Associate Professor of Chinese Studies in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the College of William & Mary. She is a specialist in Asian performance, with a focus on dance in the People's Republic of China. Wilcox is the author of *Revolutionary Bodies: Chinese Dance and the Socialist Legacy* (U of California P, 2019) and co-editor of *Corporeal Politics: Dancing East Asia* (U of Michigan P, 2020). She is the co-creator of the digital image collection *Pioneers of Chinese Dance* and is co-curator of the 2017 exhibition "Chinese Dance: National Movements in a Revolutionary Age, 1945-1965." Wilcox has given lectures on Chinese dance around the world and has published more than twenty academic articles, in both English and Chinese, on Asian dance and performance.

2) **Ta-wei Chi** (National Chengchi U), "Crippling Sinophone Cinema: Recognition of the Bare Lives in Singapore"

- In disability studies, "cripping" is a strategy of reclaiming overlooked disabilities in an ableist society. By examining the symbiosis of the disabled body with the Sinophone soundscape in such musical movies as *881* (2007), *12 Lotus* (2008), and *3688* (2015), directed by Royston Tan, this paper attempts crippling Sinophone cinema in Singapore. All three movies feature lower-class female singers who perform old-fashioned songs explicitly or implicitly imported from Taiwan. The explicit transnational imports are the Mandarin songs by the legendary Taiwanese singer Fong Fei-Fei, whereas the implicit ones are the Hokkien songs, which turn out to be localized variations of "Taiyu" (Taiwanese language) folksongs. With the therapeutic power of the old songs, these female singers amend, in Giorgio Agamben's words, the bare

lives of themselves or those of their loved ones, some of whom suffer from such disabilities as deafness, dementia, and mental disorders from traumatic experiences. While these disabilities, which prevent one from communicating or from remembering, can be easily viewed as metaphors for Singapore's preventions of nonstandard histories, the paper acknowledges not only the metaphorical implications but also the literal meanings of these disabilities and argues that these literal disabilities help testify to the underrepresented bare lives outside the standardized narrative of Singapore. Although noting the references to Taiwan in Tan's movies, this paper does not mean to congratulate Taiwan as an origin of cultural legacies but rather to recognize Singapore as an innovation site, which salvages both Sinophonic and non-Sinophonic residues eclectically from without.

- Ta-wei Chi (PhD Comparative UCLA) is associate professor of Taiwanese literature at National Chengchi University, where he teaches queer theory and disability studies. His Chinese-language monograph portrays a history of literature and LGBTQ from the 1950s to the new millennium in Taiwan. His queer science fiction novella *The Membrane* is available in Chinese, Japanese, and French. The English translation of *The Membrane*, translated by Ari Heinrich, is forthcoming from Columbia UP.

3) **Zizi Li** (U of California, Los Angeles), "Negotiating in Chaos: Amdo Tibetan Mediascape and Landscape in Pema Tsenden's *Tharlo*"

- This paper maps, shifts, and unpacks tensions within portrayals of the mediascape and landscape in Pema Tsenden's *Tharlo*. On the one hand, centering the shift in the mediascape reflects the transformation in cultural/economic/religious landscapes in Amdo amidst the forces of modernization under the rule of the Han Chinese. On the other hand, foregrounding the clashes between the old and the new allows Tsenden to use the clichéd language of modernity with a universal appeal as a shield over some of the sharper observations and bolder critiques he is able to subtly embed and construct in an intertextual way, especially when the film is read against and along with the short story collection. Centering universal critiques of modernization renders settler colonialism invisible or innocent but also serves as a kind of "semiotic technology" that affords the oppressed and the marginal (like Pema Tsenden) a certain level of disguise and protection under state control (Sandoval 1991). This essay is in conversation with scholarship on the Deleuze and Guattari school of minor cinema/literature, foregrounding the ways Tsenden constructs a cinematic and literary "placidity of Tibet" by utilizing the bonding between mediascape and landscape to compose resistant spaces for and spatial experiences of Tibetans in Amdo Tibet (Yü 2015). It argues that Pema Tsenden builds a third space for Tibetans who reside within the dominant Han Chinese settler colonial system to subtly change the place of Amdo Tibet within Chinese national boundaries, an alternative to the exiled Tibetan community's more pronounced discourses/actions.

