



NANYANG  
TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY

College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Imagining

Asua

16 to 18 January 2015

College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences,  
NTU, Singapore



Imagining



Asia

## Imagining Asia

Imagining Asia – a Symposium consisting of lectures, panels, workshops, and readings to be held on 16-18 January 2015 at NTU under the auspices of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and in collaboration with the University of Leeds – invites further and new investigations as to how we might set about understanding the overwhelmingly complex idea and material reality that is Asia.

Asia, it has been said, is 'returning to the centre stage it occupied for eighteen centuries before the rise of the West'. This must account for the current attempts by, say, journalists, academics, and politicians to envisage the continent in numerous and often contradictory ways. There is the totalizing entity, 'global Asia', and there is, precarious and frangible, the Asia of 'dramatic transitions, political, social and economic'; there is Asia, a 'formidable economic power', and there is Asia, restive with internal conflicts and external 'power-political capabilities'; there is a single continental mass bound together by what is known as Asian values and traditions, and there is an expansively open terrain of 'dizzying contrasts' and diverse cultures.

The Symposium takes as its presiding metaphor the Silk Road. When, as part of its Five-Year Strategic Blueprint, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, announced in 2010 a list of Five Peaks of Excellence, one of these was entitled 'The New Silk Road'. Within the wider remit of the institution, the New Silk Road as a Peak of Research Excellence is posited 'a natural route of progression for NTU. Its Chinese heritage and international standing as a global university make it a unique knowledge hub that combines the best of the East and the West'. As to be expected, behind NTU's conceptualization lies the ongoing significance of the historical Silk Road. The name, an invention of the nineteenth-century German explorer, Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen, the Silk Road was a scrawl of routes and trails which linked East Asia and the Pacific with Europe and the Mediterranean. For long before and after the second century B.C., it was a contact zone of travellers, merchants, and indigenous peoples; of wars, conquests, and trade; and of cultural borrowings, adaptations, and interchanges. An extraordinarily rich palimpsest of histories, cultures, and cultural interrelations, it continues to speak to us across the long passage of time in potent and instructive ways of our own world and our century.

Bearing in mind the historical Silk Road, and with the New Silk Road reinvented here as a figure for the unceasing flow of peoples, new ideas and knowledges, and cultures across Asia today, the Symposium invites papers on the transnational and transcultural (inter)connections emerging from these invigorating, if often hazard-ridden, movements. It aims to explore creative exchanges in, for example, film, theatre, the visual arts, literature, music, popular culture; to investigate some of the forces that shape our world today in work on, for example, women in Asia, migration, the environment, social media, conflict in the Asia-Pacific region; and to forge new collaborations in research, criticism, and creativity among interdisciplinary fields of scholarship.

## College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, NTU

The College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) at NTU was formed in 2006 and comprises at present three Schools and two Centres. These are: School of Art, Design and Media (ADM), School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI), Nanyang Centre for Public Administration (NCPA), and Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS).

The **School of Art, Design and Media** is the only art school in Singapore that offers Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree programmes. Research in ADM is measured primarily by creative works, and has a special focus on Asian art and design. Specifically, the School has strengths in digital arts, which spreads across animation, film, interactive media (e.g., game design), photography, product design, and visual communication. Animation is currently the strongest, with a new visual effects focus that crosses over to live-action film.

While diversity is a hallmark of research in the humanities and social sciences, the **School of Humanities and Social Sciences** has established five interdisciplinary research clusters as pillars in its research development. They are: (1) Humanities, Science, and Society, (2) Environment and Sustainability, (3) Global Asia, (4) New Frontiers in Neuroscience, and (5) Literary and Cultural Studies. Under each cluster, there are several major themes. For example, under Global Asia, multiculturalism and multilingualism, transnational migration, and China and Chinese Overseas research form the main foci. The Neuroscience cluster brings together researchers broadly interested in brain function and behavior, whereas literary and cultural studies examine a variety of media, including social media, from different methodological perspectives to shed light on cultural norms and contemporary social phenomena.

The School of Communication at NTU was formed in 1992 and was renamed **Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information** in 2006, incorporating Information Studies, which was previously in the College of Engineering. Health Communication and Informatics forms a major research focus in WKWSCI. Internet and Social Media research is another major cluster.

The **Nanyang Centre for Public Administration (NCPA)** was formed in 2010 and houses the so-called "Mayors' Programme," which comprises two Masters programmes in Public Administration and Managerial Economics designed for senior Chinese government officials. It also offers short-term executive training programmes for public officials from China, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia.

The **Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS)** is the interdisciplinary research hub of the College. It organises research activities such as seminars and conferences, hosts visiting researchers, and provides seed funding for colleagues from all Schools to develop major grant proposals.

## Programme at a Glance

Day 1: 16 January 2015, Friday		Venue
09:00	Registration / Coffee and Tea	CR
09:30	Welcome by Professor Alan CHAN, Dean, HASS, NTU	CR
09:45	Welcome by Professor Frank FINLAY, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Leeds	CR
10:00	<b>What is Asia to a Historian?</b> Keynote address by Professor WANG Gungwu, Chairman of the East Asian Institute and University Professor, National University of Singapore <i>[Chair: Professor Alan CHAN, Dean, HASS, NTU]</i>	CR
11:30	Lunch	CR
13:00	<b>Plenary Session (A):</b> By Githa HARIHARAN, novelist, short story writer, critic, New Delhi, and Writer in Residence, NTU (2015) <i>[Chair: Assistant Professor Barrie SHERWOOD, Division of English, HSS, NTU]</i>	CR
14:00	<b>Plenary Session (B):</b> By Sean GOLDEN, Professor of East Asian Studies, Department of Translation and Interpretation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain <i>[Chair: Associate Professor Neil MURPHY, Division of English, HSS, NTU]</i>	CR
15:00	Tea	CR
15:30	<b>Parallel Panel Sessions (I):</b> ❖ <b>Panel (1)</b> <i>[Chair: Assistant Professor LEE Hyunjung, Division of English, HSS, NTU]</i> (i) WONG Chen Hsi, Shooting Home – Capturing the Lost (ii) Brian BERGEN-AURAND, Women Making Movies: <i>Children of Srikandi</i> and Queer Collective Filmmaking (iii) Venus VIANA, The Making of the Two-sided Image of Macao (iv) Adam CATHCART, Transnational Soldiers in the Sino-Korean Borderlands, 1945-1950	SR4
	❖ <b>Panel (2)</b> <i>[Chair: Assistant Professor Bede SCOTT, Division of English, HSS, NTU]</i> (i) Andrea NANETTI, Imag(in)ing Asia in Renaissance Italy: A work case for new silk roads of knowledge flows (ii) Samara CAHILL, Fancy That: Asian Legacies and the Ideal Englishman in <i>Sir Charles Grandison</i> (iii) John WHALE, Thomas De Quincey's Unimaginable Asia (iv) C. J. WEE Wan-ling, Pop Music and the Contradictions of Imagining Contemporary Asia	SR8
17:30	End of Day 1 Proceedings	
18:00	Reception and Book Launch	Artease @ NTU
Day 2: 17 January 2015, Saturday		Venue
09:30	<b>Parallel Panel Sessions (II):</b> ❖ <b>Panel (3)</b> <i>[Chair: Assistant Professor Samara CAHILL, Division of English, HSS, NTU]</i> (i) Samuel PERKS, "A Vast Machine, Made of Wood and Flesh": Representing Systems through the Novel Form (ii) Els VAN DONGEN, Imagining East Asia: Reflections on the 1980s Debates on Confucian Values and Industrialization (iii) Humairah Binte Zainal, New Agents of Change: A Comparative Study on Youth Engagement with Independent Film in Malaysia and Singapore (iv) George WONG Boon Keng, Exploring "Sexportals" of Asia: A case study of an online prostitution forum in Singapore	SR7



Day 3: 18 January 2015, Sunday		Venue
09:30	<b>Parallel Panel Sessions (IV):</b> ❖ <b>Panel (7):</b> Imagining China and Asia Across the Seas: Chinese, European, and American Perspectives between the Sixteenth and Nineteenth Centuries <i>[Chair: Assistant Professor Christopher TRIGG, Division of English, HSS, NTU]</i> (i) KOH Keng We, Imagining Maritime Asia and the World: Change and Continuity in Chinese Perspectives (ii) Caroline FRANK, Imagining China at Home: Architectural Japanning in Early Newport (iii) CHEN Song-Chuan, The China They Fashioned: British Traders' Image of China and the First Opium War	SR7
	❖ <b>Panel (8):</b> PhantAsia: the British Empire and the Politics of Imagining Asia <i>[Chair: Dr Adam CATHCART, Lecturer in Chinese History, University of Leeds]</i> (i) Kaori ABE, The Anglo-Chinese Information War in the First Opium War, 1839-1842 (ii) Uganda KWAN, Printing the Global Asian Knowledge in London: Imperial Interpreter and British Sinologist, James Summers (1828-91) (iii) LI Yi, Who were the Merchants of the Empire? Indian, Chinese, and Ethnic Discourse in British Burma	SR8
11:00	<b>Plenary Session (E):</b> By Ho Widing, film director, Taiwan <i>[Chair: Professor C. J. WEE Wan-ling, Division of English, HSS, NTU]</i>	CR
12:00	Lunch	CR
13:30	<b>Plenary Session (F):</b> By Eddie Tay, poet, critic, Chinese University of Hong Kong, HK <i>[Chair: Professor John WHALE, Head, School of English, University of Leeds]</i>	CR
14:30	<b>Plenary Session (G):</b> By Tash Aw, novelist, writer in residence, NTU <i>[Chair: Associate Professor Terence DAWSON, Head, Division of English, HSS, NTU]</i>	CR
15:30	Tea	CR
16:00	End of Day Symposium Proceedings	CR
18:00	Symposium Dinner	

#### Notations

CR	Conference Room, Level 5, HSS-05-57
SR4	Seminar Room 4, Basement 1, HSS-B1-09
SR7	Seminar Room 7, Level 1, HSS-01-06
SR8	Seminar Room 8, Level 1, HSS-01-09

## Speakers and Participants

### Keynote speakers



**WANG Gungwu** is University Professor and Chairman of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore. He is Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University.

He received his BA (Hons) and MA degrees from the University of Malaya in Singapore, and his PhD from the University of London. His teaching career took him from the University of Malaya, where he was Professor of History from 1963 to 1968, to the Australian National University, where he was Professor and Head of the Department of Far Eastern History and Director of the Research of Pacific Studies from 1968 to 1986. From 1986 to 1995, he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong. He was Director of the East Asian Institute at NUS from 1997 to 2007.

