CONFIRMED PAPERS AND ABSTRACTS

As at Sunday 15 May the following papers have been confirmed for presentation at the conference. This list includes everyone who has had their abstract accepted and who has also registered for the conference. The papers are listed by alphabetical order of the presenter’s surname.

Nasirin Bin Abdillah, University of Malaya

Mapping Awk(queer)ness in the 21st Century Malaysian Literary Landscape

This paper addresses the general question of how queerness affects contemporary Malaysian Literature by examining the selected writings of new emerging voices in Malaysian Literature in English. In addition, selected contemporary Malaysian theatres, collection of essays and public opinion will be also discussed in passing. Many regard Malaysia to be a homophobic place and generally queers are denied freedom to express both sexual relations and self-determination as well as intimacy. In other words, queering in Malaysia is still very much ‘trapped’ in its cocoon of social and religious taboo, yet it is now frantically squeezing its way through so as to enable the process of queerness to ‘come out’. Therefore, there is mounting pressure to voice queerness in Malaysia, hence, creating awkwardness in expression. However, no matter how awkward it may appear, voices of queerness that were then groping in the dark are now seen traversing and breaking through boundaries. In its efforts to ‘come out and play’, queerness in the 21st century of Malaysia starts cha(lle)nging awkwardness and oddity. This paper also attempts to look at how queerness and queering are put across in this new millennium, with regard to Malaysian context, as they can take various forms of expression including political satire and social critique. An assessment is also made of the shifting and evolving trends in socio-economic political and cultural perceptions, vis-à-vis the sliding and fluid identity of the urban coming community of Malaysia.
I propose to utilize a creative non-fiction and literary critical viewpoint to consider the life of gay men in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), as observed and experienced by me during my two years of living there as a visiting Fulbright Professor of American Literature and Culture (2002-04). I will draw upon a creative non-fiction essay already written titled "Sons and Lovers," and will also examine a recently published and translated novel, "A World Without Women," which is the first contemporary fictional work in Vietnam dealing with the life of gay men in Vietnamese society. I have discussed my proposal with Dr. Donn Colby, who will include it in a panel he is coordinating concerning homosexuality in Vietnamese society and culture.
Edgar Atadero, Progressive Organization of Gays in the Philippines

A Transgender Health Research Project in Manila

This presentation focuses on transgenderism, discrimination and effects on the health situation of transgenders. It reports a Pro-Gay survey of attitudes, health practices, beliefs and world views of Filipino transgenders (and a comparative survey of modern gay-identified males) in some communities in the area called Metro Manila. The survey aims to draw the connections between the two-way reactions of Filipino transgenders to and with their surrounding environments on one hand and the evolution of how transgenders form their indigenous world view about sexuality, gender and health practices.
Encountering Babylon: Pursuing Beauty & Sexual Justice at a Globalized Gay Sauna

Gay bathhouses, Allan Berube once noted, were among the first American institutions to give that country’s gay men pride in themselves and in their sexuality by creating a ‘safety zone’ where they could communicate and be affectionate with each other. Today in Southeast Asia, one such bathhouse stands out in its reputation as a place of contact and communication among gay Asian men from throughout the region, as well as among Euro-American men. This journalistic paper examines the history and role within Southeast Asia of what has become one of the world’s best known gay bathhouses, Babylon. Relying on interviews, writings from those who have visited, newspaper accounts, and observations, it traces the sauna’s history from its inception at private social gatherings in the 1980s to the police raids conducted in 2002 as part of a Thai government social crackdown. The paper also profiles the gay Thai man who “authored” Babylon and examines his approach to constructing a gay and male space through the communication elements embedded in the sauna.
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often work with resource limitations (trained personnel, computing resources, analytical tools) that can prevent effective gathering, interpretation and use of data in their programs. Further, there is also a widely prevalent misconception that doing field work is somehow more important than data collection, while in reality the two should be inseparable, because data can (a) help set and guide the direction of field work, (b) help determine effectiveness of field work, and (c) allow results to be disseminated in a manner that can be widely understood. This paper surveys a broad range of issues surrounding data needs and challenges in the NGO sector dealing with HIV/AIDS and STD/STI intervention and service work in India. Data gathered by NGOs in India are often plagued with problems such as incomplete data, inadequate or faulty sampling, and haphazard recording. While some of these problems are due to constraints of field work, others are due to misunderstanding or inadequate training on data collection, whether of quantitative or qualitative data. These hinder data use in the sector as a whole. The types of data that NGOs invariably generate are too often not even recognized as data, much less used as data. Shared data and shared resources can greatly help resource-strapped NGOs develop robust data infrastructure to better deliver their services to their beneficiaries. The Dharani Trust has undertaken a collaborative initiative called DataMatters (www.dharanitrust.org/datamatters/) with SAATHII (a HIV/AIDS NGO) and Servelots Infotech (P) Ltd. (a software company) to develop a sustainable data capacity building endeavour. The paper will conclude with a description of the broad contours of this initiative.
Robert Baldwin, Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, Bangkok

MSM Positive Prevention: Role of Males Who Have Sex With Males Living with HIV/AIDS in HIV Prevention

Males who have sex with males ( msm) living with HIV/AIDS (MSMLWHA) have a unique and vital role to play in preventing the spread of HIV in our region. Although recent research in Bangkok has indicated possible high levels of HIV among local msm there is a lack of relevant research in this area. Positive msm could be said to be largely invisible. This closed door session for HIV+ msm, facilitated by APN+ (Asia Pacific Network of PLWHA), will provide an opportunity for positive msm to identify & discuss the issues of living with HIV/AIDS in the Asia Pacific Region and their role in preventing the further spread of HIV. The results of this workshop will be reported back to the larger conference.
Creating a Lesbian Utopia: Reading the Queer Subtext of Mira Nair’s India Cabaret

India Cabaret is Mira Nair’s documentary about the lives of cabaret dancers and prostitutes at a seedy nightclub called Meghraj in Bombay. In my analysis I wish to focus on the queer subtext of the film and demonstrate the working class woman’s body as the site for resistance to patriarchy, class oppression and heterosexuality. While heterosexuality is constantly at the forefront of the women’s lives, I suggest that the homoerotic bond that even tends to the homosexual between the women, allows them to escape the tawdriness of their lives to a large extent and to seek comfort and a safe haven in each other’s company. The women’s bodies thus function in two very different ways as spectacularized objects during the dance scenes and as mediums of conveying homoerotic desire in the scenes depicting the women interacting with each other. While the former is strictly performative and an act, the latter is more meaningful and gives them a sense of community and belonging that is denied them in their daily lives due to the harsh ostracism faced by the women in society. Through the dual function of the body as represented in the film, I want to posit a new feminist framework which accounts for a corresponding duality in their experience that portrays them as both exploited and having a certain agency. I thus problematize the simple binarism of exploited victim and liberated woman as theorized in both radical and pro-sex feminist paradigms.
Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935) was the most prominent figure of the sexual emancipation movement of his time and arguably the first queer theorist avant la lettre. His scientifically most significant contribution was the ‘doctrine of sexual intermediaries’ (Zwischenstufenlehre), according to which all human beings are intersexual variants, i.e. composites in different and irrepeatable proportions of both the masculine and the feminine sexual poles that as such have no real existence. Since the proportions combining the two poles vary from one another at the different descriptive levels and can alter or be altered in time, Hirschfeld’s ‘doctrine’ purports the dissolution of sexual categories that subsume individuals into pre-established sexes or genders. Against the background of his emancipatory and sexological work, the paper examines Hirschfeld’s assessment of the diversity of sexual conceptualisations in Asia as depicted in his book Die Weltreise eines Sexualforschers, that was published in 1933 and constitutes one of the most important documents of the nascent sexual ethnology. The book is a report of the trip around the world he decided to undertake while lecturing in America in 1930/1931, and that enabled him to have a first-hand experience of the sexual cultures in Japan, China, the Philippines, Java, India, Egypt, Palestine and Syria. During this trip, Hirschfeld attained a deeper understanding of his own Jewishness and developed a more comprehensive view of the ‘panhumanism and cosmopolitanism’ he had always strived for.
Redefining Man: Homo- and Hetero/sexualities in Philippine Cinema

Feminism and gay activism have radically changed the landscape of desire and the nature of sexual identity in the Philippines, and we can see this phenomenon very clearly in the movies. Now more than ever, the dichotomy lalake/bakla (roughly translated: heterosexual/homosexual man) is ever becoming unstable. What constitutes a lalake identity? How have the Filipino films in the last twenty years redefined the lalake in relation to the bakla? This paper intends to explore these questions through a reading of selected Filipino films from 1980 to 2004, namely: *Manila by Night* (*City after Dark*, 1980), *Macho Dancer* (1988), *Ang Lalake sa Buhay ni Selya* (1998), *Sa Paraiso ni Efren* (1999) and *Liberated 2* (2004). I intend to show how the said films have deconstructed the lalake/bakla dichotomy, how the concept of being a ‘man’ (lalake) is redefined from the optic lens of homosexuality, and how Filipino filmmakers have interrogated the bonds between the bakla and his lalake and between the lalake and his lalake friend. This study is part of a larger project that seeks to explore the relationship between gayness and cinema in the Philippines in the last twenty-five years.
Anne Beaumont-Vernon, University of Essex

The Road to Transition: Transgender in Britain and in Thailand

This paper forms an integral part of my PhD thesis, which is a cross-cultural comparative analysis of the transitioning process of male-to-female transsexuals in Britain and kathoey in Thailand. In this paper I explore the various stages that the typical British TS experiences on the road to transition, as compared to the more easily facilitated transition of the kathoey in Thailand. Characteristically, the British transsexual women in this study reported having felt ‘different’ from a very early age, and by some chance or serendipity, discover that they fit the popular description of ‘a woman trapped inside a man’s body’. The discovery of transsexualism can be itself typically so traumatic or distressing that the individual will either decide to try and ignore the problem, or suffer in silence in the hope that it will ‘go away’. This means that the transsexual individual in Britain is commonly physically fully matured long before they seek help. The experience of the Thai kathoey is in striking contrast with that of the British TS.
The global box office success of The Wedding Banquet has inspired a host of follow-up films, and it has been claimed as the founding film for the trend known as Queer or Gay Asian Cinema. Examples of films in The Wedding Banquet mode include the recent Rainbow from Thailand and Arisan from Indonesia, as well as the earlier Broken Branches from Korea and various Japanese films including Okoge and Twinkle. It has not escaped the attention of critics that not only do these films display upper middle class lifestyles but also that they represent a post-Stonewall Euro-American model of gay identity. This takes the argument one step further by noting that these two tropes are combined to produce a more distinctive rhetorical effect in the context of East and Southeast Asian metropolitan participation in globalized modernity. A post-Stonewall gay identity does not just occupy the same social and textual space as globalized modernity in these films but also actually signifies the ability to accept a post-Stonewall gay identity on the part of others and sustain a gay lifestyle on the part of the protagonists signifies the attainment of the globalized modernity so desired by the ruling classes and their adherents in metropolitan East and Southeast Asia. Ironically, this confirms the derogatory stereotypes displayed in commercial mass cinema, at the same time as it may be a powerful rhetorical tool for placing leverage upon the ruling classes.
Space is a basic entity for expression of one’s sexuality. A strong Patriarchal set up and a skewed construction of Masculinity in the Indian social set up makes space highly heterosexualised one. However amidst this heteronormative patriarchal set up there have been and there are sexual minorities - Gays, Lesbians, Kothis, Giriyas, Hijras, Bisexuals, Transgendered (about five million of them!), who continue to face discrimination, stigma and harassment from their straight counterparts. Moreover article 377 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalizes homosexuality, making things worse. My paper, through 20 conversational interviews of Gay men in New Delhi, explores the interrelationship between space and homosexuality. It tends to find out how objective space is snatched away from this invisible community thus obstructing the creation of social spaces. Examining the politics of space and identity, it tends to explore the role of organizations and groups in creating safe spaces for the community. The paper looks into how Spaces of home, workplace, public spaces and society at large are appropriated and controlled by the heterosexual majority thus marginalizing gays to suffering, discrimination and harassment. It also examines the role of Article 377 IPC in aggravating the situation and issues of citizenship. Further it looks into the role of Cyber Revolution and the efforts of various advocacy, support, and human rights groups, and their (political) struggle in creating safe spaces for gays thus bringing a ray of hope to reduce the plight of this Community in the capital city of India.
Maylei Blackwell – Paper title to be confirmed.
Mark Blasius, University of NY

Sexual Relationships and their Political Recognition in an Intercultural Context.

This roundtable will consist of a number of brief written contributions by its members toward the goals of: a) analyzing the distinctive LGBTQ partnership issues within the cultures from which the participants come or in which they live; b) making some cross-cultural comparisons—drawing parallels, pointing out divergences, and suggesting theoretical generalizations—based upon these issues and the cultural and legal problems that arise from them; and c) addressing some international questions that arise from recognition or lack thereof for LGBTQ partnerships, for example, with respect to human rights law, immigration and choice of co-residence (taking into account the socio-economic status of the partners and the heteronormative ideologies of cultures), etc. With the participation of the audience, a cross-cultural dialogue will emerge, placing cultural specificity in the Asian region at the center, but taking into account global Asian diasporas, and the non-Asian partners of Asian LGBTQ’s. It is intended that the roundtable will generate a number of co-authored and single authored papers, articles, or book chapters.
Geographies of Belonging: Spatial Scale, Queer Subjectivities, Queer Rights

Because they are embodied, sexuality and gender are often represented as highly local phenomena. Yet like other aspects of culture, sexuality and gender can be produced through multiple spatial scales. In this talk, I draw from research in Indonesia to examine how sexuality and gender are produced through translocal (in particular, national and global) spatial scales. I discuss some methodological and theoretical challenges encountered when studying the translocal production of sexuality and gender. I explore how such translocal regimes of sexuality and gender shape subjectivities and communities, and the implications of translocal regimes of sexuality and gender with regard to rights, tolerance, and affirmation. The talk will focus on how queer sexual and gendered subjectivities enter debates over national belonging when such subjectivities are seen as ‘modern’ and thus distinct from ‘traditional’ or ‘local’ conceptions of gender and sexuality.
Online Publication: The Experience of Intersections

*Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in an Asian Context* is a refereed electronic journal conceived as an interactive forum for research and teaching in the area of Gender Studies in the Asian region. Placed at the junction of historical and contemporary concerns, *Intersections* emphasises the paramount importance of research into the region’s multiple historical and cultural gender patterns—patterns which are crucial for the understanding of contemporary globalised societies, where identities and social relations are constantly being negotiated against the background of dominant narratives. In this sense the journal crosses disciplinary, cultural and gender boundaries. At the same time, *Intersections* is intended as a means to explore innovative ways of presenting research using new technologies. As such Information Technology is not seen as an end in itself, but as a place where oral, written and visual history can tangibly cross paths allowing for new connections to be made. Ten issues of the journal have now been published and it is timely that some of the positive and negative aspects of the online publication of such a journal are analysed. My paper will explore the positives and negatives involved in the web-based publication of *Intersections*. I will discuss issues associated with the design and publication of the journal as well as exploring intellectual property rights and copyright issues associated with a journal that has international exposure.
Mapping Queer Heritage

What archaeological, architectural or other physical traces of the history of homosexuality might survive in the Asian landscape and should we do anything about recording or conserving them? These ‘traces’ might include ‘traditional’ meeting/cruising places, historic venues, the dwellings of notable authors, activists or other personalities. This paper takes a preliminary look at what queer Asian cultural heritage might look like and how it might be included in the cultural heritage conservation framework that already operates in the region. The tendency of 20th century Asian governments to deny that homosexuality is indigenous to their culture, rather than a decadent Western import, is reflected in the invisibility of homosexuality as a theme in heritage recording. The low profile or underground nature of homosexuality in the 20th century may mean that its heritage traces are ephemeral in nature and difficult to map in the urban and rural landscape. However, a new interest in ‘intangibility’ in the field of heritage studies internationally, and a growing recognition of the heritage of minority cultures and marginalised or oppressed groups, may make this a good moment to begin to record queer heritage in Asia.
Erma Eugenia Capucion, Women Supporting Women Centre, Quezon City, Philippines

When Images Talk: A Question of Lesbian Aesthetics

It is expected that everyone has realized that the visual arts is one form of language, communication and in a deeper sense a form of discourse or discussion. In the contemporary view of art, its presentation or curatorship provides enhanced if not additional meaning to the creations, meaning that may go beyond or even extend beyond the intentions of the artist. Furthermore, additional meanings are formed by the audience who each have different perspectives and views of the work of art that is informed by their own personal experiences and opinions. In my research work for my masters thesis, the question frequently came up about the validity of the lesbian as subject in the visual arts. I received very strong arguments that if my work as a lesbian artist contain this subject then it becomes propaganda. But no arguments were made about propaganda versus art. The problems that an art practitioner faces are multi-layered when one uses the label, lesbian artist. As it is, art as a discourse is already laden with controversial debates, and it becomes more complicated when the label lesbian is thrown into it especially in a country like the Philippines. This paper will not provide a ready answer, but will instead aim to present research materials, quote references, point out cross-references of established academicians, critics, and artists, to support the argument for a lesbian aesthetic.
James Caspian, University of Westminster

Transgender in the People’s Republic of China

I will discuss the situation of transgendered people in China with particular reference to: estimated numbers of operations; the attitude of Chinese culture towards TG people, including religion, family and cultural mores; TG people and employment; civil rights and the legal situation, e.g. ability to live in their new gender role, right to marry, legal status, right to change gender on identity documents; access and affordability of medical services; support; attitudes in the media; TG networks and what doctors and TG people themselves have to say about the current situation.
Chak Lui Chan, Chinese University HK

‘Interesting’ Gender-Crossing: A Case of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong

‘Faan-Chuen’ is known as gender-crossing in the public understanding of Cantonese Opera. The performers can explicitly ‘do gender’ on-stage which subverts the stability and naturalized myth of gender identities. However, the reading of those Faan-Chuen performers (‘male female impersonator’ and ‘female male impersonator’) is always to subtly re-stabilize their ‘natural sex’ while emphasize their ‘crossing’. In this article, I will use a TV program about a famous Faan-Chuen male impersonator Yam Kim-Fai to question the representation/reading of s/he in the TV program. Why is Faan Chuen so ‘interesting’? How can the public take the pleasure (it can be erotic) and keep on placing the act of gender-crossing as Other?
Connie Man Wai Chan, Women’s Coalition of HKSAR

Survey on Discrimination on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation for Women in Hong Kong

This is a very crucible moment for every LGBT in Hong Kong, because the Hong Kong Government is going to conduct a review on its policy dealing with the problem of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation! Measures are emerging to protect women from sexual orientation discrimination in Hong Kong. Although women are now enjoying an umbrella of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, there is no law that specifically outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Women Coalition of HKSAR (WC) conducts initial research into the nature and extent of sexual orientation discrimination in Hong Kong. The central purpose of this report is to call attention to the extent of sexual orientation discrimination in Hong Kong, and to increase the awareness of those actors who can most effectively combat such discrimination, concerns about discriminatory behaviors in the police force, in the health service, and in the business and education environment, in the family and in the public areas.
Kenneth Chan, Nanyang Technological University

Rice Sticking Together: Desire and the Cinematic Representation of Caucasian-Chinese Relationships

This paper examines the narrative structure and cultural rhetoric of contemporary diasporic Chinese cinema that deals specifically with gay interracial relationships between Chinese and Caucasian men, a form of what some would call the ‘rice-and-potato’ relationship. By examining films from Hong Kong, the United States, Australia, and Britain, I would argue that these films, in seeking to reject the Madame Butterfly power dynamic, move toward a cultural nationalist ideological argument. This is particularly evident, for instance, in the narrative progression of documentaries, like Banana Queer and Rice and Potatoes, professing to offer insight into this social phenomenon; or in narrative shorts, such as Yellow Fever and Fall 1990, that espouse to highlight the racial discrimination of the diasporic Chinese minority even within gay communities. However, though this argument has its political place, the fluid and complex notion of desire, in spite of its historicity, confounds and disturbs this identity politics by queerly resisting its rhetorical insistence. A number of more recent films from the U.S. register a kind of utopian possibility that, despite its idealism, present a paradigm of desire that negotiates the racism and stereotyping faced by gay Chinese minorities in Western nations, without negating the presence and hope of this desire.
Kit Sze Amy Chan, Hong Kong Shue Yan College

On the Edge of Culture: Sex and Sexualities in Taiwan and Hong Kong Science Fiction

Modern science fiction frequently involves themes of sex, gender and sexuality. It is no coincidence that science fiction has always been the site for gay, lesbian and queer voices. Ursula Le Guin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Joanna Russ’s *Female Man* and Mary Percy’s *He, She, It* are most well-known Sci-Fi novels that deal with ideas like androgyny, third-sex, homosexuality or even trans-species sexualities. One of the most important characteristics of science fiction as a literary genre is that it enables its authors and readers to explore not only the world and human beings as they are, but also as they could have been in the other time-space or might be in a futuristic setting. The focus of this paper is to argue that both being on the margin of mainstream culture, queer theory and science fiction perhaps can make a perfect couple in fighting against the patriarchal, heterosexual society. This paper will discuss the sex and sexualities in Hong Kong and Taiwan Science Fiction along with the development of gay, lesbian and queer movement Authors discussed include: Chi Ta-wei, and Lucifer Hung from Taiwan and Tam Chien from Hong Kong.
Vinay Chandran, Swabhava Trust, Bangalore, India

“It's not my job to tell you, it's okay to be gay”: Medicalisation of Homosexuality

The homosexual in India is studied as a criminal in legal discourse, a sick person in medical discourse and a sinner in religious discourse. These three systems of knowledge have had had a far-reaching impact in the attempts to understand who the homosexual is in contemporary India. This paper traces the emergence of the homosexual in medical categories in the west and looks at how that western category has been uncritically accepted as a part of the discourse of the Indian mental health profession. It examines the definitions of homosexuality in the Indian context and how the worldview of the mental health professional in India is formed at the intersections of the discourses of law, medicine and religion and how that worldview finds expression in 'treating homosexuals.' Finally it looks at how this worldview, which medicalises the homosexual, is being questioned by the emergence of the discourse of queer rights. The effort has been to trace out the categories right from their origin in western medical discourse to their deployment in contemporary Indian settings. In addition, for the purpose of understanding the contemporary 'meaning' attached to homosexuality, the paper looks at empirical data gathered from interviewing clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, sexologists, and counsellors with a view to ascertaining medical responses to homosexuality. The paper specifically looks at the allopathic medical system because of the number of homosexuals who have been 'treated' for their homosexuality by professionals in the mental health field.
Hong-cheng Maurice Chang, University of Milan

“Made in Taiwan: Gay Rights of the Western Body with Oriental Soul”

Last October, it was reported that the Taiwan Government was preparing legislation to legitimize gay marriage. If the new law is passed it would make Taiwan the first country in Asia to recognize marriages between people of the same sex. This presentation gives a brief view on gay rights developments and a clear picture on the proposal to recognize same-sex relationships in Taiwan. During the discussion it will be explained that the proposal is a "solemn proclamation," or even a political slogan. It will also be discussed how Asian societies, more specifically the Chinese societies, integrate the idea of same-sex marriage with the traditional family system and the stigma of not having offspring and legal strategies for gay rights movement in Taiwan.
Pei-Jean Chen, National Chiao-Tung University

‘Queer’ that Matters -What is Queer Culture in Taiwan?

This paper is an analysis of the term ‘queer’ in Taiwan, which’s phonetic Mandarin transliteration is ku'er;. I will explore the genealogy and deployment of the term ku'er in the Taiwanese context, examining its use in social discourse and in cultural representation and artistic creation. During the early-to-mid 1990s, lesbian and gay student associations mushroomed on university campuses all over Taiwan, and some lesbian and gay studies courses began to be taught in the major universities. Out of this emergent lesbian and gay academic culture came the localized translation of the 1990s English reclamation of ‘queer.’ ‘Queer’ was first time transliterated as the Chinese word ‘ku'er’ in the magazine ‘Isle Margin’ by Chi Ta-Wei and other scholars in 1994.1. Before the transliteration, ‘queer’ had been translated to another Chinese word and showed up in some researches and discourses. When ‘queer’ was transliterated to ku'er, the term’s insistence and intention in some way has been changed through the translation/transliteration. All discussions and annotations of the word enrich its meaning and definition in Taiwanese context. So, the paper will work on how is the word ‘queer/ku'er becomes a genre and represent in the academic field, social discourse, artistic works, and subculture.
Yu-Xin Chen, National Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu, Taiwan

Passionate Friendship: Schoolgirl Romance and Female Homosexuality in May Fourth Era China

This essay argues that homoerotic schoolgirl romance in the May Fourth China compellingly testifies to the tension between the publican intellectuals, expectant experience of Westernization and anxious wrestling with given mechanisms of surveillance on women's intimate relationships. As metropolitan theorization of sexology flooded into intellectual debates, the concept of homosexuality was keenly translated and discussed. Unlike mostly Euro-American sexologists that categorized women with same-sex desires with fixed (homo) sexual identity, Chinese intellectuals tended to view women's same-sex desires as temporary and situational. As Liberal New Women writers illustrated juvenile intrafemale liaisons as painful processes of self-discovery with catastrophic ending due to social pressures, it can be observed that the structure of local homophobic hegemony was emerging. The second half of the essay focuses on western-styled boarding school for girls, a seemingly liberating modern institution that oftentimes occasions such tension. Whereas the school enables girls to realize and express their affections and desires for other girls, it is entrenched by disciplines brought by Christian church and undercurrents of homophobic discourses developed in the local community. Along with several other pieces of proto-T/po schoolgirl romance, Eileen Chang’s Tongxue shaonian do buqian (My Prosperous Classmates) is read, in particular, as a telling example of enduring feelings between westernized female intellectuals, happily within and poignantly without the sheltering world of boarding school. The boarding school in May Fourth Era, in sum, revealingly saw the dynamic interaction between local and western forms of suppression of women's dissident sexualities.
Gay experience and urban modernity are uniquely intertwined, with the latter providing the staging ground for sexual experimentation and openness in ways that permit a kind of emergent gay democracy. Within the urban setting, gay men have had the opportunity to meet other men and create social practices and institutions that constitute the “gay experience.” Among these varied practices has been the practice of “public” sex, queering the often marginalized and abjected spaces of urban settings such as deserted lots, parks, and public bathrooms into a stage for sexual encounters and connections between men. Even though the mainstream gay and lesbian movement in South Korea has often disparaged these spaces in favour of more “formal” rights and markers of “gay citizenship,” in this paper, I argue that it is, in fact, the “wild” and “unregulated” spaces that often exist only provisionally and both within as well as outside the field of gay commodification, that we can see the practices of gay democracy and public gay society-making. Using ethnography from “gay” bathhouses in Seoul, Korea, I argue that these spaces where queer desire sometimes takes us by surprise can open ourselves up to the pleasure of inter-class and inter-generational contact as well as the possibility of imagining other forms of sociality. However, they can also reveal the limits of Western notions of “gay identity,” and “gay community.”
Wei-cheng Chu, National Taiwan University

Queer(ing) Taiwan and Its Future: From an Agenda of Mainstream Self-Enlightenment to One of Sexual Citizenship?

I offer here first and foremost a glocal analysis of the noteworthy emergence of a lesbian and gay (or in local terms, tongzhi) movement in the 1990s Taiwan. Taiwan’s example may strike as particularly intriguing in the mainstream prominence enjoyed by the cultural representations of tongzhi and the coverage of tongzhi issues. My theory is that the emergence of Taiwan’s tongzhi movement at that historical conjuncture, and the specific form it has taken, in effect depends upon what I call a ‘self-enlightening’ agenda pursued by the mainstream Taiwanese society since the democratization process starting in the late 1980s. That is why the gradual halt of this agenda in the late 1990s also coincides with the cooling-off of the movement, as its prosperity had been very much a mainstream media effect and the mainstream attention to tongzhi issues was then apparently on the wane. As if to further prove this, certain contingent developments in the mainstream politics since 2000 has given a new spur to the movement by inducing what can be called a ‘civic turn’ of it, as issues of (minority) citizenship and civil rights for tongzhi are now openly on the agenda. I will also examine this most recent development with the purpose of showing the local limitations of this largely imported discourse as well as arguing for its possible significance in terms of local political future which now centers on a zest for ethno-nationalism.
Hang Kuen Chua, Universiti Sains Malaysia

The History of the Lesbian, Gay & Trans-sexual Communities in Malaysia

Homosexuality has been a feature of Malaysian society. The written record of male homosexuality in Malaysia can be traced back to as early as the British colonial period. Despite the social and legal barriers that have been put up by the British and the present sovereign state, the homosexual/gay/queer subcultures manifest themselves under the multiple influences of industrialization, urbanization, and globalisation within the diverse local socio-cultural and repressive political environment over the years. This paper explores the characteristics, organizations, movements as well as discourses of these subcultures throughout the course of their development. The PT Foundation (formally known as Pink Triangle) and other virtual groups will be specifically referred to in the discussion of the contemporary gay/queer subcultures in Malaysia. This paper will also discuss the relationship among the gay/queer and transsexual and lesbian communities, with specific reference to transsexualism in Malaysian society. The impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on these perceived high-risk groups in Malaysia will also be covered.
Donn Colby, Harvard University

Using Social Networks to Reach MSM for HIV Prevention in Vietnam

Background: Research has shown that Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) in Vietnam have a high risk for HIV infection. There are now HIV prevention projects specifically targeting MSM in 2 cities in Vietnam, with more planned in the near future. Methods: 40 in-depth interviews and 3 focus group discussions were held with self-identified MSM in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Vietnam, in early 2004. The information gathered was used to help develop a peer-educator based HIV prevention program. Results: MSM in HCMC can be categorized into two broad groups: bong kin and bong lo. Bong kin are outwardly masculine and due to social stigma often hide their sexual orientation. Bong lo assume a feminine gender; wearing female clothing, jewellery, and make-up, and using feminine mannerisms. Both socialize mostly within their own group. Bong Kin usually have other bong kin as sexual partners, while the sexual partners of bong lo are usually heterosexual-identified men. Both group engage in risky sexual behavior, such as unprotected anal sex or oral sex with ejaculation; and hold many misconceptions about their risk of HIV and STDs. Water-based lubricants are rarely used. Bong lo often face discrimination in society, such as not being allowed entrance to entertainment establishments and difficulty in finding a job. Conclusions Peer educators can use social networks to contact and provide educational materials to MSM. Better knowledge about and access to water based lubricants are needed. Many MSM still face discrimination.
Nerida Cook, University of Tasmania

Public Perceptions of Tom and Dee in Thailand

There are now a number of highly informative studies of the experiences and self-identities of tom and dee in Thailand, as well as of characterisations of tom, dee, kathoey and gays in the public domain, such as in various media and in academia. However there is still little systematic work on how members of the general Thai public perceive and understand tom and dee, gay and kathoey individuals. This paper presents findings from focus group interviews conducted in Bangkok in the mid-1990s to begin to fill this lacuna. The focus group study explored both how these various categories (tom, dee, gay, kathoey) are constructed in the public imagination, and how focus group participants sought explanations for these non-normative sex-gender identities in relation to their views of contemporary Thai society. The focus group findings on tom and dee will be presented and briefly compared with the views of tom and dee themselves (collected at the same time) in order to explore commonalities and differences between ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ constructions. The comparison aims to develop preliminary data on the degree to which public discourses are appropriated by, contributed to, or shared by tom and dee; and ways the public perceptions fall short of the latter’s understandings. The broader purpose is to examine the everyday perceptions, both sympathetic and prejudicial, that tom and dee face on a daily basis, since everyday interactions are highly significant in the ability of tom and dee to exercise choices regarding self expression and lifestyle options.
Gloria Anzaldúa wrote extensively about La Frontera, the borderlands, and the transient and permanent residents of those areas. She described the ambiguous, unsettled space between the borders as nepantla, and those who guide others through that spatial chaos as nepantleras. At their best, transgendered people make ideal nepantleras because they all qualify as ‘wounded healers’, or those whose past or on-going experience makes them particularly empathetic to others entering nepantla. Anzaldúa described the process of passing through nepantla as acquiring conocimiento, a consciousness rooted in self-awareness and wholeness, often found in indigenous traditions. In this regard, she qualifies as curandera, or people’s healer. By practicing conocimiento, transgendered people find healing for themselves as well as become healer/guides for others, both straight and transgendered, thus becoming cultural resources, as opposed to social anomalies.
The Library Foundation (TLF) is committed to prevention of sexually transmitted infections among men having sex with men (MSM), including HIV. In 2002, with help from International HIV/AIDS Alliance, TLF conducted peer outreach education to 200 gay and bisexual men in Metro Manila through the Healthy Interaction and Values Workshops - full-day seminars on sexuality and sexual health. Designed to be participatory, the workshop determined dynamics of sexual networking in MSM venues, facilitated improvement of risk awareness to STI/HIV, raise issues on self-esteem, sexuality comfort and community mutual support to enable individuals towards safer sexual behaviour. But among those who participated, attending the workshops generally was seen to be a resolve towards acknowledging one's sexuality. While baseline knowledge was higher compared to other population sentinels, reported safer sexual behaviour among MSM was generally lower. Divisiveness among different sexual/gender expressions challenged efficient implementation of the project but its immediate outcomes included improvement of attitudes towards one's own and others' gender and sexual expressions.
Brian Curtin, Raffles LaSalle International Design School

Thailand’s Gay Male Sexual Cultures and the Problem of Visual Representation

This paper addresses the issue of Bangkok as a supposed paradise for gay men by examining the visual imagery of internet and print advertisements produced by male go-go bars and massage venues. I draw on Peter A. Jackson’s essay *Tolerant but Unaccepting: The Myth of a Thai ‘Gay Paradise’* but am less concerned with foreign misconceptions of Thai social life than the semiotic currency of this sexualized imagery, which I examine in terms of a dialectic between the production of and resistance to forms of stereotyping. That is, the forms of stereotyping which can inform the assumption of a paradise. Following Jackson, the notion of paradise, is understood as the result of a purported absence of homophobic restrictions and, further, the effect of orientalist interpretations of Asian male sexualities and commercial sex. I trace the terms by which my examples of visual imagery can be implicated in discursive processes of stereotyping and demonstrate the multiple levels on which meaning can operate through context and questions of desire, race and spectatorship. The aim of this paper is to employ the visual image as a central means of marking and contesting knowledge of ‘Thai’ sexual cultures.
Nikos Lexis Dacanay, University of the Philippines

Globalizing Gay Culture in Virtual Space: the Case of the Virtualized Gay Identity

My paper is about the virtualization of the everyday experience of the city and how the expression of gay identity is implicated in the setup. I want to understand the complex relationships between the influence of the global phenomenon of virtual space to the internationalization of gay identity and the re-modification of the concept of such an identity in the local understanding of sexuality. There has been much talk about the internationalization of American-modeled gay lifestyle and this would presume to indicate a globalization of modern gay identity. My argument is that the operations of sex and gender in Thailand and Philippine societies may be different from Western societies. The concept of gay identity is redefined when we observe how homosexuals in both Thailand and the Philippines live their lives in the seemingly virtualized gay spaces that in the cities. I will look at gay identity and its complexities in the age of virtual spaces. How has virtual space affected Thai and Filipino homosexuals’ ways of living a gay lifestyle? What are the ways by which gay-identified men define their sex/gender against the backdrop of the globalization of the virtual, the incipient internationalization of Western-modeled gay culture, and the particularistic histories of local sex/gender order? My emphasis is the concept of global gay identity as a product of international gay spaces in the Philippines and Thailand, and how this identity is being renegotiated when Filipino and Thai homosexuals regard their local and traditional understanding of gender and sexuality.
Peter Dankmeijer, Empowerment Lifestyle Services

Education on LGBT Issues in a Global Context: Opportunities in Asia

In 1997, during the Amsterdam Gay Games, Empowerment Lifestyle Services organized an international workshop on LGBT education. The workshop took place in the context of a cultural event organized by Amnesty International and was financed and supported by HIVOS. Thanks to this, we were able to invite speakers from all over the world. We expected education about LGBT issues to be quite different all over the world, due to cultural, religious and political differences. So the participants were very surprised to discover that—apart from obvious differences—we still have a lot in common when providing education about LGBT issues. At the end of the workshop, we concluded it would be useful to create a global network to facilitate continuous exchange on LGBT education. Peter Dankmeijer started building this in 2003-2004 by interviewing organizations around the world. The interviews were meant as a needs assessment. A website (www.lgbt-education.info) was started and will be developed into a platform for this network. In this presentation, Dankmeijer will give an overview of the results of the needs assessment and will suggest how specific Asian needs for education about LGBT issues are different or similar to needs in other parts of the world. A discussion after this presentation will focus on how transnational collaboration on educational campaigns and projects can improve our work.
Romit Dasgupta, University of Western Australia

‘Homosocial Desire’ versus ‘Heterosexual Hegemony’ in Corporate Japan

The shift in research focus from lesbian and gay studies to an emphasis on ‘queer’ has brought out questions about the ways in which everyday, ostensibly heteronormative spaces and practices may in fact be inter-laced with dynamics of (usually un-acknowledged and un-articulated) same-sex desire. One area which has been the focus of research attention has been spaces of male-male homosocial bonding and interaction. As work on institutions such as the military or sports clubs has revealed, a public face of aggressive unambiguous heterosexuality may well have an underlying subtext of what Sedgwick describes as ‘homosocial desire’.