- Zizi Li is a Cinema and Media Studies PhD student at the University of California, Los Angeles whose works revolve around layered oppressions of race, gender, class, sexuality, and geography. Her ongoing dissertation project, “Influencer Ecosystem: Labor and Infrastructure of and beyond Digital Platforms, 2010-Present,” brings media industries and critical infrastructures together to unpack the co-constitution of global media networks and commodity chains. Her other works-in-progress examine and center intersectional and transnational BIPOC feminist and decolonial praxis. Her work has appeared in *Hyperrhiz: New Media Culture*.

4) **Kyle Shernuk** (Yale U), “Being-With and Bodpa Epistemology: Ethnicized Environmental Practices in Lhaze’s Digital Videography”

- This paper investigates the relationship between ethnicity, the environment, and visual medium in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) at the turn of the twenty-first century. Specifically, I argue that the alliance between ethnic expression and the media form of digital video (DV) enables the presentation of ethnicized environmental practices to be read as a form of oppositional politics. I take as my case study the documentary films of independent Tibetan filmmaker Lhaze. In his most popular film, *Yak Dung*, Lhaze focuses his attention on the Tibetan yak and its symbiotic relationship with the human inhabitants on the Tibetan plateau. In doing so, I contend that he blurs the line between human and non-human actors through an emphasis on “being-with” and challenges the sanitized visual prejudices of his primarily Han-Chinese audience. In his more recent and confrontational film, *Pika*, Lhaze next focuses on the environmental impact and import of the pervasive rodent species called the pika. Through a series of interviews with local officials, wildlife experts, religious figures, and local Tibetans, he demonstrates the failure of Han environmental managerial practices and the need to recuperate what I call a bodpa epistemology, or a distinctly Tibetan mode of apprehending the world. Collectively, these films work to resist the effects of Han-capitalist inflicted cultural deterritorialization and recuperate indigenous Tibetan religious and environmental practices. The powerful messaging of these films is also tied to their medium, namely DV. A cheaper medium to produce than its capital-intensive celluloid counterpart and operating beyond the state censorship apparatus, DV can be distributed online through platforms such as YouTube and Bilibili, which maximizes its distribution and viewership potential. Consequently, I suggest that Lhaze’s expression of his ethnic identity through environmental beliefs becomes a form of resistance precisely by its alliance with this particular medium and its democratizing potential.
- Kyle Shernuk is a Postdoctoral Associate and Lecturer in the Council on East Asian Studies at the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University. He is currently working on his first book, which focuses on the relationship between expressions of ethnicity in literature and film and ideas about what it means to be Chinese at the turn of the twenty-first century. Relevant publications appear in the *International Journal of*

Taiwan Studies, Keywords in Queer Sinophone Studies, and A New Literary History of Modern China.

➤ Discussant: **Jenny Chio** (U of Southern California)

- Jenny Chio is Associate Professor of East Asian Languages & Cultures and Anthropology at the University of Southern California. Trained in cultural anthropology and ethnographic filmmaking, her scholarly interests focus on media ethnography, critical tourism studies, and comparative race and ethnic studies. She conducts research on the cultural politics of ethnic minority identity, rural social transformation, and vernacular media practices in the People's Republic of China. Her work includes a book and an ethnographic film on rural ethnic tourism, as well as articles and essays on amateur/independent documentary media-making and the rural public sphere in contemporary China.

❖ Moderator: **E.K. Tan** (Stony Brook U)

19:00-20:00 PDT (22:00-23:00 EDT; Sun, Apr 25, 10:00-11:00 HKT)

Post-Conference Chat & Virtual Cocktail Hour (Facilitated by 3S Board)

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