His books in English since 2000 include: *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy*; *Don't Leave Home: Migration and the Chinese*; *Anglo-Chinese Encounters since 1800: War, Trade, Science and Governance*; *Divided China: Preparing for Reunification, 883-947*; *Renewal: The Chinese State and the New Global History*; and *Another China Cycle: Committing to Reform* (2014).



**Frances WOOD** studied art at Liverpool Art School, and Chinese at Newnham College, Cambridge, before a year in Peking University and a PhD on Beijing courtyard houses at SOAS, London. She worked in SOAS library and then as Curator of the Chinese Collections in the British Library until retiring last year. She has lectured in the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and at SOAS as well as teaching modules on Christies, Sotheby's, and SOAS Asian Arts courses, and participated in a number of BBC 'In Our Time' programmes. She has written a number of books on China and Chinese culture including: *The Blue Guide to China*, *Did Marco Polo go to China?*, *Hand Grenade Practice in Peking: my part in the Cultural Revolution*, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese: Treaty Port life in China 1843-1943*, *The Forbidden City*, *The Silk Road*, *The Lure of China*, *The First Emperor*, *The Diamond Sutra: the story of the world's earliest dated printed book* and *Picnics Prohibited: diplomacy in a chaotic China during the First World War* (2014). She is currently working on a book intended to introduce more Chinese writing (from Laozi to the 20<sup>th</sup> century) tentatively entitled *The Sixty Best Chinese Books*.

### Plenary speakers



**Tash AW** was born in Taipei, grew up in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and, having moved to England in his teenage years, lives now in London. He studied law at the University of Cambridge and the University of Warwick before embarking on a career as a novelist. He is the author of *The Harmony Silk Factory* (2005), which won the Whitbread First Novel Award as well as the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Novel (Asia Pacific Region) and was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and of two other novels, *Map of the Invisible World* (2009) and *Five-Star Billionaire* (2013). He is currently a resident writer at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and part of NTU's Creative Writing Programme.



**CAN Xue** was born in 1953 in Changsha city, Hunan province, in the south of China, and has lived in Beijing since 2001.

In 1957, during the Cultural Revolution, my father, an editorial director of the "New Hunan Daily", as head of the "anti-Party clique", was condemned as an Ultrarightist and was sent for reform labour, and my mother, who worked at the same newspaper, was similarly sent to labour in rural China. Because of the family catastrophe, I lost my chance for further education after graduating from a local elementary school. But because I love literature so much, I read whenever I had time -- fiction and poetry and philosophical works.

I have published numerous short stories and five novels. Seven of my books have been translated into English: *Dialogues in Paradise*, *Old Floating Cloud*, *The Embroidered Shoes*, and *Blue Light in the Sky and Other Stories*, *Five Spice Street*, *Vertical Motion*, and, most recently, in 2014, *The Last Lover*. Another two novels are going to be published by Yale UP and Open Letter in 2015.

I study English hard and have read quite a lot of English literature in the original and literature in English translation. I have also published critical commentaries on Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Kafka, Borges, Calvino, Bruno Schulz. Now I'm writing a book on Jean-Paul Sartre.

I seldom take part in such activities as literary conferences. Basically I'm a person who likes to stay at home, and I fear social life because it steals my time. I was however twice in the USA -- in 1992 as an honoured member of the International Writing Programme in Iowa, and in 2009 on a visit to Yale University. Today I live in the suburbs of Beijing. I write almost every day and I jog every day too. I'm having a good time.



**Sean GOLDEN** was born of Irish parents in London, spent his early childhood in Ballina and Ballaghaderreen (Ireland), and was educated in Connecticut and Massachusetts (USA). Formerly a specialist in Irish Studies with publications on modern and contemporary Irish literature, he worked some years in Tianjin (China), becoming a specialist in Chinese thought, politics, and international relations. He divides his time now among Barcelona (Spain), Ballyconnell (Sligo, Ireland) and Beijing (China). He has taught in the US, China, and Spain, and is currently Full Professor of East Asian Studies and Director of the East Asian Studies & Research Centre (CERAO) at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) in Spain. His research includes a variety of projects and publications about China, comparative cultural studies and the construction of Chinese political discourse.



**Githa HARIHARAN** has written novels, short fiction and essays over the last three decades. Her highly acclaimed work includes *The Thousand Faces of Night* which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book in 1993, the short story collection *The Art of Dying*, and the novels *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, *When Dreams Travel*, *In Times of Siege* and *Fugitive Histories*. Hariharan also edited *A Southern Harvest* and *From India to Palestine: Essays in Solidarity*. Her own collection of essays called *Almost Home: Cities and Other Places* was published by HarperCollins India in 2014. Hariharan's fiction has been translated into a number of languages. She has been Visiting Professor and Writer-in-Residence in several universities, including Dartmouth College and George Washington University in the United States, the University of Canterbury at Kent in the UK, and Jamia Millia Islamia in India. She is Writer-in-Residence at NTU, Singapore, in January-August 2015.



**HO Widing**, who currently lives in Taipei, was born and raised in Malaysia, and attended the film school at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. His first feature film, *Pinoy Sunday*, kicked off its international film festival run at the Toronto International Film Festival. Domestically *Pinoy Sunday* garnered a pair of awards at Taipei International Film Festival and also won a Best New Director Award from the prestigious Golden Horse Award. It also won the Best Feature Film at the Comedy Cluj Film Festival in Romania.

Wi Ding's previous short film, *Summer Afternoon*, premiered at the Directors' Fortnight of the Cannes Film Festival and was the only Asian film selected in the category that year. *Respire*, which preceded *Summer Afternoon*, premiered at the International Critics' Week of the Cannes Film Festival in 2005. Here it won the Kodak Discovery Award and the TV5 (very) Young Critics Award. The following year *Respire* clocked in with the Best Fantasy Short Film Award at SITGES International Fantasy Film Festival and a Special Jury Award at the Taipei International Film Festival.

In 2011, Wi Ding directed two commissioned short films. *100* is a segment of *10+10*, a joint film project comprising twenty celebrated directors and initiated by Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival. *I wake up in a strange bed*, is a segment of the four shorts compilation, *When Yesterday Comes*, commissioned by the Catholic Foundation of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia. It won the Best Short Film Award at Taipei International Film Festival.

Wi Ding is currently in post-production of *Our Sister Mambo*, a Singapore Film produced by Cathay Films.



**Gail JONES** is an Australian academic and fiction writer, the author of two short-story collections and the novels *Black Mirror*, *Sixty Lights*, *Dreams of Speaking*, *Sorry* and *Five Bells*. Her fiction has won many awards in Australia and been short-listed for international prizes, including the Dublin IMPAC and the French Prix Femina Etranger. Her work has been translated into thirteen languages and she has been the recipient of writing or academic residencies in India, Ireland, Germany, France, the USA and China. She lectures and teaches in literary studies and writing across the globe

	<p>and in 2001 received the Australian Universities Teaching Award for Humanities and the Arts. She is currently working as Professor of Writing in the Writing and Society Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney.</p>
	<p><b>Eddie TAY</b> is Associate Professor at the Department of English, Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he teaches creative writing among other courses. He is the author of three poetry collections. <i>Remnants</i> (2000) and <i>A Lover's Soliloquy</i> (2005) consist of free adaptations from Tang Dynasty poetry as well as original poems. <i>The Mental Life of Cities</i> (2010) experiments with bilingual poetry and was awarded the Singapore Literature Prize 2012 (English Category). His journal articles include "Multiculturalisms, Mistranslations and Bilingual Poetry: On Writing as a Chinese" in <i>New Writing: The International Journal for the Theory and Practice of Creative Writing</i> and an auto-ethnographical paper entitled "Street Meditations: On Poetry, Street Photography and Everyday Life in Hong Kong" in <i>Asiatic</i>. He is also the Reviews editor of the online quarterly journal <i>Cha: An Asian Literary Journal</i> founded in 2007.</p>

## Participants

	<p><b>Richard BARLOW</b> completed his PhD at Queen's University Belfast where he also taught and lectured. He is now Assistant Professor of Modernism at NTU where he has recently started a <i>Finnegans Wake</i> reading group. His research focuses on the influence of Scottish literature and philosophy on Joyce's works, especially <i>Ulysses</i> and the <i>Wake</i>. He is a regular reviewer for <i>Notes and Queries</i> and the <i>Irish Studies Review</i> and his articles have appeared in publications such as <i>James Joyce Quarterly</i>, <i>Philosophy and Literature</i>, and <i>The Guardian</i>.</p>
	<p><b>Brian BERGEN-AURAND</b> is Assistant Professor of Literature and Film and affiliated faculty in the Master of Arts in Contemporary China Program at Nanyang Technological University, where he teaches courses in cinema, ethics, and embodiment. He is the author of <i>Film/Ethics: 1. Proper Names</i> and editor (with Mary Mazzilli and Hee Wai Siam) of <i>Transnational Chinese Cinema, Corporeality, Desire, and the Ethics of Failure</i>. He is the founding editor of the journal <i>Screen Bodies</i> and serves on the editorial board of <i>The New Review of Film and Television Studies</i>.</p>
	<p><b>Samara CAHILL</b> is Assistant Professor of Restoration and eighteenth-century English literature at Nanyang Technological University. She received her dual BA in Plan II/English Honors from the University of Texas at Austin and her PhD from the University of Notre Dame. Her articles have appeared or are forthcoming in <i>The AnaChronisT</i>, <i>Assuming Gender</i>, <i>Green Humanities</i>, <i>Religion in the Age of Enlightenment</i>, and <i>Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture</i>. She is the Book Review Editor of <i>Religion in the Age of Enlightenment</i> and the co-editor (with Kevin Cope) of <i>Citizens of the World: Adapting the Eighteenth Century</i> (forthcoming from Bucknell University Press).</p>
	<p><b>Adam CATHCART</b> is Lecturer in Chinese History at the University of Leeds, specializing in Chinese communist foreign relations in the early Cold War. Apart from his work on the Sino-Korean border region and the Korean War, he writes about Japanese war crimes trials in the PRC and musical/cultural exchanges. He currently serves as the editor of the analysis website SinoNK.com and of the scholarly journal <i>Papers of the British Association of Korean Studies</i>.</p>
	<p><b>Sarah DODD</b> teaches courses on Chinese culture, language, and translation at Leeds and Sheffield Universities, and is a research assistant on Writing Chinese. She has recently completed her PhD on seventeenth-century Chinese ghost tales, and is co-organizer of "<a href="http://writingchinese.leeds.ac.uk/">Reading the Fantastic</a>", a current project on contemporary Chinese writers (<a href="http://writingchinese.leeds.ac.uk/">http://writingchinese.leeds.ac.uk/</a>).</p>
	<p><b>Frank FINLAY</b> is Professor of German Language and Literature and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Leeds. His research interests include German-language literature in its social and historical context, the writer as public intellectual, and the literary culture of Germany since 1945. He was member of an international team which produced the 27-volume critical edition of the complete works of Heinrich Böll (2002-2010) and has published on a range of other authors, such as Günter Grass, Uwe Timm, Peter Turrini and Christian Kracht. His current focus is on German-Jewish writing, particularly H.G. Adler and Edgar Hilsenrath, as Co-Investigator on a project to explore "Cosmopolitan Memory" in the Literature of Germany and South Africa funded by the British Academy.</p>



**Stella KON** is the winner of three national playwriting awards in Singapore. Her published works include the one-woman *Emily of Emerald Hill*, *3 Stellar Plays*, and *9 Classroom Plays*. She is the author of *Eston* (a novel), and the writer of the scripts and lyrics of five musicals. Other aspects of Stella Kon's life and work will be the subject of her paper at the symposium.