Corporate organizations are good examples of spaces where outward hegemonic heteronormativity may often be undergirded by what Michael Roper refers to as ‘circuits of homosocial desire’. In the case of Japan, hegemonic corporate masculinity, as embodied in the figure of the white-collar salaryman has been premised on an ideology of the male as heterosexual husband and father. Yet, at the same time, the success of this model of masculinity also depended heavily on the male employee prioritizing homosocial attachment to his colleagues and the organization, over heterosexual attachment to his family. Using material from interviews with younger corporate sector employees, as well from popular culture texts, this paper draws attention to the ways in which dynamics of ‘homosocial desire’ inform the individual’s negotiations and engagements with corporate masculinity.
Carlos Decena, Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies

Towards Cross-Regional Dialogue: Perspectives from the Americas

(United States) will identify key issues in LGBTQ research in specific Latin American countries and among Latino/as in the United States. Apart from providing APQ Bangkok 2005 attendees with information about ongoing research and activism, the panel will end with questions and topics to stimulate cross-regional dialogue between scholars in the Asia/Pacific region and those working in the Americas.
Taiwan’s second upsurge of entertainment industries and sex cultures coincided with the US military presence and backing for the post-49 KMT regime. These industries and cultures are the setting for the emergence of representations of T-po (gendered lesbian) relations and communities. By the 1970s, sensationalist media reportage pathologized homosexuality, and medical discourse followed suit. This was part of a larger state-driven campaign for moral tooling designed to discipline bodily appearance just as sexual cultures were proliferating within the informal sectors of the state economy. Our paper analyzes, firstly, the critical reception of early lesbian and gay fiction in Taiwan. It then turns to how representations of T-po bodies in 1970s melodrama struggle with institutionalized representational forces while at the same time constructing new strategies that are in dialogue with both state technologies and T-po lesbian communities and cultures. Lastly, it looks at how some of those strategies from early pulp fiction, especially their use of vampire imagery, are reconfigured in 1990s narratives that coincide with the establishment of GLBT social movements.
Serge Doussantousse, Independent Researcher

A Gender Minority in Lao PDR: Transgenders or Kathoeys

Background: Lao PDR, a country bordering Thailand with comparable cultural traits. One similarity shared by both countries is the number of visible transgenders, called Kathoey. Although there is little research on Kathoey in Laos, it has been observed that several Kathoey in Vientiane and Savannakhet have already been infected with HIV. A feasibility study was conducted in Vientiane (Capital of Lao PDR) and Savannakhet with a convenience sampling.

Methods: 11 self identified Kathoey were interviewed in Vientiane and Savannakhet early 2004. The interviews used a semi-structured questionnaire and cover various topics including sexual identity, sexual behaviour, HIV knowledge, demographic factors, and perceptions about discrimination.

Findings: Contact with Kathoey is easy; Discrimination seems minimal in the society and family. A growing number of Kathoey is involved in prostitution: they receive money from their foreign partner/ clients but have to pay their Lao boy friends. Their sexual practices are comparable to MSM's. Their knowledge on HIV transmission is still limited. Homosexual and transgenders are two different groups with strong sub-culture. Those men have chosen in their early teen to become the second women, as they called themselves. They work in most of women activities: Hair-dresser, restaurant, Entertainment facilities and seems well integrated in the Lao community.

Recommendations: The understanding of Kathoey's integration in Lao society help at designing program targeting them. Kathoeys must participated at every level of the research from planning to analysis.
Robyn Emerton, University of Hong Kong

Half Full or Half Empty? Legal Status and Activism of the Transgender Community in Hong Kong

Gender reassignment surgery has taken place in Hong Kong since the mid 1980s, and has always received public funding. At the administrative level, various concessions are made towards post-operative transsexual persons, which undoubtedly facilitate their every day lives. These include the reissue of identity cards, passports and driving licences in their chosen gender. However, there is no means for them – or for transgender persons more broadly – to change their birth certificates. This denies them full legal recognition (including marriage) in their chosen gender, and renders them vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination, which is still sorely rife in Hong Kong. In some other countries in Asia, transgender persons have successfully campaigned to claim their right to legal recognition, using the courts and legislature to good effect. Examples to be discussed include Singapore, Japan and the Philippines. By contrast – although the transgender community is now achieving more visibility in Hong Kong and is slowly becoming more politically active – the issue of legal recognition has never been raised before Hong Kong’s courts or legislature. This paper will offer some preliminary observations on why this may be the case – and also shed some light on the paper’s title!
Lesbian Identity and Community Making in Beijing: Towards a Queerer Type of Ethnography

LGBTQ communities cross-culturally are often understood to participate in a process of gay globalization originating in Euro-American cultures. Local LGBTQ cultures are accordingly adopting ‘Western’-based gay identity politics and lifestyles, with the significance of local conditions remaining largely underestimated. Another common approach emphasizes that contemporary LGBTQ cultures outside ‘Western’ locales creatively adopt those global images of queer cultures that fit into existing specific contexts, and discard those that do not. Based on ongoing fieldwork among lesbian communities in Beijing, I discuss how lesbians make sense of the global images of lesbian lifestyles and queer cultures now available to them through new media and technology, to create a lesbian sense of community and identity—collective and individual—and which ultimately takes a highly China-specific context as its structural basis. I suggest that a more constructive way of understanding LGBTQ community- and identity-making, now increasingly globalized and imagined similarly across cultures, may be not by regarding what happens in different locales as variations over a Euro-American originating gay cultural project, but rather, by paying keen attention to the processes of how everyday meanings and knowledges are continually created, re-created, contested and imagined by lesbians in the specific locales in question, and on that basis attempt to theorise the interconnections with global flows of gay cultures. I hope to contribute towards debates about queer studies’ relevance in cross-cultural contexts, and how we can best theorise identity politics and processual change in the age of globalization.
Popular images of queers, in Asia are taking a number of specific forms, which are in turn constituting new and significant (urban) contexts across the region. These forms index particular kinds of queer desire for visibility. This paper first briefly sketches the contour of queer popular culture in Asia, including the specific academic and intellectual discourses built around it. It then explores some important forms through which Asian queer, and pop, converge, including the consistent, almost nonchalant, blurring of the line between homosociality and homoeroticism, the performativity of drag as an open political allegory, and the beautiful, often feminine, youth narratives. Moving out, around, and rapidly, these cultural productions have a way of coalescing into syncretic queer practices across Asia. The fertile historical and political ground of Taiwan will be discussed as an important space of hybrid convergence at this moment.
Ross Forman, School of Oriental and African Studies

Catamite Coolies and Chinese Sodoms: British Investigations into Chinese Labourers, Sexuality in the 19th & 20th Centuries

A common accusation levelled against Chinese labourers brought to various British colonies at the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century was that they were undesirable because of their penchant for pederasty. From sites as geographically disparate as Guiana and Malaya and South Africa, there emerged a discourse about ‘catamite coolies’ that typed Chinese labourers as problematic and promoted their repatriation over more usual patterns of settlement at the end of their indentures. Often relying on testimony from missionaries or other interested parties and often focusing on the role played by cross-dressing troupes of Chinese actors (who were presumed to serve as male prostitutes), British officials carried out a number of investigations into ‘unnatural vice’ in mining compounds and plantation settings. These investigations yield important historical information about colonial understandings of Asian sexualities and patterns of sociability. This paper offers an overview of these inquiries, focusing especially on the 1906 investigation into Chinese labourers in the Transvaal, whose ramifications were so explosive that Winston Churchill actually uttered the word ‘sodomy’ in Parliament. The paper considers what the moral and political implications of Asian male-male sexuality in workers’ enclosures were; what developmental theories of homosexuality were invoked (for instance, the claim that working-class men from Northern China learned about sodomy by sleeping in close proximity to one another during the cold winters); and how the workers were and were not able to represent their subjectivities through interpreters within the legalistic environment in which these colonial investigations were conducted.
HIV prevention policies and research in South-East Asia have focused predominantly upon female, brothel-based; sex work. The rapidly growing male and transgender tourist-orientated sex industry is characterized by more; forms of sex work (in bars, nightclubs, massage parlours, restaurants and hotels for example), making the mapping and definition of commercial especially problematic. Consequently these economic, social, political, medical and imaginary geographies remain largely unexplored by scholars and marginalized in HIV policies; lacunae that urgently require attention. If appropriate HIV prevention programs are to be formulated, a theoretical framework must be developed that can accommodate the burgeoning numbers of male and female tourists who engage in sexual-economic exchanges with male and transgender sex workers, and the complex interplay between the gendered, raced and economic powers involved in these encounters.

This paper will draw upon primary fieldwork conducted in Phuket, Thailand and Bali, Indonesia in order to analyze in which particular spatial, symbolic or situational contexts unsafe sexual practices are most prevalent, and to identify measures that can be taken to reduce the incidence of these risky sexual behaviours. It concludes that HIV prevention policies must engage with the shifting intersections between tourism, sex work, sexuality, sexual behaviour and sexual health in the twenty-first century. Specifically, they must respond to the growing heterogeneity of sex workers and tourists, and the variety of sexual-economic exchanges now involved.
J. Neil C. Garcia, University of the Philippines

The Postcolonial Perverse: Hybridity, Desire, and the Nation in Federico Licsi Espino, Jr’s Lumpen

Over the last century, literary renderings of the Filipino nation have invariably been heterosexual and nativist. The national polity, as imagined by many Filipino writers, typically excludes both the perverse and the culturally ‘impure’. As a consequence, the vision of a national awakening such texts purvey essentializes the postcolonial situation into the unworkable polarities of Self and Other. The paper will examine the various ‘dissident’ spaces made available by the inclusion of perversion and hybridity into the national imagination. The world of Espino’s novella from 1985 is peopled by perverts and racial and/or ideological half-breeds: hustlers, thieves, cross-dressers, hermaphrodites, closet cases, and apparitional and racially ‘mongrelized’ characters. Their erotic lives, colorful, complex and helplessly enmeshed, transpire in the midst of political strife in the Philippine capital: student protests, marches, and ‘disappearances’ typical of the period right before and during Martial Law rule. According to the novel, the country’s official political economy is regularly challenged by its ‘underground’ economy of desire, in which other struggles and agencies may be seen to exist. Here, the downtrodden traffic in perverse gratification, both for material and erotic ends. In this world, the disenfranchised are able to indulge their own desires while reversing the customary order of things. As a postcolonial text, Lumpen not only admits to the possibility of imagining a Filipino nation constituted of cultural and political hybrids; it also gestures towards the idea of a nation whose liberation lies in its embrace and celebration of the ‘impure’ and/or the ‘perverse.’
Andrea Goh, Melissa Say, Gerald Tan, Frederick Tong, Nanyang Technological University

Probing Pink Porn: The perceived value of sexual content for homosexual and heterosexual audiences

Singapore law requires consideration of the literary, artistic, social, cultural, educational and scientific value of media content in deciding whether it is objectionable. Responses to structured depth interviews with 40 adults aged over 30 (equal numbers of homosexuals and heterosexuals) were analysed to determine the perceived value of sexual content targeted at homosexual and heterosexual audiences. Input from lawyers, media practitioners and members of the Media Authority’s various committees was also analysed.
“Bollywood Spectacles: Queer Diasporic Critique in the Aftermath of September 11th”

In the years following the attacks of September 11th, 2001, South Asian racialization in the U.S. has taken place through curious and contradictory processes. Even as the “indefinite detentions” and deportations of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians continued unabated, the last three years saw the veritable explosion of interest in Bollywood cinema among non-South Asian audiences. How can we account for this heightened visibility and “discovery” of Bollywood cinema, at precisely the moment when South Asian communities in the U.S. are being more intensely surveilled, policed and terrorized by the state than ever before? This paper argues that the ubiquity and popularity of Bollywood outside of India at this particular moment of U.S. imperialist aggression and global hegemony bears close scrutiny, as it reveals a great deal about the complex interrelation of multiple nationalisms and diasporic formations in the context of globalization. In order to fully unpack these connections, I suggest the necessity of what we can term a “queer diasporic” frame of analysis that pays attention to the intimate connections between disparate diasporic and national locations and their convergence around heteronormative gender and sexual ideologies. This is a particularly urgent and necessary project in the context of South Asia, given the centrality of the diaspora to the material and ideological maintenance of Hindu nationalism in India, and in light of the unholy alliance between the Hindu Right in India and the current Bush regime in the U.S.
This paper analyses the intersections between bisexuality and transgender in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. While there are no equivalent indigenous terms, there are cognate identities and experiences that make such an examination valid and fruitful. The paper is divided into four main sections. After a brief introduction, section one sets the scene by introducing readers to South Sulawesi. This section also examines prevailing ideas of gender and sexuality in the region. I argue that gender is a salient notion in South Sulawesi and that there are very clear models of what is expected of girls and boys when they grow up. I also posit that gender is a holistic concept, constituted by various factors, including biology, sexuality, roles, and behaviours. In the second section I introduce two gendered identities which fall outside normative models: calabai, (transgendered males) and calalai, (transgendered females). Through the narratives of key informants, the identity and subjectivity of these individuals is revealed. In the third section I recount specific examples of bisexuality and transgender intersections. A critical analysis of these intersections reveals much about representations and understandings of desire, sexuality, and gender. The theoretical contributions which arise from this analysis are proposed in the fourth section. I argue that the conceptual categories imposed by rigid Western terminology are rendered problematic when considering the intersection between bisexuality and transgender. As such, in South Sulawesi experiences of bisexuality and transgender must be explored from a perspective which allows appreciation of their coalescence.
Ed Green, University of New South Wales

Living In Rural Areas of Indonesia—The Experience of Gay Men

In his recent doctoral study of Indonesian gay men, Richard Howard (1996) noted ‘that young men recognizing a same sex desire have moved from smaller villages to the city to explore their homosexuality and to avoid the pressure to marry’ (p.354). Howard also claimed that for the gay men in his study, ‘men may express both homosexual desire and behaviour’ but unless they married they were unable to see themselves, or be seen by others, as ‘real men’ (laki asli) (p. 345). This paper, based on interview data gathered from a small sample of Indonesian gay men living outside metropolitan areas questioned how they saw themselves and experienced their lives. How did they express and experience (gay) desire? Did they interact with, resist, or simply bypass the conformity and parochialism and the religious orthodoxy of the communities within which they live? The men in this study did come under pressure to marry or to see themselves as less of a man. But they did perceive themselves as men and they had no intention of conforming to the pressure from family and society to marry. Nor did they intend moving to the city to avoid such pressures. This paper asserts that not all gay men in Asia live in cities and that many chose not to forsake their non-urban lives and instead found strategies to live their lives in their own way.
Weiguo Gu, Chi Heng Foundation

PFLAG Organizing in China: Recent Experiences

Concerned about the lack of a support network for the marginalised LGBT people in China such as the Gay movements in the US, the Chi Heng Foundation has started to organise a Chinese version of PFLAG. Currently the work focuses on two projects: The first is the construction of a PFLAG website in Chinese to be used as a starting point to introduce PFLAG to the general public and get like-minded activists united to work towards the elimination of discrimination and prejudice against gays, lesbians and other sexual minorities. The other is the compilation of a book which consists of a collection of original articles written by accepting family members and friends of lesbians and gays recounting how they came to be accepting. It is hoped that such a book will enlighten the misinformed public and increase their understanding of LGBT people.
Yaqi Guo, Beijing Gender Health Education Institute

The Rapid Development of the LGBT Communities in China

During the 1980s, homosexuals in China were undercover: only personal relationships existed. The emergence of AIDS brought the existence of ‘homosexuality’ to the general public for the first time, but it also misled people to think that homosexuals are filthy, horrifying and contemptible. Due to the neglect shown towards homosexuals, some LGBT volunteers started to work on publicity and behavior-intervention against AIDS in the 1990’s. At the same time, small groups of people providing help to homosexuals also came forth. These were the initial LGBT communities in China. Entering the new millennium, groups of volunteers mushroomed in LGBT communities of many places and organized a variety of activities. In 2003, Beijing Gender Health Education Institute organized a series of activities among homosexuals in Kunming, Nanjing and Beijing to share experiences and to build the foundation for further development of local communities.
Odine de Guzman, University of the Philippines

Between Women: Toward a Political Economy of OFW Sexuality

My research focuses on female ‘overseas Filipino workers’ (OFW) in selected Asian countries and on how the experience of labor migration in an increasingly globalized world has impacted on their lives. By way of a textual analysis of the workers’ cultural productions such as letters and narratives—oral and written—and case studies, I hope to examine the ways by which migrants interrogate, and even subvert, the usually stringent employer and sending- and receiving-states regulations as these impinge on the personal and sexual. Specifically, this presentation is an exploratory analysis of the relationship between neo-liberalism, labor migration and sexuality as these are played out in the everyday experiences of Filipino migrant domestic workers. It examines how this triad bears upon the political economy of an OFW sexuality in light of the growing number of migrant domestic workers who enter into same-sex relationships, possibly as counter-recourses to intimacy and affect given migration regulations such as the mandatory pregnancy tests, the growing incidence of HIV/AIDs among OFWs, if not apparent articulations of latent desires subsumed under socio-cultural dictates in the home country.
Judith Halberstam, University of Southern California

"Comparative Female Masculinities"

Recent anthropological work on "same-sex female desire" has been rightly hesitant about using the term "lesbian" for variations on same sex desire found in different parts of the globe. Where anthropologists have used a Euro-American template to read and study same sex female desires in non-Western contexts, they have run the risk of obliterating alternative sexual economies and taxonomies. My paper will look at comparative renderings of "female masculinity," a non-identitarian model of gender, and will ask whether we can draw any kind of meaningful parallels between "tombois" in Indonesia, onabes in Japan, T's in Taiwan, toms in Thailand, mariachis in Mexico and tomboys in the Philippines, just to give a few examples. My paper is less an account of these different models of gender variance and more of a search for a methodology for studying gender variance in a comparative framework.
Makoto Hibino, Kansai Queer Film Festival

What is Necessary For Us, For Our Queer Movement in Japan?

I have some proposals for creating changes both in the communities and in majority society. 1: Ignoring minorities is not only a problem for heterosexuals. We should think there are lesbians and gays in every classroom. In this same way, we should also think that there are bisexuals in every LG community. But unfortunately the title of the pride in Tokyo is ‘Tokyo Lesbian and Gay Parade’. The problems exist also inside our communities. 2: Some gay activists think homophobia is the greatest concern. However struggling against homophobia is not enough. Homophobia is only part of the binary gender system. Challenging the whole binary gender system is important. We need to remember that sexual orientation, gender identity, gender role/expression and sex are one thing, one part or one side of one thing. 3: The mainstream society, queer communities and ourselves are under the Japanese emperor system Tennou-sei. People want to/tend to think as if all have the same thoughts and that there are not different opinions within the community. People customarily tend to follow the authority, and do not accept their responsibility, because they think they only follow the authority. In the past, this kind of the Tennou-sei led to the invasion of Asian countries. Inside Japan, many queers feel strangled by ‘silk floss’. To say "NO!" clearly and publicly is very difficult inside both queer communities as well as mainstream. Struggling against the Tennou-sei is necessary, in order to create a new society which respects personal rights and supports the diversity of ourselves.
Brian Ho, University of Putra Malaysia

Other People’s Stories

This is a qualitative research project looking at all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transexual clients attending a private psychiatric and psychotherapeutic practice in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It looks at the attendees’ demographics, ethnic origins, reasons for seeking professional help, diagnosis and outcome. Similarities and differences in this population compared to the heterosexual counterparts are discussed.
‘A soul trapped in the wrong body’ is a common description employed by trans subjects to explain their unusual condition. This self-characterization includes two important premises: that the body and the soul (or identity, self-image, etc.) are two separate and independent entities whose correct alignment makes up the effect of gender; and that the soul occupies a higher position than the body, to the extent that any mismatch between the two is to be resolved by modifying the body (through cross-dressing, hormonal therapy, SRS, or other procedures) to match the soul. The body-soul imagery may help illuminate the awkward situation of trans subjects by graphically presenting the often contradictory feelings and images that trans subjects have to negotiate as they move through social space. Yet the simple graphic of the body-soul imagery also tends to obscure the manifold differences among trans subjects, differences that may very well affect the credibility of their claim to ‘a soul trapped in the wrong body.’ More importantly, the imagery further conceals ‘the daily effort of doing gender in everyday interactions that all of us engage in.’ The present paper presents the various ways in which Taiwanese transgender subjects have forged out of limited social means and support their own constructions of gender and identity. As the contradictory and disharmonious body/identity of the transgender subjects struggles to assert itself despite existing gender stereotypes and prejudices, their self-reflexive project of doing gender are also constantly ‘trans’-gressing/’trans’-forming existing gender/sexuality categories.
Loretta Ho, University of Western Australia

Engaging the Gaze of the Gay Community in Beijing

My research explores the form of identity being assumed by the emerging same-sex ‘communities’ in Beijing. The research seeks to evaluate whether self-identification as tongxinglian, gay or lesbian, implies an allegiance to ‘shared’ values, ‘group’ identity, and ‘solidarity’. It also examines to what extent Chinese gay/lesbian networks and social groups have been influenced by hegemonic ‘global gayness’, or whether they remain localised and unique in response to local conditions. This paper presents aspects of my post-fieldwork findings of the same-sex community in Beijing from a female, heterosexual gaze, which is mediated by assumptions, or possibly misconceptions, about the Other. I will show how this vantage point, together with the reflected and reflective gaze of the gay community, shapes the narratives of the gays and lesbians that I have communicated with and interviewed. I argue that an appreciation of ways of seeing in the field is central to understanding how epistemology of the same-sex ‘community’ in Beijing is imagined, represented, and constructed in an atmosphere which marginalises and silences their experiences.
Peter Trung Thu Ho, Asian Community AIDS Services, MSM Education and Outreach Program, Toronto, Canada

The Use and Evaluation of irice.org: An Internet HIV Outreach Targeting Asian MSM

The purpose of this presentation is to introduce audiences with 'how to' develop and implement a volunteer-based, on-line HIV education and outreach project. iRice.org, the Internet website was designed to provide information on HIV/AIDS on the issues of social dynamics and isolations, more recreational/educational space for Asian MSM on-line; and to increase positive Asian image on-line. The presenter will also discuss about evaluation and process at the end.
Guo-Juin Hong, Duke University

Theatrics of Cruising: Bath Houses and Movie Houses in Tsai Ming-liang’s Films

This paper looks at gay cruising in films by Taiwan’s internationally famed director, Tsai Ming-liang. I focus on three films, namely, The River (1995), What Time Is It There? (2001), and Goodbye, Dragon Inn, Goodbye (2002), and locate a few significant cinematic moments, hoping to show a peculiar movement of desire in Tsai’s film works. I call it a theatrics of cruising because the intricate stagings of those activities through chance encounters—be it intentional or misunderstood, comic or horrific, consummated or interrupted—are a hide-and-go-seek game that flirts with the film viewers and frustrates their visual participation as much it does the characters in the films. Never in any straightforward manner, this theatrics of cruising encourages a reconfiguration of cinematic space; a space, I will attempt to argue, that effects a different visual economy similar to the Deleuzian notion of deterritorilization and reterritorialization. A re-vision, then, of the cinematic space and its identificatory processes is made possible by such a theatrics at work; at play, too, but perhaps more than a tease.
Yuri Horie, Osaka University

Women’s Activism Against Homophobia: Christian Discourse in the Non-Christian Society of Japan

Japanese society is often described as a ‘tolerant’ society toward lesbians and gays, due in no small part to Christianity’s marginal status and limited cultural influence. Yet, Christian churches in Japan continue to exclude lesbians and gay men, and church members have internalized discriminatory consciousness based on the heterosexism present in Japanese society at large. In this paper, I analyse a case involving the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ/Kyodan), the largest Protestant denomination in Japan. When a seminarian who had come out as a gay man took the examination for becoming a pastor in 1998, the backlash led to the spread of homophobic discourse within the Church. Although in Western churches lesbians and gays working together have constructed resistance movements in reaction to such problems, in the case of UCCJ/Kyodan, heterosexual women and lesbians united in response to the situation. These women recognized the (hetero)sexist roots of this homophobic discourse and, drawing on their history of activism against sexism, were motivated to form a movement to resist it. Gay men, on the other hand, remained silent. In its analysis of this case, this paper will describe (1) the reality of the ‘intolerance’ toward lesbians and gay men in Japan, elucidating that in the current climate that discrimination is concealed rather than non-existent; and (2) potential and limits of women’s activism against homophobia.
Cliff Ip, University College London

How Should Hong Kong Court Rule on the Constitutionality of Gay Sex?

My paper is based on my master dissertation, submitted for MA Human Rights, University College London. It argues Hong Kong (HK) court should strike down statutory provisions which criminalize certain gay sexual acts. It first identifies the recognition of homosexual rights in various supranational and domestic courts, e.g. The European Court on Human Rights and the Canadian Supreme Court. Their arguments are examined. HK should follow these courts in scrutinizing and limiting the conventional morality claim --- the claim that homosexuality is immoral according to conventional or popular beliefs --- and in not deferring too much to the legislative body. It then casts doubt on a general cultural relativist argument, as, for example, advocated by Prof. Joseph Chan. If the last point is wrong, homosexuality may still be compatible with Confucianism, the influential school of thought in Hong Kong, because I) the latter can be “re-interpreted” to protect homosexuals, interests and II) other Confucian places take homosexual rights more seriously than HK. If the author is still wrong and Confucian thoughts do balance against gay rights, then a compromise solution which proposes that certain provisions be struck down is also proposed.
Hitoshi Ishida, Meiji Gakuin University

The 3-D Rigid Structure (1990s) and The Flexible Network (1950s): Two Interpretative Frameworks on Marginal Sexualities in Post War Japan

The purpose of this paper is to consider interpretative frameworks on marginal sexualities (‘non-normative sexualities’), directory comparing the Flexible Network Frameworks of the 1950s and the the 3-D Rigid Structure of the 1990s in Japan. During the 1990s, communities of men who love men and feminized men deployed terms derived from Anglophone gay and transgender activist discourse, and began to reflectively differentiate themselves as ‘gay’ and ‘MtF’ (male-to-female transsexuals). One result of the emergence of this new discourse of ‘sexual minorities’ was that various marginal sexualities became fixed in a rigid three-dimensional framework dependent on a combination of three axes (biological sex, gender identity and sexual orientation). Now this framework is hegemonic on discourse on marginal sexualities in Japan today. Compared with this 1990s framework, the 1950s framework was very different indeed, as can be found when analyzing the hentai (perverse) magazines discourses of the time. The hentai magazines tended to treat men who love men and feminized men interchangeably. Significantly, these two categories were often regarded as being representatively related to other perverse sexual desires such as sadism/masochism and pederasty/uranism in ad hoc rules. Therefore personal narratives of perverse sexual desire in this framework were characterized as having a process of bricolage within a flexible network. In this paper I will suggest that these two frameworks of sexuality in postwar Japan represent a change over a period of about 40 years from a flexible network to a rigid structure.
Lorna Quejong Israel, Women & Gender Institute, Miriam College, the Philippines

Inserting Lesbians in Non-Lesbian Spaces: Spectacularisation in Media Coverages of the Pride March

Recently, Filipino lesbians have gained visibility made possible by the LGBTQ community and curiosity on lesbians. This has opened options and drawbacks, which need to be critically scrutinized. Current visibility tend to either render lesbians as spectacles should they assert their self-defined identity as lesbians or to subsume them under hetero-normative claims. Either way, lesbians would find themselves between the conveniences afforded by recognition in hetero-normative regime and the limitations posed by identities. This panel seeks to present the everyday claims or denials that lesbians have to make both from the hetero-normative public & within themselves in order to generate effective, cost-efficient and fun ways of promoting lesbian politics without undermining their integrity.
Marou Izumo, Independent Scholar

Notes from Chanbara Queen: a queer critique of 1950-1960 Japanese cinema

In this presentation I present my work Chanbara Queen (Pandora, 2003) which offers a queer critique of mass produced popular, swashbuckling movies from the Golden Era of Japanese cinema in the 1950s and 1960s. In particular I will focus on the portrayal of drag kings/drag queens in imaginary Edo period settings and gender representations therein. I will also discuss the fanatic consumption of those films by the Japanese public. Films to be discussed include Hanagasa Wakashu (The Young Man in the Flowered Hat, 1958) starring Misora Hibari, the greatest singing star of the post-war period, and Yukinojoo henge (The transformations of Yukinojoo, 1963) featuring the eternal screen beau, Hasegawa Kazuo.
Luke Jacques, Murdoch University

Queering the Culture: Does Gay Discourse Change if We Take Cross-cultural Communication Seriously?

Body Theory has been an area of growth, ambivalence and politics in the last twenty years, yet the graft with ‘Asianness’ remains unstable. Beyond generalized tropes of Orientalism, close textual analysis is required to understand the sexualized context of the non-Western gay male body. My paper works through the multiple readings of gay Thai bodies and the opportunity that this study provides for contemporary Cultural Studies. Through relevant textual analysis, an examination into cultural meanings, readership practices, and appropriation by Western media culture probes the relationship between images of gayness, and Thai gay identity. This paper investigates the semiotic construction of queer discourses in both Thai and Western popular images for both the Thai and western reader. Within Thai popular culture the Thai gay body is read differently from a Thai national or Western expatriate perspective. This particular analysis exposes remnants of Western Orientalist discourses that construct the Thai gay, male body as a highly sexualised, commodified and exoticised site for Western surveillance and consumption. A critique of how gay is translated, embodied and defined within representations and images in Thai popular culture demonstrates that Thai queer communities resist neo-colonialist discourses by selectively appropriating particular Western gay terminology and identities in order to create distinctly Thai discourses of gayness.
Sachin Jain, Mumbai University

“Anti-sodomy Laws in India: Harassment & Socio-Cultural Aspects”

This paper delves into the roots of India's anti-sodomy laws full of vague and archaic terminologies. I have discussed social factors like patriarchy, the ebb of socialism and embrace of capitalist ways, satellite television, the internet, a booming economy, over a billion people, a breakdown of the joint family system, urban migration, Bollywood cinema the omnipresence of alternate gender identities like Hijras, Kotis etc. and the tenuous relationship they share with the modern gay movement. The paper enumerates the effects of anti-sodomy laws in India: exploitation, extortion, verbal harassment, the perception of gayism as a fancy western decadence, Recent issues like the peddling of pornography, MMS technologies in mobile phones, the cheap availability of spycams, the advent of adult television in India are discussed. Effects of criminalisation: invisibilisation, misinformation, condoning of and apathy to violence against queers, denial of access to safe sex information, hindrances in the provision of medical services etc. are considered. I describe the difficulties in obtaining redress, absence of a distinction between consensual and coercive sex, child abuse issues, the use of other lower-level laws are also used to harass queers, especially transgenders in India. The paper discusses the immediate advantages of decriminalization of homosexuality in the fields of health, law reform, social awareness, increased tolerance, acceptance, decreased harassment, hate, vulnerability, exploitation, violence, better HIV/AIDS prevention, registration and protection of NGOs, full expression of identity and potential. The paper ends with recommendations and advocacy to win LGBT rights in the 21st century in India.
Humaira Jami, National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Condition and Status of Hijra (Transgender, Transvestite etc.) in Pakistan

This paper is based on Ph.D. work of the presenter. The focus is on reasons and process of becoming a Hijra (umbrella term used for those men in Pakistan who are transgender, transvestites, hermaphrodite, homosexual, bisexual and intersexed) and the attitude towards Hijra Community with prevailing cultural and religious views about them in. Most of these Hijras live in the form of community. No official facts and figures about Hijras are available. However, it seems that their number is increasing because of increase in poverty and unemployment. They earn their living through dancing, singing and begging in functions, circus, weddings, at the birth of male child, or through sex business. In Islam, curse is put on those who cross-dress; homosexuality is strongly condemned. Hijras are abhorred and mocked around, though acceptable as an important sexual minority. It is believed that they hold special effects in their curse and blessings. People consider them to be aggressive, ill mannered and shameful creatures. Most of the people believe that they are hermaphrodite (Hijras also portray this identity). Education and employment is denied to them and to Hijras themselves they are not able to do any job other than dancing, singing and begging. No medical or legal facilities are defined for transgender. Even those who go for castration or hormones rely on self-remedy. There is no facility to change the ID documents. Transgenders register themselves as male. There is no organization working for transgender, except some NGOs working in reference to AIDS/HIV.
Fatemeh Javaheri, Tarbiat Moallem University

An Empirical Study on Transsexuality in Iran

Transsexuals are marginalized persons who are unknown to both laymen and educated people in Iran since only a few scientific studies are concentrated on Transexuality. The author of this article—a Sociologist—aims to explain some aspects of transexuality in Iran. This work is based on survey research undertaken in Tehran in the summer of 2004. The data has been gathered in some cases by self-directed questionnaires and in other cases by interviews with transsexuals. The survey was completed by about 35 male and female transsexuals of whom are under the protection of Tehran governmental organizations. The findings have been summarized around questions as follows: What are the demographic and social characteristics of transsexuals? How do transsexuals experience and interpret their sexual identity? How do they manage problems related to sex changes? What socio-economic factors can effect the decision to become transsexuals? What are some of the major consequences of transexuality for transexualists? How is society able to help transsexual people overcome their specific problems?
Hui Jiang, ICCGL

ICCGL: Internet Based Cultural Exchange and Community Building Among Chinese GLBT