**Satoshi MASUTANI** is Professor at the College of Tourism (2008-) and Director of the Division of Student Affairs of Rikkyo University, Japan (2010-2013). He is currently Visiting Professor at the Division of Chinese, NTU. He was also Research Fellow of Waseda University, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and Kyoto University; and Visiting Fellow of the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Malaya and Lecturer of MCA School of Political Studies. He specializes in Southeast Asian Chinese Literature, in particular Malaysia and Singapore (Mahua) Chinese Literature. His publications include: *Malaysia under NDP* (1996), *Asian Pop Culture* (1996), *Interviews: Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Singapore* (1998), *Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Singapore* (2001), *Introduction to Southeast Asian Literature* (2001) and many research papers about Malaysia and Mahua Literature.



**Sujatha Arundathi MEEGAMA**, Assistant Professor in Asian art history at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, holds a PhD in History of Art from the University of California Berkeley (2011). She specializes in the art and architecture of South Asia and her methodological interests range from artwork, which questions established binaries and boundaries (different visual traditions, different religions, and different media), to the transmission of artistic knowledge in the medieval and early modern art worlds. She has published on Sri Lankan temple architecture in the journal *Artibus Asiae* (2010), and is currently at work on a series of articles about sixteenth-century Sri Lankan ivory caskets produced for the Portuguese court. In 2013, she co-curated an exhibition on the responses of contemporary Sri Lankan artists towards war and peace in the wake of the civil war in Sri Lanka. Her current research interests include roadside shrines to Ganesha built by Sri Lankan security forces; the diverse responses to the *Ramayana* seen in Sri Lankan material culture, literature, and ritual; and the visual narratives about Buddhism in colonial photography/ postcards from Ceylon.



**Andrea NANETTI** received his Laurea in Medieval History, and his PhD from the University of Bologna. His main research interest is in innovation and change in heritage interpretation processes. As a scholar he applies interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary methods to the study of *regional* man-heritage-landscape systems, *national* art-heritage-politics relationships, and *global* histories of intercontinental heritage networks. As an entrepreneur he adopts transnational and cross-disciplinary approaches in access to heritage (ICT tools, new media, and contemporary art), conservation-restoration (selection and coordination of Italian and other European masters for Asian companies, establishment of artworks restoration labs), and support to heritage management (advisor to public and private institutions). His research results have been presented in more than 190 papers in Europe, America, Asia, and Australia. He has received international prizes, awards, and grants. Most of his main publications (in Italian, English, Greek, and Chinese) are used and cited in international peer-reviewed scientific publications.

**Samuel PERKS** is a first-year PhD candidate at the University of Leeds. His research project explores representations of environmental transformation in Singaporean historical novels, and is funded by the Anniversary Research Scholarship scheme.



**EIs VAN DONGEN** is Assistant Professor of History at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She obtained a Ph.D. in Chinese Studies from Leiden University, the Netherlands, a Masters degree in Chinese Studies, and a postgraduate diploma in International Relations, both from the University of Leuven, Belgium. She was a visiting Fulbright scholar at Boston University and a visiting researcher at Peking University. Her research interests include the history, historiography, and intellectual history of modern China, with a special focus on revisions of history and debates on history and historiography during the reform era (post-1978). Within the framework of the broader themes of nationalism, transnationalism, and national identity, her recent research project deals with Chinese diaspora engagement strategies during the reform era, the history and migration patterns of the Chinese overseas, and the changing relation between the Chinese overseas and the PRC.



**Venus VIANA** is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Chinese Language and Culture, Nanyang Technological University. Before joining NTU, she graduated from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology where she also served as a lecturer in 2013. Her research interests include the social, economic, and legal history of late Qing and Republican China. She is currently working on a book manuscript which studies Zhongshan's implementation of Guomindang's modernization programmes including the reformation of the police and judicial system, the banking and monetary systems, public health campaigns and so on.



**C. J. WEE Wan-ling** is Professor of English at the Nanyang Technological University. He is the author of *Culture, Empire, and the Question of Being Modern* (2003) and *The Asian Modern: Culture, Capitalist Development, Singapore* (2007); he is also the editor of *Local Cultures and the 'New Asia': The State, Culture, and Capitalism in Southeast Asia* (2002). Most recently, he co-edited the anthology *Contesting Performance: Global Sites of Research* (2010). Wee's essays have appeared in journals such as *Public Culture*, *Critical Inquiry*, *The Drama Review*, and *positions: east asia cultures critique*.



**John WHALE** is the author of books on Thomas De Quincey, John Keats, and imagination in the period 1789-1832, the editor of collections of essays on Edmund Burke and Romanticism, and a contributor to *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*. He is currently working on the culture of pugilism in the long eighteenth century and on Georgian Liverpool. He is also a poet with two published collections from Carcanet: *Waterloo Teeth* (2010) and *Frieze* (2013).

**George WONG Boon Keng** is currently a Masters candidate in Sociology at the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore. His current work aims to explain the relationship between migrant communities and their recreational places. George received his B.SocSc in Political Science and Sociology from the Singapore Management University and was awarded the Ho See Beng Excellence Award (Top Graduating Political Science Student). His research interests include Political Sociology, Nationalism, Migration and Urbanism.

**WONG Chee Meng** graduated from the National University of Singapore with a BA in Chinese Studies and Linguistics. He then obtained his Master's degree in World Heritage Studies at the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus, with a thesis on built heritage in Chinese and European cultures. Upon his return to Singapore, he worked as an arts manager promoting Indian classical music and dance, and designing arts education programmes. He then went on to complete a PhD at the Cottbus University on cultural policy in intercultural dialogue and cultural heritage. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU, where he researches on cultural heritage, theatre, dance and film as articulations of cultural identity, values and ideology.



**WONG Chen-Hsi** is a Singapore-based narrative filmmaker. She has been named one of the 5 top local directors of 2013, and part of the "Singapore New Wave". In her debut feature film, "Innocents" (2012), she explores "orphaned" children looking in from the periphery of society. "Innocents" premiered at the prestigious Rome International Film Festival, and won several awards at major international film festivals including "Best Director" (Asian New Talent) at the Shanghai International Film Festival. Chen-Hsi's films are often concerned with memory, displacement, and environment, and have been screened at more than 50 international film festivals. She received her MFA from USC's School of Cinematic Arts in Los Angeles and is currently on the film faculty at the School of Art Design and Media at NTU Singapore.

**Humairah ZAINAL** is a PhD research student at the Division of Sociology, Nanyang Technological University. Her research interests are in the areas of Malay films, gender, and sexuality, and the socio-cultural history of the Malays. Her PhD thesis explores the ways in which Malaysian undergraduates engage with and appropriate the independent films produced by the late Malaysian independent filmmaker, Yasmin Ahmad, in their everyday lives.

**Kaori ABE**, who has an MA in History from SOAS, University of London, worked on her PhD in the Department of History, University of Bristol. Her research focus is the history of Hong Kong, modern China and the British Empire. Kaori's PhD dissertation, titled "The City of Intermediaries:

	<p>Compradors in Hong Kong, 1830s to 1880s,” explores how compradors, Chinese intermediary merchants, emerged in nineteenth-century Hong Kong and established the fundamental bases of the commercial and administration system of the city. Her CLASS postdoctoral research is titled “Inventing Public Health: Chinese Responses to Contagious Diseases in South China and South East Asia, 1890s-1910s.” Exploring the interaction of local and foreign values, knowledge and approaches to contagious diseases, this research will highlight the process of the social, political, and cultural development of public health in port cities in South China and Southeast Asia, such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Guangzhou.</p>
	<p><b>Uganda Sze-pui KWAN</b> is Associate Professor at the Chinese Division, and the coordinator of the interdisciplinary research cluster of literary and cultural studies at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University. Her research interests include Chinese knowledge production by the British interpreter in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, literary translation of modern Chinese literature, and Sino-Japanese comparative literary and cultural studies. She is currently working on a book manuscript that is a revisionist history of British Sinology in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Her other forthcoming book projects include <i>Scholars and Interpreters</i>; and <i>Bridging the Language Gaps: Translation and Interpretation Activities in the Early Hong Kong Government (1842-1860)</i>. She is the co-editor of a translation journal <i>Studies of Translation History</i> which is jointly published by Fudan and the Research Center for Translation of Chinese University of Hong Kong, where she is holding a honorary research appointment (2009-present). She has also held visiting appointments at the University of Tokyo (2009), University College London (2010), and Harvard University (2014).</p>
	<p><b>LI Yi</b> received her PhD from the Department of History, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, in 2012. She works on the history of the Burmese Chinese under colonial rule using both English and Chinese sources. Her other research interests include the history of modern Southeast Asia, Overseas Chinese studies, and European colonies in Asia. She joined the History Programme of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University, as a postdoctoral fellow, in December 2013. She was born in China, and has spent years in Shanghai, Singapore, and London.</p>
	<p><b>KUAH Ting Ting</b> is currently working for her Master’s degree with the Division of English at Nanyang Technological University. Her research interests include critical theory and discourses on identity politics.</p>
	<p><b>Leah Jolene TAN</b> is pursuing her Masters in English at NTU, and her research interests include marginal cultural identities. She is presently working on her thesis, focusing on Dominican-American author, Junot Díaz, and his use of language in bearing witness to, and representing, cultural trauma.</p>
	<p><b>Eric Tinsay VALLES’</b> poetry has been featured in <i>Words, Reflecting on the Merlion, Ceriph, Southeast Asian Review of English, Routledge’s New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing</i> and other journals. He has taken up short-term writing residencies at the Vermont Studio Center, Centrum and Wellspring House in the USA. He has won a Goh Sin Tub Creative Writing prize for poems that form the core of his second poetry collection, <i>After the Fall</i>. His previous poetry collection is <i>A World in Transit</i>.</p>
	<p><b>YAO Xiaoling</b> is a PhD student at the Division of English, NTU. She obtained her MA degree at Fudan University in China. Her research interests are modernist and contemporary writers, in particular Joseph Conrad. Her article, “The Harmonious Communication between Tragic and Comic Elements---on the Identity Construction of Yank in Hairy Ape”, was published in <i>Fudan Forum on Foreign Languages and Literature (Postgraduate)</i>. She has delivered conference papers at the 6th and 7th Fudan Intercollegiate Doctoral Academic Forum (postgraduate panel).</p>
	<p><b>CHEN Song-chuan</b> is Assistant Professor of History, History Programme, at Nanyang Technological University. His academic qualifications include undergraduate degrees from Taiwan; MA in Comparative Literature, School of Oriental and African Studies, university of London; PhD., Department of East Asian Studies, Cambridge University. His publications include “An information war waged by merchants and missionaries at Canton: The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China, 1834-1839,” <i>Modern Asian Studies</i>, 46:6 (October 2012). <a href="mailto:scchen@ntu.edu.sg">scchen@ntu.edu.sg</a></p>



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Day 1: 16 January 2015, Friday		Venue
10:00	Registration / Coffee and Tea	CR
10:30	Welcome by Professor Alan CHAN, Dean, HASS, NTU	CR
10:45	Welcome by Professor Frank FINLAY, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Leeds	CR
11:00	<b>What is Asia to a Historian?</b> Keynote address by Professor WANG Gungwu, Chairman of the East Asian Institute and University Professor, National University of Singapore	CR
12:30	Lunch	CR
14:00	<b>Plenary Session (A):</b> By Githa HARIHARAN, novelist, short story writer, critic, New Delhi, and Writer in Residence, NTU	CR
15:00	<b>Plenary Session (B):</b> By Sean GOLDEN, Professor of East Asian Studies, Department of Translation and Interpretation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain	CR
16:00	Tea	CR
16:30	<b>Parallel Panel Sessions (I):</b> ❖ Panel (1) ❖ Panel (2)	SR4 SR8
18:30	Reception and Book Launch	To be confirmed
20:00	End of Day 1 Programme	

### Plenary Session (A): 14:00 to 15:00 [CR]

#### Retelling the View from Here

##### Githa HARIHARAN

Even in post-colonial times, our views of “here” and “there” come from elsewhere. Too often a “universal” or cosmopolitan view has meant adopting the Western gaze of events and lives in the past and present. Many of us live in places which we have to “retell” if we are to tell them at all – tell them as we see them, and in our own voices.

In this retelling of home, we have multiple pasts in the narrative. In our own postcolonial lives, we experience the jostling of colonial legacies with postcolonial aspirations. Above all, we are in the eye of the local struggle between views from the centre and the views from the periphery.

Combining a talk with readings, Githa Hariharan will raise two linked questions: What makes a city, or any place, home? How do we tell a layered story of home which includes multiple pasts, the collision of ideas, culture, war and colonization, and the frictions of day-to-day survival in the present?

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### Plenary Session (B): 15:00 to 16:00 [CR]

#### From Sligo to Noh via Ernest Fenollosa. Imagining and Re-imagining Asia

##### Sean GOLDEN

“Liu Xie 劉勰’s *Wénxīn diāolóng* 文心雕龙, Ernest Fenollosa’s complete *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* and 20<sup>th</sup>-century avant garde American writing outside the Ezra Pound tradition”

Ezra Pound’s edition of Ernest Fenollosa’s manuscripts for *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* was a landmark in modernist European poetry and the imagist movement at the beginning of the 20th century. Pound’s work has stood for Fenollosa’s vision since then and has been the subject of controversy among Sinologists for its emphasis on the graphic elements of Chinese written characters. A recent edition of the complete Fenollosa manuscripts by Haun Saussy, Jonathan Stalling and Lucas Klein has made it possible to see the differences between Fenollosa’s interests and Pound’s interpretations and to restore Fenollosa’s original intentions. The Pound connection has limited consideration of Fenollosa almost exclusively to literary matters, and especially to poetry. Pound also published, through W.B. Yeats, and his sisters, Lily and Lolly, translations of Japanese classical theatre based on Fenollosa’s manuscripts. Yeats wrote the Introduction. What is less well known is the hand that Yeats played in retranslating Fenollosa (a hand unacknowledged by Pound), and that Yeats corresponded with D.T. Suzuki about Zen

## Plenary Session (B): 15:00 to 16:00 [CR]

Buddhism, and, even more so, the effect that Fenollosa's influence in the visual arts and design had on the Arts & Crafts Movement around the world and on other avant gardes. Fenollosa's original project for imagining Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was interrupted, not just by his death in 1908, but by the incomplete interpretation of that vision by Pound and his followers. A different avant garde, characterised by John Cage, intuitively followed Fenollosa's original intentions. Now that it is possible to recover Fenollosa's original vision it becomes possible to read backwards into the history of the influence his imaginings of Chinese and Japanese art had on the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to project forward a renewed imaging of Asia in the arts.

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## Parallel Panel Sessions (I) — Panel 1: 16:30 to 18:30 [SR4]

### Shooting Home – Capturing the Lost

**WONG Chen-Hsi**

In December 2010, I shot my feature film, *Innocents*,<sup>1</sup> which is set in 1980s Singapore. By the time the film premiered in 2012, every location we filmed in had been demolished. This included the railway tracks, the old school, giant jungle canals, and ageing shophouses. *Innocents*, which invites audiences to look back upon half-forgotten childhood memories, no longer simply depicted a past era, but had become a document of a fragile and evanescent present.

In a country that is continuously subject to rapid physical and social change, location filming itself becomes a narrative process charged with steering the best path through a fraught landscape of shifting cultural memory and migrating identities. Through the production process of *Innocents*, this paper examines issues of remembrance against the practical dictates of effective representation in film art in Singapore.

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### Women Making Movies: *Children of Srikandi* and Queer Collective Filmmaking

**Brian BERGEN-AURAND**

When German filmmakers Laura Coppens and Angelika Levi came to Indonesia to document the lives of the local queer community and ceded control of the project to the women they were documenting, they queered not only the content of the film but also its form and process in terms of the established discourses of scopophilia, (colonial/exotic) voyeurism, film authorship, and queer intersectionality. Generally, considering questions of women making movies throughout Asia involves addressing the interactions among forms or systems of situation, domination, discrimination, access, and privilege, across institutions and structures that interact on multiple, simultaneous, and sometimes contradictory, paradoxical, ambiguous, and aporetic ways to locate and delimit the expectations surrounding and defining gendered socio-cultural productions. Specifically, though, addressing the production, distribution, exhibition, and reception of the queer documentary *Children of Srikandi* (directed by The Children of Srikandi Collective, Germany and Indonesia, 2012)—“the first film by queer women about queer women from Indonesia”—requires engaging with an expanded network of intersections, including those among race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, embodiment, religion, citizenship, and sartorial presentation as they join with the effects of cinematic expectations and aesthetic and rhetorical possibilities with regard to concerns over authority and authenticity, soft transnationalism, and the wider contexts of women making movies throughout the region. This queering of intersectionality then queered and continues to queer, in contrast, the production, distribution, exhibition, and reception of other films composed and produced (collectively or otherwise) by women across Asia and around the globe. This paper examines the intersectionality of this overall queering effect of such socio-cultural productions.

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<sup>1</sup> “Innocents” is an 88min feature film, directed by Chen-Hsi Wong. It premiered in the Alice Nella Citta competition of the 2012 Rome International Film Festival. Awards include Best Director Asian New Talent at the Shanghai International Film Festival, Best Screenplay at the Ourense International Film Festival, and the Graine de Cinephage jury prize at the Films de Femmes Creteil. In 2013, Chen-Hsi Wong was named one of 5 top local directors to watch.

### **The Making of the Two-sided Image of Macao**

**Venus VIANA**

Macao must have provided a highly complex, even paradoxical, image in early twentieth-century China. The city was known as the holy city in the East and, at the same time, the sin city in the East. It was well known for its corrupt activities, namely gambling and prostitution, and its collaboration with mainland counterparts in the smuggling of goods and humans. Coolie trade, a system full of abuses, had at some point of time brought prosperity to the Macao economy. On the other hand, much has been written, especially by the British in Hong Kong, about Macao's clean and beautiful gardens, its well-equipped public facilities, such as schools, churches, and charity houses, and the peaceful life that residents lived. As early as the 1890s, the British had praised Macao's residents for their promptitude and energy in their attempts to combat plague. This article studies the making of the two-sided image of Macao. Despite their comments, the British might not have been aware of their role in the making of Macao's two-sided image. This article argues that British merchants, opium smugglers, and missionaries who resided in Macao in the nineteenth century and, later, British Hong Kong all played an important role in turning Macao into both a holy city and a sin city.

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### **Transnational Soldiers in the Sino-Korean Borderlands, 1945-1950**

**Adam CATHCART**

State-centered historical narratives by their nature generally avoid regional variation or ambiguous peripheries which tend to challenge the cohesiveness of national narratives or mythos. Northeast Asia's case is not an exception to this rule, particularly in the case of historiographical and narrative division between Korea and China. Social and political relations on the Sino-Korean border are extensive and enduring, yet, Yonsei professor Michael Kim writes aptly that while the "entangled histories of Manchuria and Korea" continued after 1945, the desire or ability of any historian to write a combined history of the border space has faltered.

What will re-enable and re-activate this historiographical and narrative rupture in these borderlands? This paper holds that analysis of personal narratives might support reconfiguration of the theoretic or historiographic division and paralysis in what is now northeast China, between Japanese defeat and the hostilities of the Korean War. Examining newly sourced Chinese sources in its investigation of military transfers, mutual aid, and the individual stories of ethnic Koreans caught in national rupture between two civil wars, the paper analyses several different nodes where Sino-Korean contact occurred (and continues to occur, albeit in a more regulated fashion) along the frontier. In particular the paper addresses cross-border ties between Yanbian (PRC) and North Hamgyong Province, North Korea. The paper argues for a greater transnational approach to North Korea's early history, moving beyond simple narratives of disconnection, asserting its continuing connectivity with China during this period and potentially offering a solution to this conceptual and historiographical rupture.