Based on the works and experiences of ICCGL and its webpage (Gaychinese.net) in the past six years, this paper discusses the practice and implications of a Chinese NGO with members working in several countries. The reality of Chinese gay life is very complex and in many ways unique. Against this background, the cultural exchange and community building have become a vital part of the gay movement in China. Topics discussed in this paper include: The current state of web based gay cultural exchange in China, The establishment of ICCGL/Gaychinese.net, the spread of gay culture in China, challenges and cultural clashes encountered during the community building process, the importance of reaching out to students and youths and future directions and plans.
Carol Johnson, University of Adelaide

Sexual Relationships and their Political Recognition

This roundtable will consist of a number of brief written contributions by its members toward the goals of: a) analyzing the distinctive lgbtq partnership issues within the cultures from which the participants come or in which they live; b) making some cross-cultural comparisons-drawing parallels, pointing out divergences, and suggesting theoretical generalizations-based upon these issues and the cultural and legal problems that arise from them; and c) addressing some international questions that arise from recognition or lack thereof of lgbtq partnerships, for example, with respect to human rights law, immigration and choice of co-residence (taking into account the socio-economic status of the partners and the heteronormative ideologies of cultures), etc. With the participation of the audience, a cross-cultural dialogue will emerge, placing cultural specificity in the Asian region at the center, but taking into account global Asian diasporas, and the non-Asian partners of Asian lgbtq’s.
Oradol Kaewprasert, University of Essex

The Very First Series of Thai Queer Films: What Was Happening in the 80s? (To be confirmed)

It took more than half a century after motion pictures were introduced into Thailand for a Thai to produce a film that dealt with a transgender character as a person, as in The Last Song (1986). Then, in the following years, Tortured Love (1987) and I Am a Man (1988) were released. Even though, these three films allowed audiences to emphasize with their characters, some characterization of transgender in the films still replicated stereotypes of homosexuals, as seen in other media. This paper aims to discuss the filmic representations of queerness in the very first series of Thai queer films. These representations, it will be suggested, not only enable the films to explore their authorship but also to characterize the audiences’ attitudes. The paper also looks closely at the dominant images of the representation of homosexuality in The Last Song and its sequel, Tortured Love. The paper then proceeds to look thoroughly at I am a Man, since the film offers a valuable case study in the consideration of homosexual identities and representation of authorship. In conclusion, I want to suggest that Thai queer cinemas in the 1980s pretty much imply constructivism. This means that queer cinemas are defined by the way they create queer concepts, or the concept of queer, in Thailand. It can be said that a proper conceptualization of queer cinema inevitably involves the critique of representation.
Yip Lo Lucetta Kam, Chinese University HK

The Emergence of Lala Community in Shanghai

With the popularity of the Internet and the emergence of lesbian and gay friendly public spaces such as bars, Lala communities have begun to appear in many major cities in China. Lala is popularly used as a local identity for women with same-sex desires. During the past decade, we have witnessed the rise of Shanghai as a new metropolitan centre in China. In recent years, scattered Lala gatherings such as parties and discussion groups were told to be held in Shanghai semi-openly. The city has become one of the most vibrant sites of Lala community in the country. Cyber space has been the most active meeting and interaction point for Lalas. Websites such as Aladao and Lala Club etc. have turned popular both for Lalas in Shanghai and other cities in China. Offline in the real space, the flourishing development of gay and lesbian friendly bars in the city in recent years is also believed to play a significant role in forming and shaping the local Lala community. My study aims to map out this recently emerged community both by its physical locations (that is, the physical spaces that it makes itself visible) and its discursive trajectory (that is, the discursive forces that it used to make itself recognizable and identifiable). Ethnographic field visits and in-depth interview are major research methods.
Saori Kamano, National Institute of Population & Social Security Research

Doing ‘Couples’ in Lesbian Communities and Doing ‘Lesbian Couples’ in the Japanese Society

In this paper, I will depict ways in which lesbians construct ‘lesbian couples’ in Japan. First, I will focus on what goes on within a ‘lesbian community’ by examining how ‘couples’, ‘partners’, and/or ‘romantic relationships’ are being understood and depicted. I will specifically analyze the behaviors, meanings and values that are associated with being in a couple relationship and the language used in discussing such relationships among lesbians. Second, I will examine how lesbians construct ‘lesbian couples’ vis-à-vis heterosexual couples and/or gay male couples by looking at how ‘lesbian couples’ are juxtaposed against heterosexual and gay men’s relationships. For example, I will identify various social and interpersonal contexts in which lesbians claim ‘lesbian couples’ to be similar to and/or different from heterosexual and gay male couples and delineate the characteristics of ‘lesbian couples’ that are being emphasized through making such claims. In my analyses, I will rely on published materials, such as newsletters (e.g., Regumi Tsushin) and magazines targeting sexual minority women (e.g., Anise), and major Internet sites by and for lesbians, in addition to face-to-face interviews I conducted in 2002 of more than 20 self-identified lesbians. It is my hope that the paper takes the first step in understanding and defining what it means to be ‘lesbian couples,’ in today’s Japan by taking a more ‘insider’s approach’ than merely looking at how lesbian couples are seen and understood by the larger society.
Tomoyuki Kaneta, Tokyo Metropolitan University

Individualization and Japanese Gays

This article arms about individualization among Japanese gays. Individualization is a concept explaining a uniqueness of modernity or late-modernity (not post-modernity). This concept mainly used by Ulrich Beck, German sociologist. According to Beck, modernity drives individualization to any persons. With individualization, any events is experienced as a individual event, and individualization regard individual choice as most important in modern life and state. In our era, Individualization infiltrate into any social system, of course, into sexuality and intimacy system, without exception. Modern democratic society needs individuals as components of society, at the same time, individualization emerge in modern society. So, on Japanese gays, individualization has been infiltrating thoroughly. In Japan, basically, "coming out" is not seen as a political action, but as an individual choice, individual selective action. This situation dose not means what Japanese gays can not have politicized "coming out" ever. A few famous Japanese gay leaders has made effort to politicize a gay issue, including "coming out". But these trials dose not seem to succeed sufficiently, by reason that individualization become a political gay issue to a simple individual issue. I think individualization infiltrated among Japanese gays, before some political claims emerged. Therefore, Japanese gays dose not form a obviously political consciousness. In these situation, we must reconsider "gay politics" in Japan.
Dredge Byung’chu Kang, Emory University

Reconsidering the Rice Queen

In gay argot, the ‘rice queen’ is a gay man, typically white, who has an exclusive or strong sexual/affectional preference for Asian men. His counterpart, the ‘potato queen’, is an Asian man who desires white men. In Western nations, some gay Asian men have protested the putative objectification of Asian men in these interracial relationships. They claim that the pairing, often of a significantly older and less attractive white male with a younger and more attractive Asian male, is a form of psychosocial violence. This is made possible by the emasculinization of Asian men within a social context of structured power differentials where white masculinity is privileged. This formulation, however, does not allow for agency among potato queens, as agency is construed as being motivated by an internalized racism or individualistic social climbing. Moreover, the argument fails to consider homophobic constraints on the agency of rice queens. They, furthermore, are marginalized by other gay men who can not fathom their desires for the feminized Asian. Additionally, younger rice queens situate their identity in contradistinction with older rice queens, whom they portray as resembling sex tourists: old, fat, ugly and unable to attract sexual attention without their financial endowments. Thus, the putative perpetrators of psychosocial violence are themselves located within complex webs of power differentials based on race, sexuality, nationality, age, economics, and their failure to conform to gay cosmopolitan ideals of attractiveness. In this paper, I argue for a more nuanced view of the rice queen and sex tourist.
Sharful Khan, Social and Behavioural Sciences Unit, Public Health Sciences Division, ICDDR,B, Dhaka, Bangladesh

“MSM: A New way of imposing sexual inequity!”

Background: A popular term 'MSM' has been used by many scholars to name those males having sex with males but do not necessarily identify themselves as 'gay' or 'homosexual.' This paper attempts to dissect the concept of categorizing people based on their sexual practices and describes the consequences of such categorization.

Method: A survey was conducted with 300 males having sex with males in a city of Bangladesh to explore their sexual practices and other related concerns. In addition, a focused qualitative approach was also adopted to understand men's perception of their sexual practices and identity issues.

Results: None of the males having sex with males named themselves as 'MSM', nor they liked the terminology. Only 20 percent of interviewed men were aware about the term MSM and most of them were annoyed and confused with this special taxonomy. In-depth interviews with informants and key-informants revealed impacts of imposing this terminology in diverse ways. They expressed their concerns and experiences of stigmatization due this labelling by 'outsiders'. The term MSM has created confusion, incongruity and complexities in terms of working with males having sex with males and to reach their sexual partners for STIs/HIV interventions as well.

Conclusion: Categorizing people based on their sexual practices is a new way of imperialism to further stigmatize and discriminate a person that essentially obliterates the scope of enhancing human dignity, rights and equality of people irrespective of sexual practices or preferences.
Shivananda Khan, Naz Foundation International

Addressing Impediments to HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care and Support for MSM in South Asia

Issues of HIV risk for males who have sex with males (MSM) is not only about actual behaviour but also the environment in which these behaviours take place. Methods: Over 12 situational assessments accessing 2400 (MSM) conducted in South Asia, two studies conducted in Bangladesh and India on impediments to sexual health promotion among MSM, and regular activities reports from partner projects since 1997.
Results: The primary framework of male-to-male sex in South Asia appears to be based on gendered identities and sex roles. As a feminised male the penetrated partner is highly stigmatised, living in an environment of social exclusion and violence which greatly increases their vulnerability and risk to HIV, while the penetrating partner is seen as a normative male usually without a sexual identity and from the general male population. Socialising networks are only kothi-based. Attacks and sexual violence against kothis are common, while illegality, and stigma and discrimination based on genderphobia, create denial and invisibility as well generate social exclusion from HIV/AIDS services. Such a disempowering environment generates high risk behaviours which are difficult to address.
Conclusions: Unless masculinity is addressed, sexual responsibility strongly advocated, and appropriate and confidential HIV/AIDS services are available that are non-discriminatory, non-judgmental and readily accessible, where anal sex is mainstreamed as a general male sexual health concern, along with amendments to laws and policies, effective risk reduction strategies among MSM cannot be sustained.
Anita Khemka, Photo Ink, New Delhi

“Photo Exhibition “ARAVAN ARAVAN”

My photo documentation of 'The Aravan Festival' - a festival of eunuchs, gays & bisexuals was published as a book by UNAIDS. I am keen on preparing an exhibition of the same for your conference. This is the only socially accepted festival in the subcontinent that is entirely dominated by transsexuals, transvestites, & eunuchs; gays & bisexuals. It takes place in Koovagam, a nondescript village, and transforms the sleepy village into an arena of camaraderie, jubilation, nuptials and mourning. The origins of this cultural festival can be traced to a Hindu tale from the Epic 'The Mahabharatha' in which Aravan, a man about to be sacrificed to the gods, asked to be married before dying. To fulfill this last wish, Lord Krishna is said to have assumed the form of a beautiful woman, Mohini and married Aravan. The trans-gendered community, believes that they are like Lord Krishna - born as men but who take the form of a Mohini to satisfy the sexual needs of men. In India, issues such as celebration of sexual identity, homosexuality & transgenderedness are very rarely addressed. The exhibition, besides giving a glimpse of the diversity of these communities in India also focuses on interesting perspectives, and shows how certain cultural practices and traditional societies accepted individuals and communities that are now seen as social deviance and shunned by modern societies. It is essentially a study of sexual identity in the Indian social and cultural environment with a focus on HIV/AIDS.
Mark King, University of Hong Kong

Public Perceptions of Transgender in Hong Kong: Social, Psychological, and Emotional Sources of Biases

Transgender identities have existed for thousands of years in Chinese history; yet in Hong Kong they remain shrouded in mystery, misinformation, and social oppression. Feelings of apprehension and a lack of sympathy appear to permeate many Hong Kongers’ attitudes towards non-normative gender and sexual identities, particularly male-to-female transgender or ‘Yen Yiu’ (literally ‘evil person’). This paper explores the Chinese cultural construction of transgender, and how they are perceived to transcend the normative biological and social categories of ‘self’ and are commonly considered an aberration of basic human nature. It is argued that because of traditionally constructed boundaries defining gender categories, transgender-identified persons face significant obstacles to living normative lives, and routinely face marginalization, erasure, and exclusion from social acceptance. Additionally, this paper will explore the constellation of social, psychological, and emotional sources of biases that persist in the depiction of transgender-identified persons as deviant. It will be argued that Hong Kong peoples’ perceptions and attributions of transgender identities share a common thread that has been shaped by historical and contemporary Chinese values surrounding the construction of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality, as well as imported religious, medical, and legal concepts from Western and other Asian societies.
One of the earliest lesbian groups in Japan was formed in 1971. The first issue of its newsletter was published in 1982. However, it is only recently that lesbians have started becoming more visible in society. The early 1990s began to see the so-called gay boom. Since then, the Japanese mass media has began taking an interest in the homosexual subculture. Popular magazines, TV programs and films have covered topics of gay subculture and themes of homosexuality. Though the gay boom was principally about gay men, the environment also helped lesbians be heard. In the 1990s, books written by lesbians began being published for the general audience as well as for lesbians. This paper examines newsletters of lesbian groups in Japan from the early 1980s to today. Given such transformations in the environment surrounding lesbians, how have lesbians’ perceptions of themselves been changed? Have lesbian identities appeared in the newsletters, and how? How have their activities in lesbian groups been altered, and where have they been going? Have lesbians questioned heteronormativity in the larger society, and how? By comparing newsletters before and after the gay boom began, the paper discusses those questions. It also explores whether and how Japanese lesbian identities differ from Western, particularly Anglo-American, ones, many of whom place a high value on individualism, and how Japanese lesbians feel and think about lesbians in other countries.
Travis Shiu Ki Kong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Not a Juicy Story: Identity Management of Chinese Male Sex Workers

This article contributes to both men's studies and the sociology of work by examining how male identity is reconciled in the context of commercial sex work, based on ethnographic research on Chinese male sex workers. Inspired by a post-structuralist turn in theories on gender and sexuality (i.e., queer theory), I argue that male sex work can be seen as a platform for male sex workers to experience polymorphous sexual desires and permit them to destabilize relatively fixed and mutually exclusive identities (e.g., men/women or heterosexual/homosexual) that are constantly held in check. A male sex worker fashions a work persona that navigates between the living embodiment of the client's fantasies, governed by a temporary contract set in monetary terms, and his own gender and sexual identities, confined under the constructs of (hegemonic) masculinity and (compulsory) heterosexuality, and resolves any conflicts that might arise from it. Male sex work should be seen as a contested and negotiated arena of power, and the male sex worker as a strategic identity that is subject to the interplay among personal biographies, culture and power.
Hisashi Kubo, Kobe University

Oppressive Effects on Pre-sexual minorities

Pre-sexual-minorities in Japan experience much difficulty in acquiring sexual minority identity, and this paper explores the causes of this difficulty. I have used the word ‘pre-sexual-minorities’, referring to those who feel their sexuality is somewhat different from that of other people, but who are unable to identify themselves as sexual minority. Drawing on data from empirical research, this paper hypothesizes that this is mainly an effect of the invisibility of sexual minorities in social space, especially suburban space in Japan. Although queer people are discriminated against in Western societies as well, these societies at least recognize that queer people exist. By contrast, in the Japanese society many people are not even aware of the existence of sexual minorities so that these minorities are rendered invisible in daily social life. It should be argued that this situation oppresses pre-sexual-minorities in a latent way. This paper focuses on the suburban space as a typical setting where this oppressive process takes place. This place is made up of nuclear families and homogenous, especially in ‘New Towns.’ Compared with the central city, the suburban space is less diverse in terms of kinds of activities, and less tolerant toward heterogeneity, especially in terms of sexual life-styles. Gendered division of labor is distinct and parents put large energy into better educating for their children. This normative sense of values renders sexual minority invisible. Consequently, it is hard for pre-sexual-minorities to accept their own sexual queerness by identifying themselves as a sexual minority.
Oral History of Transsexuals in Hong Kong

In this paper, I would like to record an oral history for transsexual men in Hong Kong. Unlike the situation in Thailand, transsexuals are never ‘seen’ in Hong Kong. Being colonized for 150 years, the concept of heterosexual monogamy has become hegemonic. Anything alternative would be blamed as pathological. People are generally homophobic and queer or homosexual acts in private places were only legitimized in 1991. It is therefore not surprising that people of the same sex try their best to hide their tenderness towards one another and men are particularly alert in demolishing affection towards other men. Growing up in this heterosexist culture, I find the kathoey culture in Thailand particularly intriguing and I have been looking for similar issues in Hong Kong. To my surprise, no academic study has ever focused on this area. Thus I want to build an archive for the transsexuals in Hong Kong through the recording of oral history. The study will focus on male transgendering to female in Hong Kong. As transsexuals in Hong Kong are never willing to come out and they are seemingly ‘invisible’ in our society, I believe that by voicing out their stories, it would provide future researchers some reference for further scrutiny in this area.
Hoi Leung Lau, Chinese University HK

Gay Specificity: The Reworking of Heteronormative Discourse in the Hong Kong Gay Community

This qualitative study purports to examine two conspicuous phenomena in the Hong Kong gay community, namely the adoption of zero-one role division and the marginalization of the sissy gay men. While Turner’s interactive role theory is adopted to pinpoint the process of gay role differentiation and transition, sissy marginalization is interpreted with Connell’s notion of hegemonic masculinity. The power-laden negotiation process between the gay men and the heteronormative society as involved in these phenomena is then analyzed with reference to Foucault’s notion of relational power. Drawing on in-depth interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis of Internet message boards, I propose that a culture of ‘gay specificity’ is formed on the basis of the subjective interpretation and reworking of the heteronormative discourse by the gay men. In the negotiation process, the gay men react to the hegemonic heterosexist culture with three possible reworking techniques, which include assimilation, reconciliation, and rejection. The specific gay culture in Hong Kong, however, remains structured by and also perpetuates the myth of heteronormative discourse, and in this way maintains the marginality of the gay men themselves, in particular the aspect of ‘invisible marginalization’ of the gay community. In analyzing the past and present development of the Hong Kong tongzhi movement and the perceptions of the gay men, it was found that a potentially subversive queer consciousness could not take hold in the Hong Kong gay community at the present, though it remains necessary in the creation of a pluralistic and discrimination-free gay community and society.
Erick Laurent, Gifu Keizai University

Typology of Male Homosexualities in Contemporary Japan and Its Mediatized Expressions

The ‘categorization’ seems to be a major characteristic of the Japanese homosexual world. This paper analyzes the ways such a typology is formed, transmitted and mediatized. The methodological tools include participant observation in bars, formal interviews and content analysis of the gay press. The ‘logic of the types’ is created and reinforced in 3 areas in the gay world: the bars, the press, and self-presentation. In guides, classification of bars is precise, according to the dominant mood, age of customers, and type of encounter. In such a milieu, the first thing one is asked is ‘What is your type?’ It is not unusual to be asked to drink elsewhere should one’s preferences not match the bar’s characteristics. Similar is the case in gay magazines. Seven are published monthly, each dedicated to the various types. The vocabulary used, pictures, stories and news in each magazine tend to maintain barriers between the types. During self-presentation, a Japanese gay has to announce to which ‘type’ he belongs. Finally, advertisements on websites are often classified according to more than 20 types. It is my claim that the existence of the typology has a certain influence in shaping aspects of gay sexuality and life in Japan. One reason for its success is that it mirrors Japanese society in general, where nearly everything has to be ‘classified’ to be dealt with. In such a way, encounters are channelled, ‘the other’ is situated; the culture of secrecy is maintained.
It is often assumed that the lesbian community or the lesbian-faced spaces are isolated from the so-called mainstream world or heterosexual-faced spaces, which enables lesbians to get rid of the stigmatization of same-sex desires/relationships. The movement and space of lesbians will be limited when lesbians attempt to fulfil the purpose of separating from heterosexuals. They may limit their lesbian movement to certain locales such as lesbian bars and the virtual lesbian community. Euro-American lesbians may enjoy more spaces than their Asian counterparts, as there are lesbian religious groups, lesbian political groups and so on in the Euro-American societies. Nevertheless, instead of establishing their own lesbian-faced spaces, lesbians in Hong Kong are able to extend their power and subjectivity to the heterosexual world. The scarcity of lesbian-faced spaces conversely provides opportunities for Hong Kong lesbians to obscure the boundaries between the lesbian world and the heterosexual world. This paper aims to show how boundaries can be blurred by lesbians in Hong Kong from their cyberspace experience and daily activities.
Ji Eun Lee, Yonsei University

Research on Queer Girls’ Identity Formation in South Korea

In South Korea, the number of youth identifying themselves as queer has been growing since 2000. Among them, some girls are distinguished by their characteristic styles and others call them *fanfic iban*. This combination of ‘fanfic (fan fiction mostly dealing with homosexual relationships among boy band members)’ and ‘iban (self-identifying word in Korean queer community)’ is a negative notion within lesbian youth community implying *fanfic iban* people’s superficiality. People say they are girls just affected by male stars and ridiculous *fan fic*, pretending to be lesbian without serious affliction and just following fashion. However, the emergence of *fanfic iban*, is a very interesting and important cultural phenomenon. It has three aspects; (1) Style: Their style is expression of their desire for performing, playing with gender and making community, and it has become a struggling point for the *fan fic iban* since mass media and homophobic people stigmatize the style. (2) Internet space: They can meet each other, get information, and form community via the internet, and they can extend the limits of their imagination. (3) Fandom culture: *Fan fic* and other plays in fandom community provide resources for their style and self-identifying (as lesbian) process unintentionally. In this paper, interrelation among these three aspects in their identity formation will be analyzed. They cannot be explained in old framework, they have to be analyzed in contemporary Korean context, especially with fandom and internet culture. In this paper, the subversive aspect of their queerness will be examined in concrete context.
Social implication of rape has been vigorously discussed and debated by feminist scholars and activists throughout the globe. The boundary between sexual act by consent or by force is yet not clearly understood. What is then the implication of such definition, law or declaration regarding sexual violence on LGBTQ community, especially on female? What about the situation where a woman who seems to be an ordinary heterosexual woman married to a man but in fact she is a lesbian who was forced to marry a man by her own family who could not accept her abnormal sexuality but chose to put her into normal life by force and even by physical violence? Can the sexual act take place between this woman and man be considered as to be by consent? If one sees this crime against her will in the as she was forced to marry him, how will be that committed this crime? My paper will explore this issue employing the concept of human rights and national policy such as law in Asian context from a feminist point of view.
In this paper, I draw on the Foucauldian notion of ‘heterotopia’ to illuminate Shanghai schoolgirls’ expressive and performative enactment of a she-self desiring another she in their journey through schooling. Heterotopias of same-sex intimacies in school space disrupt the heteronormativity so unrelentingly (en)forced through various disciplinary technologies from teachers’ pastoral surveillance to public condemnation (e.g., in moral education classes) of emotional intimacies and physical affection deemed falling into the category of tongxinglian (lit. same-sex love)/homosexuality. Such heterotopias range from both the spectacle of kisses and embraces in the school green and clandestine behavioural intimacies in the classroom which have escaped the scrutinizing gaze of the school to schoolgirls’ narratives of same-sex emotional bonds and erotic experiences happening in different spatio-temporal sites of their school life, e.g., dormitory, school excursions. Perhaps what is most intriguing about the revelation of the graphic/telling/intricate details of the experiences of same-sex intimacies is their own self-positioning on the friendship-eroticized intimacy continuum as they recount their emotional/erotic adventures. While many of them would rather portray their same-sex relationships as passionate friendships, some of them gingerly embrace ‘lesbianism’ as they seek to name the intense emotional attractions and erotic fantasies they have towards another girl. This paper relates on the one hand schoolgirls’ ingenious negotiations of the school’s governmental impulses to circumscribe the legitimate expressions of sexuality and depicts on the other hand their struggles for emotional autonomy and sexual subjectivity through the exploration of alternative identities/identifications of which the lesbian identity/identification is but one.
Helen Hok-Sze Leung, Simon Fraser University

The Queer Cosmopolitics of Hong Kong Cinema

This paper considers queer representations as a form of ‘cosmopolitics’, which Bruce Robbins elaborates as ‘a domain of contested politics’ in which cosmopolitanism is not opposed to, but negotiated within and beyond, the nation. In Hong Kong, homophobic resistance against the decriminalization of sodomy during the 1980s was expressed as anti-colonial patriotism. In response, activist Samshasha penned A History of Chinese Homosexuality, writing as ‘an angry Chinese’ tracing a queer past that has been eclipsed by colonial Christian values. Yet, in 1997 when Hong Kong was ‘returned’ to China, Samshasha refocuses his critique on the ‘implicit homophobia’ of Chinese culture while exploring queerness as a cosmopolitan ideal. When the configuration between nation, state, and power shifts, so does the dynamics of queer politics. The recent rise in independent filmmaking in Hong Kong has fueled a renewed interest in exploring queer themes in relation to issues of nation, identity and belonging. This paper explores the queer erotics of Island Tales (2000), Maps Of Sex And Love (2001) and Ho Yuk: Let’s Love Hong Kong (2003) as an intricate expression of love for Hong Kong. In the films, queer relationships are played out in the cosmopolitan experience of diaspora and incessant transnational movement, and in a postcolonial city’s struggle for autonomy that is at every turn challenged by a nationalist demand for its patriotism. The paper analyzes the films, cosmopolitics whereby queer sex, bodies, and relationships become emblematic of the trauma, contradictions, and possibilities of life in postcolonial Hong Kong.
Dreaming of Mat Motor: Malay Biker Masculinity in a Queer Eye in/through KL Menjerit

KL Menjerit (2002; dir. Badarudin Azmi; lit. Kuala Lumpur Screams,) is a Malay biker film produced for the consumption of a largely Malay audience, primarily male, Malay youths who like ‘rough activities like illegal street racing’. Everything about the film—from the subcultural biker world it constructs to the lead character and the core audience—is overwhelmingly jantan (male, masculine and heterosexual), except for the presence of a subtextually queer supporting character who develops a homoerotic relationship with the Mat Motor (male biker) protagonist, whose masculinity he eroticises and obsesses over, literally unto death. This paper focuses on the dynamics, significance and implications of the archetypal relationship, and the queer fixation on Mat Motor masculinity both in the context of KL Menjerit and in the wider context of cities like Kuala Lumpur (KL), where homosocial biker haunts sometimes overlap with gay cruising grounds.
Michael Kho Lim, De La Salle University-Manila

“When the Politics of Desire Meets the Economics of Skin: The Pinoy Gay Magazine Phenomenon”

The paper is a historical/critical essay that traces the beginning of Valentino, the premiere gay magazine in the Philippines, and probes the dynamics of model selection, photography direction, and magazine production, and the factors leading to the eventual demise of the publication. First, the paper will note the process that the publication underwent from conceptualization to its spin off and to its other magazine counterparts within the publishing house, to its competitors, up to its closure. The paper will also provide the related financial data to illustrate the commerce of gay magazine publishing. Second, the paper reviews and studies the representations and/or misrepresentations of the male pin-up models who appear on the covers and on the centrefolds of these magazines. By reading the image as text, the paper will discuss how these models are stereotyped, objectified, and spectacularized. Also, it will present how the magazine has become a “penile gallery” and how this presentation exhibits homoeroticism that further underscores the fluidity of gender/sexuality in the Philippines. Lastly, the paper will explore and analyze how the Pinoy gay magazine phenomenon poses a challenge to the existing gender relations and how such occurrence redefines the male gaze and blurs the binaries: heterosexuality and homosexuality, masculinity and effeminacy, lalake and bakla.
Dennis Chwen-der Lin, University of Warwick

The Regime of Compulsory Gay Masculinity in Taiwan

Since the 1990s, Taiwan has seen dynamic progress in lesbian and gay activism. Nonetheless, as local gay men become anxious to achieve equal rights, a hegemonic discourse emerges as an ideological regime exerting considerable influence upon their thinking about the femininity in gay men and male-to-female transgenderism. According to the very discourse, if a gay man aims to gain acceptance from the mainstream society, he must demonstrate masculinity and then develop sexual/romantic relationships with other masculine gay men. Thus all the effeminate dispositions need to be devalued, suppressed, and ultimately eradicated. However, the ideological regime has found itself haunted by the subversive challenges from the sissies such as Top Gay Aunties, King Kong Barbies, Mirror-Rubbing Gay Sisters, and so forth. Confronting those challenges, the framework upon which the regime bases itself turns out problematic and tenuous. In this paper, I shall examine the contexts within which the regime of compulsory gay masculinity arises, and the ways through which it functions to discipline local gay men. Furthermore, I am to look into how those sissy queers are galvanised to “fuck” the masculinised gay agenda. My paper employs a queer methodological approach, using different methods in order to collect and produce information on the marginalised subjects. Practically speaking, there are three modes of research methods adopted in my paper: in-depth interview, documentary analysis and participation and observation. All the methods bring into relief the locality and contextuality of contemporary Taiwanese society, in which my paper situates itself.
Hui-Ling Lin, University of British Columbia

From Enter the Dragon to Enter the Mullet—Exploring the Representations of Asian Butch Dykes

The dominant stereotypes of Asian women in the western media are usually highly feminine; they are either portrayed as submissive and vulnerable, or irrational and evil (i.e., the dragon lady). These stereotypes are often constructed through the hegemonic heterosexual discourses. One can hardly find the representations of Asian queer women; especially the Asian butch dykes. The last decade has seen the emergence of cultural products created by queer Asian immigrants who are interested in the representations of Asian butch dykes. Through analyzing the films and conducting in-depth interviews with the filmmakers, this paper aims to explore these representations through cultural appropriations in the films made by young diasporic queer Asian filmmakers in contemporary Canada. A particular example that this paper will draw on is Enter the Mullet, a film made by Donna Lee, the second-generation of Chinese Canadians. The film is composed with two-fold dynamics, including the one between mullet-head and non-mullet-head Asian butch dykes, and the other between Asian and white butch dykes. It is shot with a Kung-Fu movie style inspired by Bruce Lee’s Enter the Dragon. Through adopting the Chinese Kung-Fu plot, which is often linked to oriental masculinity, and appropriating the mockery stereotypes of Mullets, which is associated with white working-class masculinity, Lee introduces the playful hybrid masculinity of diasporic Asian butch dykes. The multi-layered cultural appropriations in this film also challenge the dominant discourses and stereotypes of racial difference and queer sexuality, and show the complexity of visibility and identity politics when intertwining class.
Laurent Long, Suzhou University, China

Leftover Peaches, Shared Meals, Comrades: An Insight into Chinese Gay and Lesbian History

Chinese gay and lesbian History, History writing and the consciousness of a tradition - rather than identity * has seldom actually been taken into account by homophobic Western scholars and Chinese 20th century historians. However, some pioneering studies have been published, especially since the establishment of queer studies in the 1990's. This study encompasses the whole tongzhi History of China, from the remote past of the Book of Odes to the early 21st century, reflecting on ”memory” i.e. how history is being written, how people relate to an exemplary tradition. It also tries to explain concepts and attitudes to male love and lesbianism in traditional China. Chinese History is covered under these headings : Love and politics, peaches and cut sleeve (7th cent. BC - 220 AD), Boy loving flamboyant aristocrats in a divided China (220-581), Low profile? Sui to Yuan dynasties, An urban and literati apex, nascent homophobia (1368-1911), Shared meals, lesbianism in traditional China, Petty-bourgeois ”morals” and deafening silence (1920,s to 1990,s), and ”Comrades, keep on the efforts, and the Revolution shall succeed!” (1990's to present).
Denilson Lopes, University of Brasilia

LGBTS Images and Narratives in Contemporary Brazil

Panoramic View of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual and Sympathizers issues in Brazilian contemporary culture, from the 70s to nowadays, dealing especially with university activities from Anthropology to Literary and Cinema Studies.
Is there really a way out? The rigid fashioning of gay masculinities in Lanyu

Stanley Kwan reproduced a ubiquitous tragic homosexual love online story (named Beijing story) onto the screen in 2001, Lanyu, in which he replaced and rearranged episodes from the original text to elaborate the personae more deeply, which eventually has been highly recognized in both cultural and cinematic fields; the film visualizes and constructs varied gay masculinities, destabilizing the cherished notions of dichotomous genders and normative heterosexuality in contemporary Chinese ideology. Yet if we specifically scrutinize those apparently subversive, fashioning of masculinities, we may discover that such a subversion is still well monitored by the heterosexual matrix; two male protagonists, gay gender performance is in some way rigid, fixed, destined, and directly borrows the binary and hierarchical gender positions from the heteronormative culture. Extremely speaking, it would make no difference if Kwan adopted a female to perform Lan Yü the film would simply become a heterosexual love story, not provocative at all. In the film why should Lan Yu often perform the presumed feminine roles (passive, obedient, doing housework) but Chan Hong Dong never does? Why is the purely, homosexual Lan more problematic than seemingly bisexual Chan so he needs to be cured by the psychiatrist? In what ways are the constructions of Chan’s and Lan’s masculinities different? Is the sub-division of gay masculinity only reconfirming the orthodoxical gender positions? What are the politics between two rigid gay genders, masculine masculinity and feminine masculinity, and their correlations to the heterosexual ideology? Lastly, is there really a way out?
It’s no doubt that the queer culture is the most attention-getting one in academic, in film, in literature, in theater, in the most visible form of culture in the multicultural Taiwan in 1990s. Because the queer culture itself is multicultural, there are many different forms to express the uniqueness which is different from the mainstream heterocenterist culture. The cultural forms of queer culture such as film, drag show, music and gay rights movement are more acceptable or famous to the mass culture. But the issues presented in the queer literature are also presented other cultural forms in queer culture. In the hybrid queer culture, ‘drag’ is the most provocative issue between queer culture and mainstream heterosexual culture. In the queer culture, especially in gay culture,[1] drag is always being in an equivocal way to express the queerness. In gay community, there are two conspicuous factions who struggle for the drag as a queer politics. One of the conspicuous factions supports that drag as the queer politics to the mass culture and regards it as the effective way to break the gender frame of the heterocenterist representational apparatus; but another opposes the viewpoint and regards the drag as the notorious representation in the queer culture. Hence, I would like to discuss the drag as a queer politics in the queer culture and try to figure out that the drag, visual drag and sonic drag, as a gender performativity to break/represent the gender imagination of the heterocenterist representational apparatus.
Networking Among Postwar Japanese Queer Communities

During the long war years, state censorship in Japan placed severe restrictions on the representation of sexuality in print, film and other media, downplaying romance and reducing sex to hygienic and procreative functions. However, in the first postwar decade, Japanese publishing saw a boom in interest in the topic of sexuality, particularly in those ‘perverse desires’ deemed ‘individualistic’ which had been repressed by the wartime state. Of the many hundreds of magazines (some of them folding after only one or two issues) printed during this period, several were dedicated to the exposition of ‘perverse desire’ in its many manifestations. Unlike contemporary discourse about ‘sex variants’ taking place in English which was almost entirely framed by medical (including psychiatric) and criminal discourse, Japan’s ‘perverse press’ gave voice to a wide range of ‘experts’ (with literary, historical and anthropological backgrounds) as well as to the perverse themselves. The magazines did not segregate issues along a hetero or homosexual divide but included discussions of sadomasochism and a variety of fetishisms as well as ‘sodoma’ and ‘Lesbos’ love. Through their correspondence columns, these magazines enabled individual and group interaction, including the formation of Japan’s first homophile organization in 1952.