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### Imag(in)ing Asia in Renaissance Italy: A Work Case for New Silk Roads of Knowledge Flows

**Andrea NANETTI**

This paper presents a project envisaged by Andrea Nanetti for a recently established research team of scholars based in Venice, Hong Kong, Beijing, Canberra, and Singapore, who will be involved in the final abstract and full text paper if this proposal will be accepted.

The project goal is the design of an interactive and immersive installation for museums and galleries, able to display the historical data on harbor cities along the Eurasian maritime networks for both architectures and everyday life. The research relates the data of travel accounts and chronicles to the data encapsulated in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century western and eastern maps of the world, starting with the mid-fifteenth century world maps by Fra Mauro and the anonymous "Portolano 1" of the National Library of Florence, by Castiglioni (1525), compared to the 15th-century Mao Kun maps 茅坤圖, the Da Ming Hun-yi Tu 大明混一圖, and 16th century Guang-yu tu 廣輿圖.

These data will be integrated into the "Interactive Global Histories" database (see [www.engineeringhistoricalmemory.com](http://www.engineeringhistoricalmemory.com)), which was awarded at the 2013 Kyoto Culture and Computing Conference, and in 2014 is starting a collaboration with Microsoft to implement the Bing search engine.

From a methodological point of view, the paper investigates old and new methods to manage historical information and how they contribute to certain (art) historical methodologies, by using themes of late medieval and early modern (art) history (13th-16th c.) related to the Silk Roads, as tests for the (art) historical research, today. It deals with issues of method, that are usually considered beneath the field of art histories, oriental studies, medieval history, archival studies, library sciences, and humanities information science.

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### Fancy That: Asian Legacies and the Ideal Englishman in *Sir Charles Grandison*

**Samara CAHILL**

Ciaran Murray has argued that Jonathan Swift's mentor, Sir William Temple, laid a foundation for the Romantic movement when he praised the Chinese garden aesthetics encapsulated in the term *sharawadji* (probably taken from the Japanese *sorowaji*, according to Murray). Temple's praise influenced Joseph Addison and, through him, Alexander Pope and Samuel Richardson. Further, Patrick Mello has recently argued that Richardson's single novel devoted to an ideal Englishman—*Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-4)—is a "cosmopolitan" novel. Drawing on these works of scholarship I will read *Grandison* as a test case for Richardson's complex appropriation of Asian aesthetics.

Implicitly, China (or Japan) is the provenance of the "fanciful," "peculiar," and "poetical" design of the patriarchal garden Sir Charles carefully preserves (he feels that it is a "kind of impiety" to fell a tree his father planted). Further, the status of Sir Charles and his brother-in-law Lord G as patriarchs themselves is associated with their collections of imported porcelain (called "japan china"). Thus, before the period Edward Said examines in *Orientalism* (1790s and onward), China and Japan were seen not as effeminate, but rather as the points of origin of commodities that enabled a reimagining of quintessentially English patriarchs as both cosmopolitan and worldly. Indeed, the cultivation, appropriation, and collection of Chinese and Japanese aesthetics and artefacts are central to Richardson's construction of ideal English masculinity. If Sir Charles Grandison's travels make him cosmopolitan, his aesthetic choices bring the world to Grandison Hall.

### Thomas De Quincey's Unimaginable Asia

**JOHN WHALE**

This paper reflects on Thomas De Quincey's numerous papers on China, Afghanistan, India, 'Ceylon', and Asiatic Russia in order to enquire into the nature and legacy of European Romantic Orientalism's representation of an 'unimaginable' Asia.

One key strand of De Quincey's often belligerent and jingoistic response to Britain's imperial wars in Afghanistan and with China in 1848 is the sublime. Across his writings this takes a number of different forms; even in his teenage diary De Quincey was intent on proliferating different versions of this aesthetic, including 'the gloomy sublime'. The ineffable or - to use his own phraseology - the 'unutterable' (which relates to his sense of the dark secrets underpinning the Greek drama) forms one of the keystones of his discourse of the sublime; and one which intensifies in relation to his writings on China. This particularly charged version of the sublime which is focused for him on the

blockage of human utterance is set against the more obvious challenge of sublime infinities, including a challenging set of different geographies, peoples, and languages. De Quincey's reverie or prospect view from Everton above 'the many-languaged town of Liverpool' in his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1822) presents a Christian imperial vision of unmanageable differences reconciled to a higher metaphysical harmony of 'infinite activity, infinite repose'; a very different prospect to the threat he sees as being provided by the sublime geography and demography of China.

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### Pop Music and the Contradictions of Imagining Contemporary Asia

#### C. J. WEE Wan-ling

In *The Awakening of Japan* (1905), published during the Russo-Japanese War, art historian Okakura Kakuzō wrote and complained of the colonial-era modernity of his time, and how its "commercialism and industrialism" was "accompanied by a tendency toward the universal occidentalization of etiquette and language." A predatory modernity and culture were spreading and threatened the creation of an enforced common culture: "The restlessness that constantly moves its home from the steamer to the hotel, from the railway station to the bathing resort, has brought about the possibility of a cosmopolitan culture." What happens when this older restless modernity and culture has become entrenched in postcolonial era East Asian societies, and—ironically?—can make some claim to be contributing towards an idea of contemporary Asia? The "West," after all, has long since been absorbed into various forms of regional cultural expression. This presentation will attempt to think through both the (unexpected) spread of Japanese pop culture in East and Southeast Asia in the 1990s and the spread of Korean pop culture that followed from the late 1990s. The latter followed in the tracks of the earlier J-wave—which itself followed the tracks of circulating pop cultures in various Chinese languages from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Are we witnessing the emergence of a contemporary sensibility that can draw the young in the common consumption of an Asian pop culture, one that now seems able to compete with the West in the region? How might we think of the contradictions between the national idea and a cosmopolitan "new Asian" identity when we live in a moment when the tensions that had their origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries seem more pronounced than ever?

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Day 2: 17 January 2015, Saturday		Venue
09:30	<b>Parallel Panel Sessions (II):</b> ❖ Panel (3) ❖ Panel (4)	SR7 SR8
11:30	<b>China but also Cathay: Imagined and Explored by Western Writers from the 15th to the 20th century</b> Keynote address by Dr Frances Wood, Lead Curator (until retirement in 2013) of Chinese Collections at the British Library	CR
13:00	Lunch	CR
14:00	<b>Plenary Session (C):</b> By Gail Jones, novelist, Professor of Writing, University of Western Sydney, Australia	CR
15:00	<b>Plenary Session (D):</b> By Can Xue (残雪), novelist, short story writer, critic, Beijing, People's Republic of China	
16:00	Tea	CR
16:30	<b>Parallel Panel Sessions (III):</b> ❖ Panel (5) ❖ Panel (6)	SR7 SR8
18:30	End of Day 2 Programme	

### Plenary Session (C): 14:00 to 15:00 [CR]

#### "I am Chinese": of Bodies and Walls, of Boundaries and their Dissolution

Gail JONES

In 1916 Franz Kafka wrote 'I am Chinese' in a postcard to his fiancée, Felice Bauer. Yet this curious Sinophilia is not simply casual, perverse, or a joke of identity, but a well-documented fascination with the high-seriousness of Chinese classical poetry and philosophy. Kafka read Confucian and Taoist texts in translation, and possessed a number of travel books on China, including the influential *Travels in China* by Julius Dittmar. Moreover, his famous short story, 'The Great Wall of China' (1917), remains to this day a fable variously interpreted as Orientalist or anti-Orientalist, as a paradigmatic instance of the European imperial imaginary or a wish instead to construct a China that is autotelic and beyond European control. Using the trope of walls and their persistence or ruination, this paper considers fiction as implicating not just these presumptions of identification (or dis-identification), but also acts of collective and personal imagination that approach the vastness and heterogeneity of China – and indeed its monumentality, prestige and symbols – by means of the vigorous negotiation of particularized historical traces and cultural imagination. My last published novel, *Five Bells* (2011), includes as one of its four personal narratives that of a Shanghainese woman, and thematizes the Cultural Revolution as exemplifying the control of literary production and reception. In this text I've sought to re-encounter my own fantasized Asian-ness and to approach with humility, honour, and intellectual caution, matters concerning the suffering body and the ethics of cross-cultural writing.

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### Plenary Session (D): 15:00 to 16:00 [CR]

#### A Secret Silk Road -- Can Xue's Creation

CAN Xue (残雪)

My writing is a very special sort of writing. I think I can call it "experimental writing", undertaken in order to know how far and how finely one's spiritual tension could be stretched, and how high one could scale the summits of art. My experimental writing is different from most of the kind to be found in the West because, although the plots and dialogues in my fictions are grotesque, even unimaginably strange, my language is plain, down to earth, and straightforward. I think maybe the reason for this is that the stories that I tell are the common stories of mankind. Some of these we have forgotten long long ago, some we just don't know if they are our own stories. So people (whether they are from the East or the West) often say that Can Xue is very difficult to understand.

I deeply feel that the relationship between the East and the West has come to a critical moment. I will do my best to devote my literature to peace and development, and I would like my works to become a secret silk road between the West and the East. As a Chinese I always know that I come from a great tradition; but, even with this great tradition, the road will become narrower and narrower if one does not learn from other civilizations. I think this learning is very important to writers, like myself, today.

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**'A Vast Machine, Made of Wood and Flesh': Representing Systems through the Novel Form**

**Samuel PERKS**

In the early twentieth century, Malayan rubber planters relied upon Brazilian rubber seeds, a pool of Indian labourers, and American demand for the crop to cultivate their enterprises. In Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, the owner of the Sungei Pattani rubber plantation instrumentalizes these international inputs by referring to his plantation as "a vast machine, made of wood and flesh," to be maintained and disciplined. This paper highlights the novel form's potential for showing trans-continental and global economic connections, by scrutinizing representations of these connections in *The Glass Palace*.

Stretching from colonized to decolonized Asian locations, the novel emphasizes the distinction between migrant labourer and migrant entrepreneur classes, and further shows that the exploitation of one by the other entails the harnessing of family relations and the wider natural environment. *The Glass Palace* narrates the conscription of the vulnerable in the creation and protection of profits across Burma, India and Malaya, but this paper focuses on two particular ecological regimes: the Huay Zedi teak frontier and the Sungei Pattani rubber plantation. Close reading of passages relating to these sites reveals the novel's social conscience regarding the colonial foundation or intensification of these profit-making links, and the legacies of these links today.