This presentation investigates how the postwar perverse press afforded opportunities for networking and community building among Japanese postwar queer communities.
Thai High School Students’ Perceptions of Gender and Sexuality Groups

Survey data is presented on Thai high school students in the Nong Khai District. Student responses are reported as they reflect in-school and out-of-school relations and acceptance of students who identify themselves as straight, bisexual, Katoey/gay, and Tomboy/gay. Comparisons are offered in regard to those students who are initiating high school and those students who are in their final year.
‘Teachers Implied I Should Try to be Straight’: Exploring Heterosexism in the Classroom Experiences of Filipino Gay/Bisexual Male Students

How has queer sexuality been taught in the Filipino classroom, according to learners who directly stand to benefit or lose from that education? We explored learner experiences and perceptions of teaching as well as bias using a model for assessing heterosexism (the belief and ideology that privileges heterosexuality as fundamental, normal, and good). Data from a survey of N = 121 Filipino gay/bisexual male college students indicated that being gay was discussed more negatively during high school, regardless of type of school (public or private), but more positively in college. Qualitative responses provided evidence for both forms of heterosexist educational practices: denigration (e.g., teaching that being gay was ‘abnormal’, ‘immoral’, or ‘unnatural’) and denial (e.g., avoiding discussions of queer relationships). Positive, queer-affirmative classroom experiences, particularly in college, were also reported. Focus group data provided further qualitative accounts of heterosexist and non-heterosexist classroom-based experiences of Filipino gay/bisexual students, which can be understood in the context of Filipino sexual culture and current dominant views about queer and non-queer sexualities.
Muhammad Abdullah Mansoor, Alliance for Bright Citizens (NGO), Lahore, Pakistan

Human Right struggle for LGs in A Religious Society

Our NGO is dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual those questioning their sexual orientation or gender Identity. Its goal is to provide a safe space and a forum for LGBT people to address issues of common Concern, share ideas & experiences. I let you know that we live in religious & and conservative society that is anti-gay. These activities are punishable according to law as well as according to moral values in our society. Our society does not tolerate us. Alliance for Bright Citizens aims to support LG in reconciling their sexual orientation or gender identity with our strict society. We promote education, human rights, social justice, peace and tolerance to bring closer to society that is free from prejudice & discrimination. I have been working since 1994 for human rights of gay youths & educating them to make awareness for discrimination free society. I educate gays to uplift their social & mental level to live in the society with honour. It is needed to make awareness for healthy thinking about gays. I consider the education is the best factor to produce change in all sphere of life from personal attitude to collective behaviour of society towards queer. In this conference I will visit the international personalities. I will collect & exchange our ideas & experiences from the delegates. I can collect their ideas, experiences and achievements in their societies. This information will be helpful for our organization to accelerate our activities.
In 1994 the first Gay and Lesbian Parade was held in Tokyo, Japan. Fronted by a huge banner reading ‘Come Out’, over 1300 people walked in what marked the first major demonstration of gay and lesbian pride outside Shinjuku ni-choomé, the so-called gay area of central Tokyo. The mid-nineties also saw the use within the lesbian of the phrase debyuu (to debut = go to a lgbq event for the first time as a lgbq). Against this backdrop a range of new clubs and bars began to spring up in Shinjuku and beyond. Among these was a women’s-only club event operating monthly in venues outside of ni-choomé that remains popular today. Although the 1990s emerges as a time of change and innovation, of greater access and visibility, women-only space had been in operation since the 1970s. Lesbian bars began opening in ni-choomé in the 1980s. In this paper I will examine the discourse of women’s only club and bar spaces from the 1970s to the present. Focusing on flyers, advertisements in magazines, mini-komi (community zines) and more recently the internet, I will examine how imaginings of women-only space in Tokyo have shifted during the 70s, 80s and 90s. I will specifically focus on the intersections of ‘female’ and ‘queer’, to explore the language of ‘women-only space’ and issues of lesbian (and women-woman desire) within those spaces.
Danubak Matalaq, HLTC, Taiwan

“Taiwanese aboriginal gay male subjectivity : The life stories of a Paiwanese gay man named Dakanow”

My study aims at looking into the process of the construction of Taiwanese aboriginal gay male subjectivity, by focusing on the life stories of a Paiwanese gay man named Dakanow. Also, it intends to initiate a discursive dialogue between the two academic fields of aboriginal studies and LGBT studies in the contemporary Taiwanese context. There are three conclusions arising from my research on the life stories of Dakanow. First, it is contemporary Paiwanese social structure that exerts considerable influence on the formation of Dakanow's sexual identity. So to speak, the social hierarchal system and its derivates such as power relationships and patriarchal authorities all function to shape the sexualities of Paiwanese people. In addition, the fact that both the media coverage and the Christian disciplines play the key in stigmatizing sodomy contributes to the aboriginal people's hostility toward homosexuality. Second, for Dakanow, the de-stigmatized ethnic term of “Yuan-Chu-Ming” at large level represents a significant symbol in order to resist the racist ideology spreading through the mainstream society dominated by the Han people. More importantly, it enables Dakanow to construct a strong sense of aboriginal community, and therefore inform his ethnic hybridity. Third, Dakanow's positive identity as a gay man involves multiple socio-cultural factors such as developing intimacy, romance and friendship with his LGBT peers, receiving supportive information from the LGBT communities, entering college, and participating in the LGBT activisms. Key words: Paiwan tribe, aboriginal, gay, gay identity, ethnic identity, aboriginal LGBT activism.
Joel Matthews, Kobe University/Murdoch University

Queer Japanese Identities: An antidisciplinary approach to constructions of masculine identity in Japan

Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary paradigm, but in recent years, it has been dominated by sociological and semiotic approaches. It is important for the future of this anti-discipline, that outreach continues. The new frontiers remain Asian Studies, Queer Studies and Youth Studies. My paper activates this provisional project through an examination of hybrid youth queer subcultures and their renegotiation of a distinctly Japanese hegemonic heteronormativity. In recent times, Japan’s position in the global economy has paradigmatically shifted from the economic to the cultural. A cultural production centred away from traditional economic imperatives drives desire to satisfy immediate concerns. A focus towards economies of pleasure marks an ideological shift from traditional Japanese economic rationalism. Domestic subcultures have emerged that follow leisure ideals aspired to in Western (non-Asian) nations. New aspirations centred on politics of leisure challenge heteronormative kinship constructions. The changing ideological aspirations of youth have facilitated queer subcultures, evasion of the hegemonic radar through the marginalisation of marriage, children and the salaryman, career from the idealised norm. However, to argue that gay, and lesbian, identity constructions respond to economies of pleasure in similar ways to those in non-Japanese contexts would be a specious argument. With Queer theory contributing the theoretical framework, Asian Studies the context, and Youth Studies the focus, Cultural Studies brings this paper together to probe the conflicting and often contradictory tropes of queer masculinity in contemporary Japan.
My paper will interrogate Chen Kaige’s The Emperor and the Assassin and Zhang Yimou’s Hero in terms of historical epics that offer a gendered formation of Chinese nationalism. I want to suggest ways to queer these ostensibly conservative nationalist projections, particularly by arguing that the star discourse which, in part, propels such films to international acclaim works to forestall the assertion of a hegemonic masculine national project. By examining the possibilities of female space/subjectivity in each film as a counter to the male homosocial resolutions that each text, I believe, posits, I begin to sketch counternarratives that refuse national narratives of heteronormativity. My paper will draw on theoretical work by Eve Sedgwick, Shuqin Cui, Jenny Kwok Wah Lau and others.
Akiko Mizoguchi, University of Rochester

Yaoi Fans As ‘Queer’ Women in Japan

Starting in the early 1960s, yaoi fictions, male homosexual comics and illustrated novels created by women for women in Japan, cater to at least half a million women today. Though many stronger works of the 1960s and 1970s have proven to be crossover hits with readers of both genders, more recent yaoi comics and illustrated novels which feature explicit depiction of male homosexual acts have excluded straight male. Today over 95% readers and 100% writers and artists are women for the yaoi genre as a whole, and as such, yaoi provides a female gendered and fully sexualized discursive space. What female yaoi fans communicate in this space through the representations of male homosexual romance narratives are their sexual desires and fantasies. Regardless of their sexual identities such as straight, lesbian, bisexual and others, these women operate in the yaoi space together. For example, a married woman who reads yaoi fictions and shares her fantasies with other yaoi fans on a daily basis, and claims that such acts feel more ‘sexual’ than her actual sex acts is not at all rare. Instead of calling these women straight women who like yaoi fictions, or women who belong to ‘lesbian continuum’ with lesbian fans of yaoi fictions, this paper proposes to call them ‘queer.’ By examining women’s words from magazines, face-to-face interviews and email correspondences, this paper explores this ‘queerness’ that exceeds conventional categories of sexual orientations in the hope of expanding the discussions of women’s ‘queer’ sexualities in contemporary Japan.
Lyn Rhona Montebon, Women Supporting Women Centre, Quezon City, Philippines

Coming Out, Sticking Out: Responses of Closeted Lesbians to a Sticker Campaign

The cultural arm of Womyn Supporting Womyn Centre (WSWC), celebrated the 2003 Women's Month, by launching a concept exhibit under its project "Gallery Out!". This project generates public art as a medium to address lesbian issues, uses public space, and patterns its strategies after advertising campaigns. In a Nina Felshin book entitled -- But is it Art?, the spirit of art as activism is described as the innovative use of public space to address issues of socio-political and cultural significance, and to encourage community or public participation as a means of effecting social change. "Gallery Out!" seeks to engage the general public on lesbian issues using lesbian art outside the established venues for art - the gallery. Lesbianarama's first project for "Gallery Out!" mimics the Lose Weight stickers widely seen in public areas in the Philippines such as toilet walls, street posts, or seats of buses and jeepneys. The sticker was distributed in different parts of the country with the help of WSWC members, families and friends. Distribution of the sticker has been sustained and responses to these continues up to the present. The paper will describe this sticker campaign and the various responses to it from lesbians struggling to come out, to find a safe space and to connect with the community at large. It will also describe the steps and processes that WSWC has undertaken to bring this lesbians in from out there and out from in there.
“Brazil resolution on sexual orientation: Challenges in articulating a sexual rights framework”

Since Brazil sponsored a resolution on prohibiting discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in 2003, suddenly governments around the world from tiny Bhutan to India and Thailand were forced to respond as states to this new human rights concern. The resolution has become a contested terrain in which the newly emerging right to sexual orientation has become subject to the pressures of both religious extremists as well as nationalist understandings of what is 'our national culture'. This paper will examine some of the challenges which south based groups advocating 'queer' rights face. Based on the experience of the last Commission on Human Rights (CHR), this paper will strive to answer two questions. Firstly the issue of how does one articulate a right to sexual orientation of ones choice in a manner in which the articulation does not become perceived as a northern concern and hence of no consequence to countries in the south? Secondly how does one articulate the issue of sexual orientation such that the very articulation is not stigmatized and dismissed as something which is not in 'our culture' and not 'a part of our religion?' Both these questions are sought to be answered by locating the question of sexual orientation within the wider framework of the south's position in the global economy and key concerns with respect to socio-economic rights.
Tooru Nemoto, University of California

Health Promotion Project for Gender Minorities in San Francisco

For more than four years, TRANS (Transgender Resources and Neighborhood Space) project has been providing substance abuse and HIV risk reduction and health promotion workshops for gender minority groups in San Francisco. The findings of the first phase of the 3-year TRANS project showed that the project participants significantly reduced the levels of sexual risk behaviors and depression after participating in 10 workshops. In addition, the project has mobilized the transgender community for equal access to health and social services. More than 1,500 transgenders have visited TRANS space, which provides safe space, shower facilities, and resource closet, as well as peer-facilitated workshops and support groups. The current 5-year TRANS project provides community outreach, jail outreach, health promotion workshops, individual counseling to encourage and successfully complete the enrollment in substance abuse treatment programs, sensitivity training for treatment providers, and peer support groups. The paper addresses the history of the TRANS project and presents the evaluation study of TRANS. A future dissemination study will be discussed in order to improve health and psychological well-being for gender minority groups in the United States.]
Indonesia's Waria, Gay and Gay Dendong: Fluid Constructions of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation and Their Essentializations

The presentation will revisit the not always clear distinctions between waria (male-to-female transgenders), gay (male homosexuals) and gay dendong (cross-dressing male homosexuals) in Indonesian society, taking the perspective of the waria/gay communities themselves and that of the general public. The ubiquitous presence of gender-transgressive males in contemporary television and film will be used as an entry point in discussing the interfaces of mediatized realities, (pop pseudo-)science and lived experiences. An attempt will be made to understand the tolerance and sometimes acceptance of gender- and sexuality-non-conforming males in Indonesian society in the midst of strong heterosexism and increasing homophobia.
Sexuality and Human Rights

This paper focuses on the growing social and international importance accorded to human rights and sexuality. The paper aims to explore the cultural dimension of sexuality and human rights, and systematically relate this to social and cross-cultural contexts of law. Same sex sexualities are a valuable and useful focus for such an inquiry because the developments in this area are under-researched though much debated, and so promise to offer insights applicable across the field of human rights and citizenship. The argument made is that the sexual citizen requires rigorous research through an integrated socio-legal and cultural analysis of sexuality and human rights. This will involve the use of cultural studies thinking as the broad approach, informed by sociological and cultural theory on identity and recent work in critical legal theory on rights discourse. The paper will be of concrete interest to Australian and Asian policymakers, jurists, third sector, organizations, sexuality and human rights scholars, activists and organizations.
Homosexuality is not unfamiliar any more and it seems to be less inhibited in current Korean society. However, representation of homosexuality is often told that it is yet rare and less visual in Korean popular culture, especially in cine/televisual culture. This situation often leads us to talk about the difficulties of reading homosexuality in Korean popular culture. These difficulties were sometimes described as being based on cultural/literary/queer comparative studies in terms of cultural visibility of homosexuality in Korea, or in search of ‘essence’ of queer representation. However, questions from the approaches mentioned above can’t explain complexity of experiences/imagination of homosexuality in current Korean culture, whose central issues are now competition of various social forces. Given this, I would like to explore representation of homosexuality in Korean popular cinema and television as a place or ‘scape’ of negotiation, especially by re-reading of Korean popular ‘masculine’ genres like ‘army movies’ and ‘same-sex high school movies’ like *Joint Security Area, Spirit of Jeet Keun Do*, etc. Based on the Korean Peninsula’s division, and the cold-war ideology and military dictatorship in 70s and 80s Korea, these films are obviously connected with male homosocial desire, conspiring with Korean masculine nationalism. However, there are some moments of exhibitions of male sexuality, eroticism and body that cannot be fully articulated in the narrative of normative heterosexual masculinity. I will focus their films with moments of fissure and spasm as a field where we can negotiate with institutional representation of heterosexuality and imagine homosexuality.
Asian indigenous and foreign (Western) constructions of non-heterosexual identities are not independent of each other. These constructions are constantly challenged and shaped by each other through discourse and interactions. Exposure to cultural representations and interactions with people from different countries facilitate exchanges between Asian heteronormative and Western (Americanocentric) discourses. Researchers generally focus on the power of the media in this role. However, what is less discussed is the impact of the movement of people migration (including tourism) on the construction of non-heterosexual identities. In this paper, I will discuss how migration, directly and indirectly, affects how people construct their sexual identities. I will examine this issue from both Western and Asian perspectives. The two main case countries I will use are the USA and Singapore. However, I will also allude to other Asian countries including Taiwan and Thailand, and I will use data from the Internet, in-depth interviews and participant observation. The analysis shows that a person’s sexual identity is constructed using a myriad of perceived and self-assigned set of characteristics that include both behavior and conceptual. This set of characteristics that constitutes one’s identity is fluid. They are constantly being contested and changes as people interact with one another. Different sexual and gender hierarchies and meanings clash and change as the East and West come face-to-face. The implication of this study is that the context of identity discourse may be localized but the effects of globalization cannot be ignored.
In Thailand men who have sex with men (MSM) can be divided into two groups on the basis of identity, kathoei (male-to-female transgenders and transsexuals) and gay. In recent years many sectors have begun to support MSM in various creative activities. However, these activities are not varied or spread over the complete way of life of Thai MSM. For the example, activities with a health focus emphasizing HIV/AIDS prevention and the distribution of free condoms may reproduce negative stereotypes that MSM are sexually promiscuous people who spread dangerous diseases. Too much focus on this health activity (which is still important) may obscure other equally important issues, such as how to improve society’s understanding of kathoei and gay, the human rights of kathoei and gay, and the potential of MSM to provide benefits to Thai society. This raises the question: in Thailand what issue can motivate kathoei and gay to join together in useful activities to achieve the above goals? Today, kathoei and gay groups still do not join together in a united way. The issue of human rights and dignity is an issue that all MSM share in common. In this paper I will explore whether the promotion of their common rights and human dignity can become the basis for joint activism between Thai kathoei and gay groups.
Drug/Trade: Purging the Nation

This paper draws on my doctoral thesis which used queer theory and HIV cultural criticism to contend ‘War on Drugs’ ideology. I am interested in how the theme of drugs functions politically to substantiate an idea of the nation grounded in conservative visions of personal enterprise and familial order. As a political theme, drugs have been surprisingly adaptable for enforcing in diverse contexts moral notions of self control and personal discipline, elaborated against a global scenography of consumer pleasure. Drugs are constructed as a sign and instance of excessive conformity to consumer culture, and this excess is opportunistically scooped off and spectacularised to stage an intense but ultimately superficial battle between the amoral market and the moral state. This manoeuvre sustains a notion of national purity centred on domesticated consumption and heteronormative intimate life, but it does little to combat drug harm. My analysis speaks primarily to the forms of power associated with drugs in the Anglophone context, but there are striking parallels with the Thai experience, not only in relation to the Thai government’s war on drugs, but also in terms of the ongoing assaults on Social and Moral Order, which erase queer recreational space as we speak. This paper seeks to initiate dialogue around the local and global expressions of power in the region that converge on illicit consumption.
Chandan Reddy, University of Washington