As a cultural product, partaking in globalization's import and export of culture, *The Glass Palace* demonstrates how novels can powerfully represent colonial-era and contemporary connections to a global audience by tracking the movements of families – and thus, representing an exploitative global system of labour relations.

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**Imagining East Asia: Reflections on the 1980s Debates on Confucian Values and Industrialization**

**Els VAN DONGEN**

During the 1970s, the American futurist Herman Kahn predicted the rise of East Asia and its challenge to Western supremacy. Confucianism, he argued, would play an important role in this rise. In 1980, in a famous article in *The Economist*, China scholar Roderick MacFarquhar also discussed the role of Confucian values in the rise of "Industrial East Asia." This interest in Confucian values was part of the overall turn to culture as an explanatory force in disciplines as diverse as economics, political science, and history. We need to understand the "East Asia" imagery and "Confucian capitalism" discourse in the context of the rise of the so-called "Mini Dragons," which led to a revision of post-WWII modernization theories. Following this international debate on the role of Confucian values in the East Asian "miracle," Chinese scholars equally turned Max Weber's thesis on the relation between Confucianism and capitalism on its head.

From a contemporary perspective, the notion of an "Industrial East Asia" based on Confucian values appears reductionist and static. The old modernization formula was reversed, but it did not truly do away with simplistic binaries or notions of universality, in spite of all the emphasis on "multiple modernities" that came with it. Ironically, just decades earlier, Confucianism had been blamed for precisely the opposite: obstructing development. What would a contemporary dialogue with this "East Asia" imagery look like, given the current importance of flows and the crossing of sub-boundaries in area studies? In spite of changes, we cannot deny that Confucianism continues to play a role in transnational Chinese imageries for the region. "Re-Sinicization" efforts through Confucius Institutes and other strategies have shifted to Southeast Asia in particular in the context of new connectivities, leaving us with the question: What's in a region?

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**Agents of Change: A Comparative Study on Youth Engagement with Independent Film in Malaysia and Singapore**

**Humairah Binte Zainal**

The growing interest in independent films or "indie" among the youth in Malaysia and Singapore exist amidst significant political discontentment within both countries. The current crisis environment, which includes issues related to censorship, gender and sexuality, and the rights of minority ethnic communities, forms the backdrop to the controversy surrounding the screening of independent films in the two countries. Many of these films have garnered

global praise and won awards at prestigious international film festivals. However, most are either censored or do not enjoy a wide distribution in their countries of origin. Based upon findings obtained from an ongoing research project on independent films and agency of undergraduates in Malaysia and Singapore, as well as textual analysis of selected independent films, this paper offers a comparative discussion on the ways and extent to which political dissatisfaction with how these two countries are run translate into youth support for local indie films. By adopting Arjun Appadurai's (1996) concept of "mediascape" and in recognizing the capacity of indie films to interrupt or de-centre the political landscape of the nation, this paper examines the appropriation of indie films by undergraduates to facilitate the formation of new identities and allegiances that are no longer restricted by citizenship and nationality. Furthermore, this paper highlights the similarities and differences in how undergraduates engage with indie films, be it to voice dissent, to seek empowerment and/or to affect positive social changes. It argues that indie films provide new opportunities for youth negotiation with current conditions of authority and power.

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### **Exploring "Sexportals" of Asia: A Case Study of an Online Prostitution Forum in Singapore**

**George WONG Boon Keng**

Prostitution in Asia has often been portrayed as a Janus-faced web of intricacy, enigma and exploitation, constantly morphing in the face of increasing globalization and shifting migratory patterns in the region. Scholarly works in this discourse often focused on the physical dimensions of prostitution, linking the activity to areas often referred to as "red light districts". The focus has also been about connecting these spaces, along with their interactions, with the global sex trafficking industry and how industry "actors" collude to preserve the sexual exploitation of women. Yet in recent years, there has been an undocumented growth in the use of technology to facilitate prostitution, particularly in Asia. This paper explores an emerging trend of online prostitution forums and highlights its unique role in challenging yet reinforcing certain social dynamics and issues typically associated with the "traditional" prostitution industry in Asia. Using the case study of a major online forum operating in Singapore's prostitution scene, this study utilizes netnographic research methods to uncover how both emerging and existing social processes and roles operate in the online prostitution market. Through the findings, this paper argues that these online forums, propelled by the increasing rate of internet penetration in Asia, may further stratify the Asian prostitution market as new forms of transnational market relationships and the virtualization of processes begin to emerge out of an age-old profession "revolutionized" with a cyber facelift.

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Panel Abstract

**Imagining Asian Diasporic Identities and the Search for Home**

What does one mean when one speaks of an Asian diasporic identity? Is it a static experience to be simply understood as being a complete departure from or continuation of one's native culture? Or is it an unstable condition, constantly subjected to the socio-political-cultural forces of the adopted homeland? Our panel aims to explore how Asian diasporic writings portray the complex formation of an Asian diasporic identity and how it leads to or threatens the individual's understanding of Asia as home. This will be achieved through a critical examination of literary works by Asian diasporic writers from India, China, the Philippines and Malaysia. Through such an examination, we seek to interrogate the intersecting discourses on gender, racial, ethnic, and national identity in various national contexts and thus understand how, in James Clifford's words, "diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension".

**A Discourse of Wood: The Indeterminacies of Power in *The Glass Palace***

**KUAH Ting Ting**

In recent postcolonial studies, the call for utopian thinking in postcolonial literature has been deemed as necessary for it involves 'the practice of confronting and transforming coercive power to produce an imagined future' (Ashcroft 13). For Bill Ashcroft, the utopian impulse is 'a dual one: to engage power and to imagine change'. Through a Foucauldian approach, this essay seeks to examine how wood acts as a dual discourse of imperialist power and colonial resistance in Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* and thus contribute to an optimistic imagination for future change. On the one hand, according to Michel Foucault, power 'dominates and subjects' individuals (Barker 37). In the novel, wood acts as a form of imperialist power that leads to the exile of the Burmese royalty and their 'terminal loss' of sovereignty and home (Said 173). Hence, the portrayal of the 'unhealable rift forced between [the family] and [their] native place' (Said 173, emphasis mine) thus justifies literary critic Meenakshi Mukherjee's evaluation of the novel as 'the most scathing critique of British colonialism [she has] ever come across in fiction'. On the other hand, Foucault also asserts that 'the possibility always exists that [power] can be reversed, transformed and resisted' as it is ultimately 'a relation and not a substance' (Barker 37). Wood allows orphan figures such as Saya John and Rajkumar to be self-made entrepreneurs in the timber business. In turn, it enables them to 'make [their] own place in the world' and find a place of belonging which they can call home (Ghosh 124). Therefore, through a study of wood as a dual discourse, this essay attempts to trace Ghosh's optimistic vision in *The Glass Palace*: in spite of British imperialism and the resulting experience of estrangement forced upon colonial subjects, such an experience of loss is not a devastatingly permanent one as there exists a cultural and political hope for colonial subjects to 'transcend the conflicts and dysfunctions of lived reality' and find a home of their own (Niezen 716).

**Fusang as a Maternity Metaphor: Destabilizing Oriental Fantasies**

**YAO Xiaoling**

The subject of my paper is *Fusang* by Yan Geling or, as it is known in its English translation by Cathy Silber, *The Lost Daughter of Happiness*. Published in 1998, the novel depicts the survival history of Chinese immigrants to America in the nineteenth century, in particular the sufferings of the eponymous female character, Fusang, as she tries to make a home for herself in San Francisco. Yan's narrative recounts the racism Fusang endures within a hegemonic white and male dominated society. Faced as she was with a hostile foreign environment, Fusang's survival tactics take several forms in order to cross over set gender, racial, and national boundaries – the passivity and compliance of the traditional maternal figure, the silence of the prostituted body, and the mystery of the oriental woman. But do we at the end of the day find Yan Geling's representation of her protagonist ultimately conservative and constraining? Can we agree fully with her, for example, that 'maternity is the highest level of femininity: the mother opens herself to be plundered and invaded. She does not reject'? (Yan 189) Is Fusang ultimately trapped between two divergent but imprisoning constructions of woman? To answer this question, I will look at the liberating possibilities held out in the symbolic fusang, the divine tree, and what this could mean in relation to the protagonist, Fusang. Though a seemingly passive object, she tries to rewrite her own story in despite of masculine ownership and racial dominance, and by using the above-mentioned subversive strategies. So to what extent does Fusang actually acts as a diasporic Chinese female subject to disrupt authoritative discourses?

**“You See Blue, Rose”: Performing Rootlessness in Jose Garcia Villa’s Poetry**

**Eric Tinsay VALLES**

The Filipino-American poet, Jose Garcia Villa, enacted performativity – “that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (Butler 1993). Villa’s symbolic act contributed to his public persona: he wore colourful, outrageous shirts and fancy adornments in a redefinition of the lifestyle of his upper-class *ilustrado* background. Speaking to a younger Filipino writer, he proclaimed, ‘I’m always acting’.

Villa’s theatricality seems to exemplify the Asian-American poet as other as expounded by Zhou Xiaojing in *The Ethics and Poetics of Alterity in Asian-American Poetry*. Zhou maintains that the Asian-Americans’ “inherent cultural otherness and subsequent political and cultural marginalization stem ironically from their apparently successful assimilation”. Asian-American poets seem to be warmly received initially because the American public is curious about them. But these poets may be regarded also with suspicion and, consequently, face obstacles to being embraced into the canonical American mainstream.

This paper studies Villa’s appropriation of stylistic markers found in canonical Anglo-American poets as well as the Modernist characteristics, such as impersonality, in his work. But Villa’s otherness remains, especially evident in the tropes he draws from the Spanish-Filipino Catholic tradition. The dichotomy between the cultural continuity that Villa’s formal poetic style aspires to and the other consciousness that it conveys speaks to Villa’s rootlessness. This paper will show how this dichotomy is actualised in Villa’s poems, and argue that Otherness as irreducible is also a form of intervention in an adopted society.

**Beyond the Grand Narrative: Neglected Trails in Literary Conceptions of Malaysia**

**Leah Jolene TAN**

The standard or historical interpretation of the Silk Road posits it as an “ancient trade route that, linking China with the West, carried goods and ideas between the two great civilisations of Rome and China” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*) – a narrative which, essentially, rests upon the notion that Rome and China functioned as the very pillars of the said trade route. Recent studies, however, dismiss this standard narrative as an “artificial and nostalgic concept” (Rezakhani 420) which tends misleadingly to “obscure important details” (Rezakhani 420) about the area that lies between the two poles – lands that include Central Asia, Iran, and modern-day Syria.

In applying the metaphor of the Silk Road to present-day conceptualisations of Asia, I want to look beyond the grand narrative of East-West relations, and to sift out the trajectories and stories that lie beneath this dominant frame. In particular, I examine Malaysian author Tan Twan Eng’s *The Garden of Evening Mists* (2012) -- a novel set against the clashing of routes between the British, Japanese, and Chinese forces that dominated the Malayan/Malaysian region in the earlier half of the twentieth century – and uncover trails and traces neglected by discourses of empire and ideology -- a tomb of an exiled Dutchman, a Transvaal flag, Ceylon tea leaves, a stone once part of an imperial garden in Japan.

**Translating the Tree of Jesse: Ivories from Early Colonial Encounters in Africa & Asia**

**Sujatha MEEGAMA**

When the Portuguese first went down the coast of West Africa in search of spices and Christians, they arrived in Sierra Leone in 1460. There, Sapi artists began to create hybrid objects, mostly as luxury gifts for patrons of Portuguese voyagers, but also as religious objects. One such object, an ivory pyx, depicts the Tree of Jesse, a genealogical tree of the ancestors of Christ. In 1498, the Portuguese disembarked in Calicut, in South India and Goa became the center for Portuguese Asia. Again, objects made in ivory began to be produced for mostly religious purposes, some of which depict the tree of Jesse, with the Virgin Mary cradling baby Jesus at the very top of the tree. When the Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka in 1506, they signed a trade agreement to obtain a monopoly on the cinnamon trade in return for protecting the local king of Kotte from his local adversaries. Various ivories carved by Sri Lankan artists were sent as diplomatic gifts to Lisbon from this court, and ivory was again used as a medium for religious imagery. A sixteenth-century ivory casket that was rediscovered in Lisbon in the 1880s depicts the Tree of Jesse on a side panel along with other European prints.

The standard narrative about these complex objects of encounter frames them as derivatives, copies, or reproductions. However, in this paper, rather than locating the agency only in the European print and its maker, I focus on the translation of the Tree of Jesse from European prints to the medium of ivory by anonymous artists from Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. I suggest that these visual responses give us access to the voices of colonial subjects in some of the earliest colonial encounters in Asia and beyond.

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### **Transcultural Connections in Stella Kon's Writings**

#### **Stella KON**

Stella Kon was born in Scotland and brought up in Singapore. She always thought of herself as a resident of British Malaya until 1965 when, with the stroke of a politician's pen, Singapore became separated from Malaysia. She lived in Malaysia for 15 years, as a Singaporean married to a Malaysian citizen, an alien in the country she had always considered hers. She writes as one rooted in the region, and also as an exile looking homewards to Singapore.

This paper will show how her well-known play *Emily of Emerald Hill*, depicting the Peranakan (Chinese-Malay creole) society of colonial Singapore, recognises and memorialises elements in that society which derived from surrounding Asian cultures and from colonial influences. Stella Kon will read significant excerpts from her play, and show photos of family possessions reflecting their transcultural influences.

Kon's earliest writings reveal her attempts to fuse Western and Eastern forms, and to use elements drawn from regional cultures. In her later works, the play, *The Bridge*, shows the inmates of a Malaysian drug rehabilitation centre producing an inspiring version of the Ramayana legend. Other early plays are framed in the style of Chinese opera, while the upcoming new novel, *4 Pax to Emptiness*, explores Singaporeans' emotional response to the Chinese famine of 1958-1962.

### **Cultural Network as Performance: Imagining the New Silk Road in Singapore Dance/Theatre Productions**

#### **WONG Chee Meng**

The multi-ethnic composition of Singapore has been inextricably tied to its position in the global economy, and has become constitutive of its national identity. Yet relative to the importance of its economic network within Asia, the creative output of its cultural network in terms of the performing arts across ethnic cultures may not seem to have found its own model beyond the known patterns of 'interculturalism' in world theatre often criticised as Eurocentric. This paper will examine the issues at hand by considering the different approaches of the intercultural or cross-cultural in dance and theatre among three clusters of artistes in Singapore, which have re-imagined connections between Chinese culture and Indian culture or beyond, especially through references to a golden age in the Silk Road or the Maritime Silk Road, around centres of cultural exchange such as Nalanda and Quanzhou. The first cluster is represented by *Anweshana – The Search for Nalanda* (2011), an Indian dance production choreographed by Santha Bhaskar in collaboration with the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS; it is conceived as a *Buddhanusmrti* (recollection of the Buddha) using the classical idiom of Bharatanatyam. The second revolves around the musical and theatrical innovations of Siong Leng Musical Association, which traces its heritage of Nanyin music to Quanzhou and the Tang capital of Chang'an. The third cluster is represented by the 2014 production of *Gitanjali [I feel the earth move]* by The Necessary Stage, which takes inspiration from poems by Tagore and experiments with intercultural interventions on Indian classical dance.

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### Joyce and the Pimps of Singapore

Richard BARLOW

On page 351 of *Finnegans Wake* James Joyce includes the phrase “my respektoble medams culonelle on Mellay Street, Lightnints Gundhur Sawabs” (FW 351.31-2), an allusion to the former red light district of Singapore on Malay Street. Also on the same page is a reference to “Lyndhurst Terrace” (FW 351.29), the old brothel area in central Hong Kong. Joyce – himself no stranger to houses of ill-fame – found much of his information on Asian prostitution in a somewhat bizarre 1912 publication by Archibald Mackirdy (Olive Christian Malvery) and W. N. Willis named *The White Slave Market*. This book contains a chapter entitled “THE ‘PIMPS’ CLUB” AT SINGAPORE’ which warns of the dangers of the “human perverts and degenerates ... dealers in white women” (p. 106) operating in the city. According to Mackirdy and Willis, ‘[t]he “pimp” is, without any exception, a cur. The one thing he would dread would be a horse-whipping’ (p. 108).

Joyce uses this curious chapter for material to work into a section of the *Wake* known as “How Buckley Shot the Russian General”, a dense vignette based on the story of an Irish soldier in the Crimean War. In Joyce’s treatment, the story becomes a consideration of militarism, Oedipal conflict, and colonial confrontation. I propose to discuss the relevance of the pimps and prostitutes of Singapore to this important section of the *Wake* and to explore Joyce’s broader interest in Asian cultures. In addition to a discussion of Malay Street I would also like to briefly examine Joyce’s use of Malay language in the *Wake*.

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### History as Fairy Tale: Edgar Hilsenrath's novel *The Story of the Last Thought*

Frank FINLAY

Situated along the route of the Great Silk Road, Armenia boasts a history longer than most of the European countries. One of the earliest Christian civilisations, it has fallen within the orbit of a number of cultural influences and empires, oscillating between Byzantine, Persian, Ottoman and Soviet control.

2015 marks the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, the culmination of several decades of persecution, during which an estimated 1.5 million ethnic Armenians died at the hands of forces of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Turkish denial of the mass killings of men women and children is a matter of official policy to this day, and the truth of events is effaced from Turkish history and collective memory. Over the past century generations of Armenian survivors have produced literary and other artistic responses to the genocide.

In my paper I discuss the 'outsider' perspective on this particular chapter of history offered by the novel *The Story of the Last Thought* by the German-Jewish writer Edgar Hilsenrath (1926-). Hilsenrath survived the Holocaust and has produced a formidable body of narrative fiction since the 1960s which is strongly autobiographical and aesthetically ambitious. The depiction of his experience of life in the ghetto and in exile in novels such as *Night* and *The Nazi and the Barber* have garnered much controversy which has all too often deflected from their literary merits.

I argue that *The Story of the Last Thought* defines and refines Hilsenrath's earlier works to synthesise their respective approaches which range from intense realism, bleak satirical humour to the poetic recreation and evocation of a lost world. I point up how Hilsenrath draws on the classic story-telling techniques of the “Orient” to combine intimate subjectivity with a broad historical perspective while at the same time raising challenging questions about the relation between truth and fiction, literature and historiography, as well as the singularity of the Holocaust.

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### Made in Malaysia via Formosa to Japan: Malaysian Chinese Literature in Translated Japanese

Satoshi MASUTANI

This is an examination of Malaysian Chinese Literature transiting from Malaysia to Taiwan since 1960s. It argues that studies in Malaysian Chinese Literature map a terrain where complex negotiations and interventions for different purposes are carried out. Malaysian Chinese Literary studies often imply a shift from the nation state to the transnational. This is one paradigm shift in the cultural scene. There has been Malaysian Chinese Literature and also Taiwan Literature since the 1960s. This paper speaks to the phenomena as constituting the meaning of the diaspora sign. It highlights the importance of investigating transnational cultural production and the need to reincorporate the

notion of topos into our agenda in conducting cultural critiques. Finally this paper discusses writing made in Malaysia via Formosa to Japan, analysing how such literature is researched and translated in Japan

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### **The Real and the Unreal in Contemporary Chinese Writing**

**Sarah DODD**

This paper explores the ways in which contemporary Chinese writers combine the real and the unreal, the mundane and the fantastical, in their work. Whether it is in the violent and claustrophobic narratives of Chen Xiwo, the magical realism of Yan Ge, or the textual playfulness of Sun Yisheng on the mainland, or through the surrealism of Dorothy Tse and Hon Lai Chu in Hong Kong, contemporary writing in Chinese blurs the boundaries between genres, between worlds, between the everyday and the extraordinary.

Whilst the strange and fantastical has exerted a fascination upon Chinese writers since some of the earliest fictional texts, for much of the twentieth century it was banished as backwards and feudal, only emerging again in the 1980s. Taking as a starting point the writers featured in a current project at the University of Leeds; "Writing Chinese; Authors, Authorship and Authority" (<http://writingchinese.leeds.ac.uk/>), this paper focuses on how and why writers today look beyond 'the real' to represent the challenges and contradictions of a rapidly changing contemporary world. It will look at how social and historical fissures in China are reflected through writers' explorations of the boundaries between the real and unreal. And it will examine how intercultural traditions of this merging of reality and fantasy – magical realism, the Gothic, 'slipstream' – have also taken on new life in Chinese writing, leading to work which stands at an intercultural and inter-genre crossroads, where 'real' and 'unreal' are questioned, problematized, and subverted.

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Day 3: 18 January 2015, Sunday		Venue
09:30	<b>Parallel Panel Sessions (IV):</b> ❖ Panel (7): Imagining China and Asia Across the Seas: Chinese, European, and American Perspectives between the Sixteenth and Nineteenth Centuries ❖ Panel (8): PhantAsia: the British Empire and the Politics of Imagining Asia	SR7 SR8
11:00	<b>Plenary Session (E):</b> By Ho Widing, film director, Taiwan	CR
12:00	Lunch	CR
13:30	<b>Plenary Session (F):</b> By Eddie Tay, poet, critic, Chinese University of Hong Kong, HK	CR
14:30	<b>Plenary Session (G):</b> By Tash Aw, novelist, writer in residence, NTU	CR
15:30	Tea	CR
16:00	Symposium Proceedings End	CR
18:00	Symposium Dinner	

### Plenary Session (E): 11:00 to 12:00 [CR]

#### Filmmaker in Search of Point of View

##### HO Widing

"Point of View" or POV is a very crucial tool in fiction writing and also in filmmaking. As a filmmaker, you need to learn how to choose. You start with POV -- what you see and what you don't see. What you choose to see and what you choose not to see.

The same applies to the understanding of other cultures. It's a matter of choice of whether one wants to be "involved", and to what extent. I have been everywhere in my life; and I have been making films in different cultures about different cultures. In my work, it all comes down to the choice you make when you pick your topic, when you propose a narrative, and when you decide on the POV which normally goes with the protagonist.

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### Plenary Session (F): 13:30 to 14:30 [CR]

#### The Poetics of Occupy Central

##### Eddie TAY

At the time of writing this abstract, Occupy Central, as a Hong Kong protest movement which involves occupying the streets at Central, Causeway Bay and Mong Kok, is still ongoing. It is clear even now that, though this is a protest with serious socio-political implications, it also represents a cornucopia of playful aesthetic expressions and symbolic objects, ranging from the wearing of yellow, blue or green ribbons (depending on which side one is on), colorful umbrellas, temporary and non-destructive chalk graffiti, to the wood art sculpture known as the "Umbrella Man" and the John Lennon Democracy Wall made up of Post-it notes.

This paper, which is in part a showcase of street photography and poetry, is a documentary, analytical and poetic meditation on Occupy Central. Indeed, the activities and symbolic objects at the three sites underscore the relationship between political protest and art-making. What is happening here and now is an outbreak of vernacular symbolic expressions in search of an imagined community it is already establishing. Occupy Central is both a material and symbolic site, inviting a public to imagine a Hong Kong nationhood, even as such an act is fraught with anxieties, conflicts and tensions. For Occupy Central was an event that was yet to come; now, it is entirely feasible that it will be an event that is always already present, even if it ends at some point in the future.

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Tash AW

<Pending>

Parallel Panel Sessions (IV) – Panel 7: 09:30 to 11:00 [SR7]

Panel Abstract

**Imagining China and Asia Across the Seas: Chinese, European, and American Perspectives between the Sixteenth and Nineteenth Centuries**

By the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, China itself was well aware of the seas and lands surrounding its southern coast – Nanyang -- and becoming familiar with the Westerners and other foreigners who were arriving on these shores, such as the Dutch, the Spaniards and Portuguese. Lured by the exotic commodities and riches, curious about the cultures and peoples who produced the variety of goods and products they coveted, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century and into the 19<sup>th</sup>, the British and Americans had joined the rush to “Imagine Asia.”

The exchange of silver for Chinese goods empowered Spaniards and Mexicans to project images of China and Chinese people throughout the Americas, and spurred the production of *chinoiserie* in New England, where China was imagined freely in prosperous households. In the southeast coast of China, scholars and mapmakers were busily editing and interpreting information they were gathering about the world beyond the coast. When British private traders became powerful in oceanic Asia, they wiped out the exotic and romantic image of the East, to re-draw China as a country in isolation from the great march of “civilization” in the West.

These new encounters and exchanges between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries shaped Chinese “imaginings” of maritime Asia and the world, as well as imaginings of China and Asia by these European and American players. This panel of historians will explore how China and maritime Asia were imagined from multiple perspectives based on readings of documents, texts and visual material.

The Papers for this panel are arranged in chronological order, from the Ming to the late Qing.

**Imagining Maritime Asia and the World: Change and Continuity in Chinese Perspectives**

**KOH Keng We**

This paper examines Chinese perspectives on its maritime frontier and maritime Asia between the Ming and Qing dynasties by focusing on selected texts, such as the *Dong Xi Yang Kao*, the *Hai Lu*, and the *Hai Guo Wen Jian Lu* as well as maps like *Da Ming Hun Yi Tu*, the *Guang Yu Tu* and *Selden's Map*. It explores not only continuities and change over time in the representations of these frontiers and regions but differences across textual and representational genres. Lastly, it explores the impact of early modern European expansions and changing relations and dynamics within the maritime Asian zone on these imaginings and narratives.

**Imagining China at Home: Architectural Japanning in Early Newport**

**Caroline FRANK**

This presentation focuses on a series of *chinoiserie* wall murals painted by a Newport painter in about the 1720s. The murals offer evidence that artisan-based colonial New Englanders were completely fluent in the latest metropolitan *chinoiserie* fashions and were also familiar with authentic Chinese design sources such as lacquer screens and porcelain with figural motifs. Moreover, analysis of the murals’ dark content shows that early Anglo-Americans, like their English cousins, had complex, often conflicting attitudes towards a geographically imprecise and powerful Celestial Empire. Their view of China was influenced by a rich variety of textual and visual sources, including ongoing popular medieval depictions of the Ottomans and contemporary world “histories.”

**The China They Fashioned: British Traders' Image of China and the First Opium War**

**CHEN Song-Chuan**

This paper examines how in developing a war idea and campaigning for the war that would become the First Opium War, a group of British traders in Canton in the 1830s changed the British perception of China from a view of it as an 'idyllic country' to an 'insular country'. To paint a China as 'closed' was to bring the British state to bear on the interaction in order to open up China by military action for extensive British trade and Christian proselytizing. The image of a China in isolation formed part of the justification for the war both in the lead-up to and the aftermath of the war. The China brought into focus by the trader's narrative was of a culturally anti-commerce nation. In the service of their quest for a war, the British traders in Canton cast China as a xenophobic country.

**Panel Abstract**

**PhantAsia: the British Empire and the Politics of Imagining Asia**

How can Asia be conceptualised beyond the oriental and ideological imperative? We know many early cross-cultural contacts are arguably based upon cultural imagination, stereotypical constructions, and exoticism, but was Asia always an object of passion (or primitive passion) for the white, the elite, the orientalist? How were the richness and diversities of Asian culture captured, represented, and discovered by Westerners through the lens of anthropology, history, and archaeology in and out of the social, cultural, and military contacts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

The panel seeks to explore and understand the crisscrossing trajectories of the East/West, old/new and traditional/modern interactions through a contextualised study of archival materials, a close reading of textual evidence, and a critical analysis of the fictionality embedded in all kinds of printed and visual resources related to the making of Asian knowledge. We will use various regions in East Asia such as Canton, Burma, Hong Kong, Yokohama, Singapore as contesting sites to examine how the British Empire generated the politics of **PhantAsia**.

**The Anglo-Chinese Information War in the First Opium War, 1839-1842**

**Kaori ABE**

A war of information is a confrontation and an exchange of ideas and knowledge between intellectuals belonging to different social and cultural groups. These intellectuals produced and transformed ideas and concepts to underline their economic, political, and militaristic interventions to another society. This kind of information war was conducted between British and Chinese intellectuals during the First Opium War, in particular before and after the Sanyuanli Incident. The Sanyuanli Incident was a militaristic confrontation between indigenous militias and the British troops around the village of Sanyuanli near Canton at the end of May 1841. Before the incident, British officials produced proclamations in the Chinese language in order to explain the reasons for their military actions and to obtain support from the general run of Chinese citizens. In response, Qing officials and local intellectuals issued notifications which criticised the British military activities and their productions of "false edict". As such, this paper attempts to explore the process of the Anglo-Chinese information war from the late 1830s to the early 1840s with specific focus on the case of the Sanyuanli Incident, by drawing on British and Chinese officials documents, local newspapers, private records of the war and diaries. In doing this, it is possible to shed light on how the Chinese elite in Canton understood and responded to drastic transitions of the society during the war period.

**Printing the Global Asian Knowledge in London: Imperial Interpreter and British Sinologist, James Summers (1828-91)**

**Uganda KWAN**

What facilitated the production and circulation of East Asian knowledge in the nineteenth century? The question which seems to be overextended can hardly be pinned down to one single factor. Social? Historical? Economic? Political? They might all have a share of it. However, this is intricately related to the political and imperial engagement in East Asia after the Opium War. The need to acquire accurate and immediate intelligence in China, Japan, and Annam facilitated an explosion of translations and transmissions of Asian knowledge in London. Was Britain capable of producing an extensive amount of Japanese and Chinese knowledge for political and public consumption when it was

notoriously known for lacking Chinese and Japanese experts? Who were the historical agents in making that happen in Victorian London?

The paper will focus on James Summers, the second professor of Chinese at King's College, London, who used various academic institutions, such as King's College itself, the British Museum, and the India Office Library as platforms to collect, translate, and disseminate the rarely seen collections of East Asian knowledge through the print medium. In order to understand how knowledge of East Asia was produced in the historical context, this paper will discuss James Summers' interaction and competition with Thomas Francis Wade, who would later outcompete Summers as a well known Sinologist. They were both eager to become imperial interpreters for the British regime at the time. By using an extensive amount of archival material from the Foreign Office, British museum, Oxford University, Church Missionary Society and College de France, I hope to retrace the historical trajectory and historical contribution of this rarely known British sinologist.

### **Who were the Merchants of the Empire? Indian, Chinese, and Ethnic Discourse in British Burma**

**LI Yi**

Ethnic stereotype played a critical role in British rule in Asian colonies, when a limited number of Europeans had to govern a huge and multi-ethnic local population that was composed of not only indigenous peoples but also immigrants from other Asian countries. By attributing certain images to certain peoples, the colonial knowledge could be found from popular writings to contemporary newspapers. It was further utilised by colonial policy-makers to systematically legitimise colonial rule, categorise different races, and simplify the governmental task. This article looks at two dominant Asian migrant communities within the British Empire, the Chinese and Indian, and the development of ethnic discourse in the case of British Burma. As a newly established colony in need of capital and labour, and locating between China and India, Burma in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw large waves of immigrants from India and, to a lesser extent, from China. These two foreign Asian faces dominated the colony's commercial sectors and lived side by side in central Rangoon, the capital of British Burma. While both the Chinese and Indian were known for their commercial skills and for being hardworking, an image that had been created and well received in other parts of the Empire by then, the unique situation in Burma called for some minor, but vital, modifications.











Imagining  
  
Asia

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