Queer Spectacles: Beyond the Legal Codification of Asian Homosexuality

In the US, a significant body of legal texts and practices have codified the ‘gay immigrant’, offering legal protection and recognition to variety of non-normative ‘gay men’ of the Asian diasporas living within Euro-US space. I argue that it is crucial that we investigate the form of representation, legal, political and aesthetic, within which ‘queer’ Asian migrants are given recognition and definition by the US state, to query if such representation far from being felicitous, is yet another mode by which Asian diasporic sexualities are constitutively occluded at the very moment of their asserted historical emergence. I argue that the ‘spectacle’ is the representational form within which queer South Asian sexualities are social articulated in Euro-US legal space. Lastly, I argue that queer South Asian cultural politics be read as a critique of the ‘spectacle’, a representational practice that incorporates sexualized differences only through a fixation on racial difference. The recent photographic installation by Pakistani artist and ‘asylee’ Saeed Rahman, titled “Haseena 420” will serve as a case in point for pursuing this argument. At a time when not only US queer politics, but many ‘queer’ political and social movements across Asia are turning to the state as the horizon of their activist engagement, it is urgent that we ask not only about the prudence of that strategy, but also about the ways in which queer ‘Asian’ cultural practices can expand and exceed the state’s definition of our movements.
Tertsak Romjumpa, Independent Scholar

Cinema and Homosexual Identity in Thailand: Discourses and Politics of Homosexuality (to be confirmed)

Movies provide good reflections of local understandings of male homosexuality in Thailand. This is especially the case for movies made by male homosexual directors, who have grown up in the context of the construction of knowledge about male homosexuality in Thailand. In 1987 the movie Chan Phu-Chai Na Ya (I’m a man) was very popular and highly successful. This movie was a Thai adaptation of Mart Crowley’s Boys in the Band by Dr.Seri Wongmontaa, the most famous male homosexual in Thailand at that time. In 2003 the gay/kathoey cheerleader comedy Wai Boom, Cheer Kraheum Lok (Boom! The cheer that shook the world) by gay director Potch Arnonda cast famous stars. These two movies represent the changing self-understanding of Thai male homosexuals in the different decades in which they were made. In this paper I argue that the homosexual themes of these movies reflect the embedded knowledge of male homosexuality in Thai society that has been produced by three key institutions: Buddhist religion, the medical profession and academic research. The discourses of these three domains represent homosexuality as sinful, mental perversion and deviant behaviour, respectively. These discourses do not merely represent dominant explanations of the causes homosexuality. They have also been fundamental to the development of homosexual politics in Thailand.
For the first time, a couple of years ago, a medical clinic for “all lgbt individuals” was opened in the south-Indian city of Hyderabad. As one of the gay-identified volunteers at the clinic informed me, this facility was indeed for “all gays and kotis…but please tell hijras (the so-called third sex or indigenous transgendered identity) to come only on Sundays.” On further inquiry, I was told that this injunction was necessitated because gay men’s respect was at stake: “If hijras come during a weekday, what will people think? Everyone will know this is a ‘homosexual’ clinic then, and our respect will go.”

Drawing on such constructions of sexuality, respect, and stigma this paper explores the emergence and contextual deployments of the signifiers gay, koti, homosexual, and hijra in Hyderabad, and their increasingly complex and fluid circulations within the semantic fields of AIDS and sexual rights discourses. By mapping the geographies of stigma and contagion between and among these various “sexual identities,” this paper highlights the multiple, shifting constructions of sexual politics, citizenship, and rights operating in contemporary India.
Transgender Culture and Thai Boxing

This paper intends to give a few keys of understanding the national success of transvestites as Muay Thai boxers in Thailand. I will mostly refer to a famous case. A boxer named Nong Tum who became a transsexual and was highlighted in the media in the Thai boxing world and beyond from 1998 onwards. As a matter of fact, the Muay Thai’s image elaborated through its media coverage makes it a truly gendered activity. Definitely, it draws on masculine behavior. Peter Vail sees Thai Boxing as the womb of a performative hyper-masculinity. I wish to question the confusing success of Nong Tum by making use of the recent developments of gender analysis in Thailand embedded within the contemporary critical theory. Peter Jackson (2003) for instance, shows how the performative norms of gender were altered and emphasized by the Thai State since the middle of the nineteenth century onward. I would like to test the hypothesis that the high mediaization of Nong Tum can be related to the management of Thai bodies at the domestic and international levels as well. I shall enlighten biographical features of Nong Tum and Nong Tim, a late emulator who is yet to be as famous as the former, and I will analyze the comments it generated in the Thai society at large. In order to understand this phenomenon, it will be also necessary to look at the boxers, their behavior in the Muay Thai community, in the ring and especially in the boxing camps.
Efren John Sabado, Ateneo de Davao University

Self-Concept of Male Homosexual Educators: A Narrative View of their Life Chances

Listening to the voices of male homosexuals is an imperative in understanding them and the realities where their lifeworlds revolve. This study explored into the self-concept and life chances of male homosexual educators of the Ateneo de Davao University in the Philippines, with the aim of understanding male homosexual reality in the context of the views and experiences of male homosexuals themselves. Their self-concept and life chances were explored into through their individual narratives about their sexuality, selfhood and experiences. These narratives revealed that among male homosexuals, there is variability in the way they view themselves in contrast to popular beliefs that they constitute a homogenous group or subculture in society. These differences in self-concept were vividly captured through their different definitions of male homosexuality, different opinions as to popular stereotypes and labels about male homosexuals and different experiences in life that influenced their views of the reality of their sexuality such as those pertaining to their life chances. Moreover, personal descriptions of the self-identified gay respondents about themselves as educators have shown that male homosexuals in the academe do not see themselves as significantly distinct individuals but are just like any typical classroom teacher, colleague and administrator. Although most of the self-identified gay educator respondents did not cite any personal experiences of employment discrimination as well as discrimination in the workplace, cases cited by some of the self-identified gay educator respondents would suggest that discrimination against male homosexuals especially in terms of employment is still an apparent social reality.
Douglas Sanders, Chulalongkorn University

Flying the Rainbow Flag in Asia

Certain symbols, words and strategies that were first developed in the West are increasingly found in Asia. Pride parades, as one example, are now held in Hong Kong, Kolkata, Manila, Seoul, Taipei, Thailand and Tokyo. The strategies of ‘out’ activism are still not seen as feasible in most parts of Asia. Are we witnessing selective borrowing, parallel development or the emergence of a new Westernized or internationalized ‘GLBT’ minority? Is the growth of a public commitment to ‘human rights’ in Asia supporting these developments?
Stephan Sastrawidjaja, International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission

When Sex Happens: Sexual Rights and Transnational Activism

This panel/workshop will provide an introduction to applying international human rights and sexual rights frameworks for both local and transnational advocacy in Asia and the Pacific. Both theoretical and practical, it will examine transnational activism and how activists in different parts of Asia and the Pacific have engaged in sexual rights and LGBT advocacy. We begin by redefining sexual rights. We end by paying particular attention to women who have sex with women (WSW), domestic and sex workers, and human rights and sexual rights defenders. We are currently in conversation with Dede Oetomo and Wang Ping, amongst other human rights activists, to participate and formulate the final presentation of the panel/workshop. We hope to have this finalized by December.
Indian queer theorists such as Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai have striven to show how same-sex love is part of India's cultural heritage without a trace of homophobia. Though homophobia is a relatively late entrant in Indian culture via Christian morality and British legislation, right-wing activists have claimed otherwise. They routinely attack cinema halls screening movies with explicit scenes of lesbian love. Showing surprising insensitivity, the Indian media recently sensationalized news of the murder of two gay men in New Delhi, highlighting the crime as a gay crime. As before, queer activists like Kavi pointed out how the media treated such news in an insensitive manner, seeing queer existence in terms of criminality and depravity. The positive fallout of these controversies has been that more and more people are participating in the debates and queer existence has gained some visibility, with many coming out in defense of the sensitive portrayal of lesbian identity. Also, the homophobic tirade against films and theatre is being increasingly matched by equally vehement protests by queer activists which might result in greater tolerance. Whereas queer activists raise the question of ethics concerning media coverage, they rarely probe the ethicality of queer conduct and ethics of representation of these identities. My paper examines ethical issues concerning the act of coming out, media responsibilities, and those of the queer activists, not only towards the queer community but also to the society in general.
K.K. Seet, National University of Singapore

Progression or Regression?: The ‘Gay Teen Summer Romance’ as Popular Phenomenon in Taiwanese Cinema

Despite increasing media reports of Taiwanese authorities busting private gay parties on the pretext of narcotic raids, a curious phenomenon has transpired in contemporary Taiwanese cinema, what I shall label ‘the gay teen summer romance.’ Featuring gay protagonists still in school or barely out of school, the genre is shrouded in the golden haze of youth and conveyed in a pastel palette, where treatment of issues are as sugar-coated and downy-edged as the summer days are long. Two examples, both of which garnered considerable critical as well as commercial success, are Blue Gate Crossing and Formula 17. While ostensibly encoded in the template of the bildungsroman, they avoid its necessary rites of passage by the deliberate postponement (in the case of Blue Gate Crossing) or evasion (in the case of Formula 17) in their confrontations with heteronormativity. This paper studies the strategies of erasure involved in the creation of a faux utopia that results in a kind of infantilism instead of affirming an alternative queer reality. In particular, Formula 17 can be read as both an exercise in commodification and an extended trope of political self-delusion or national myopia when juxtaposed with another teen (albeit heterosexual) romance of mainstream appeal that opened in the same period but failed miserably in the box office: Love of May, which dissects the poignant encounter between a Taiwanese boy and a PRC girl against a larger canvas of the cross-straits relationship between the two Chinas.
Sex work and sexual commerce in India have inspired anxiety, with respect to the increasing degrees of labour migration in South Asia from rural to urban areas, and enthusiasm, especially with respect to the possibilities for unionization and labour organizing among sex workers. Women, in particular, who sell sex have been both subjects and objects of local advocacy, health, and political interventions. While much of this work is critical to developing improved working conditions and economic options for sex workers themselves, research and writing on prostitution has been largely concerned with the political economy of sexual commerce, while the spaces in which to examine the connections between sex work, sexual commerce and sexuality remain relatively few. This paper will consider spaces of urbanized sex work as providing a context for the public performance of sexuality, especially heterosexuality, and as a set of spaces with an actual or imagined queer interiority. In particular, this paper uses the rubrics of queer theory to ask what, if anything, is 'queer' about sex work? Moving beyond the notion of 'queerness' as a set of embodiments of non-normative, movable sexualities, I will examine questions which arise at the intersections of performing 'respectable' heteronormativity, sexual commerce, caste, and sexuality.
Yi Mu Shen, Chi Heng Foundation

AIDS Prevention in a Different Way — Innovative Outreach Approach Towards MSM in China

In China, the existence of the MSM population was not officially acknowledged until very recently. Therefore, past AIDS prevention programmes have largely ignored this marginalised sexual minority group. The unique characteristics of the MSM population require an innovative approach to intervention, in which the stigma, discrimination and other social barriers that hinder the effectiveness of prevention must be removed.

The Chi Heng Foundation’s MSM Outreach Programme aims at improving MSM’s safer sex awareness and reducing their risk behaviours. It is community-based and involves no moral judgment, focusing only on the target group’s health. This non-judgmental attitude has proved to be essential in winning the trust and support of the target MSM community. The programme’s volunteers are gay men themselves, so the MSM community can easily identify with them. They regularly visit gay cruising grounds and other gay venues (including gay bars, gay bathhouses, etc.) to hand out condoms, lubricants and educational leaflets about safer sex. They also proactively communicate with the men on topics of sexual health. This paper shares the experiences of the volunteers of the MSM Outreach programme and assesses the impact of this innovative approach on AIDS prevention among MSM in China.
Akiko Shimizu, Chuo University

My Different ‘I’s: Survival, Subversion and Non-Visual Queerness

The main objective of this paper is to examine how, and to what extent, one can re-present and re-construct one’s gendered self by appropriating existing sets of gender norms. In particular, I will insist on the importance of the roles the non-visual, or verbal, gendered practices may play in the attempts of self-re-presentation, and argue that, when combined with visual gendered practices that may or may not be consistent with them, they can open up a space for non-traditional, non-normative configurations of gendered experiences. Using examples from girls, novels, pop music, and other cultural texts in modern Japan, I will demonstrate how the choice of different first person pronouns can allow Japanese women to project different gendered images, and discuss how, and to what extent, it can be used strategically in order for the self to avoid or loosen the grip of existing gender norms. I hope this paper will not only demonstrate one possible way of re-appropriating Anglo-American queer/gender theories in a Japanese context with the view of unsettling the fantasy of solid and coherent genders, but also question the current emphasis in queer theories on visibility of gender and sexuality.
Sex is a taboo subject in many Asian cultures. China is no exception. This is reflected in the lack of proper gender and sex education in Chinese schools. Consequently, a lot of teenagers are ignorant about this subject and are puzzled by all kinds of psychological and physical problems related to sexual health. It is not uncommon for teenage students (especially boys) to turn to erotica (which is misleading in many ways) to obtain the information they crave to learn.

Concerned about this critical situation, the author has been advocating proper sex education in his high school. Due to the conservativeness of the school leadership, his plan encountered some difficulties at first. However, he did not lose heart but continued with his efforts. Later he adroitly changed his strategy, taking AIDS education as an entry point, and gradually bringing in other issues related to sexual health. This roundabout approach helped him win the much-needed support from his school and other relevant government authorities. The author later became a volunteer for the Chi Heng Foundation’s MSM outreach project. This enabled him to get in close contact with the gay community in his home city and broadened his perspectives on sexuality and society. This paper recounts how the author broke the taboo and shares his experiences as a youth peer educator on AIDS and sexual health among Chinese youths.
Clarence Singam, Oogachaga Community Development

Developing LGBT Affirmative Support Groups within Singaporean Postmodernity

Singapore today, stands between modernity and post-modernity where contradictory narratives of identity battle for dominance. Two increasingly dominant narratives are that of the nation as a successful economic entity and that of Christian fundamentalism. The former asserts that Singapore’s survival requires her to become a creative society open to diverse ideas. However this requires celebrating diversity; including sexual diversity. Thus the issue of gay freedom of expression has been a focal point in the public debate on societal diversity.

This push towards diversity has however thrown segments of Singapore’s population into identity crises. It has resulted in the growth of a minority though vociferous Christian fundamentalism that adopts the discourses of the religious right wing in the United States. Vocal segments of this population believe they are divinely mandated to stem the rise of lesbigay acceptance in Singapore. These battles are often fought in the public sphere via the discourses of Asian and family values, sexual abstinence as the primary anti-HIV message and allowing religious voices in the political space.

This paper will trace the evolution of gay support groups within this terrain of meta-narrative conflicts. It will explore the types of support groups in existence, the strategies employed in planting and nurturing these groups, the obstacles faced and the impact these groups have had on the Singaporean discourse on diversity. The paper will explore the development of religious and social activity based lesbigay affirmative support groups as well as recent community experimentation on straight-gay partnerships.
The Creation of an Asexual Love in My Name is Shingo

This presentation discusses the birth and development of a human robot which is called Shingo, in Kazuo Umezu’s manga, My Name is Shingo (1982–1986). This Japanese manga of a science fiction love story has been popular both among adults and the young alike. Readers see how two elementary students, Marine and Satoru, love each other, give birth to a robot, Shingo, how his mind develops, and how he travels the world in search of his parents, after they move to different places. Several studies and reviews have been made on the motifs of this manga, such as love, childhood, evolution, and awakening. This study tries to highlight asexual love and human asexual reproduction. In the story, Shingo dramatically increases his power which leads to uncontrolled violence and destruction, but at the same time, he protects his parents from danger in extraordinary ways. I consider the idea of supernatural, which can be seen in old Japanese folktales, like Momotaro or Urikohime, offers a key to an understanding of asexuality. Compared with these tales, we can also point out the main characters’ strong will and passion, no matter how the adults regard Marine, Satoru and Shingo as premature, or not unsophisticated. The definition of the word asexual, among researchers, and people who identify themselves as asexual, is varied and open to discussion. This study ends with a look at the further possibility of asexuality today by exploring Marine and Satoru’s asexual love and reproduction.
Dinh Thai Son, Institute for Social Development Studies

Men who Have Sex with Men in Ha Noi: Who are They and What are their Sexual Health Needs?

Since the late 1990s, the Vietnamese government has acknowledged the importance of men’s sexual health in its overall efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, MSM remains a reluctant area for discussion, not to mention intervention, for the reasons mentioned above. But as long as the silence surrounding MSM is not broken, the group will continue to be vulnerable to the epidemic, excluded from health education programs and invisible to health services, and their vulnerability will continue to pose a threat for HIV transmission to the larger community. It is important that efforts are made to meet MSM’s needs for improvement of sexual health and social well-being, and hence to ensure that their rights are respected and protected. This requires insights into the psychosocial world of MSM and their needs in order to raise awareness of researchers, public health professionals, society and the state, and to help designing appropriate policies and interventions.
Katsuhiko Suganuma, University of Melbourne

Naming Themselves or Being Named?: Articulation of Indigenous Queer Politics of Modern Japan

Drawing upon the notion of ‘global queering’, developed by Dennis Altaman in recent years, there have been a growing number of studies published in English on the development of lesbian and gay identity politics in non-western societies. In the Japanese context, it has been claimed that the modes of gay and lesbian identity and activism started to rise in the 1980s due in large part to the application of Anglo-American discourses of sexuality politics to the Japanese context by a certain western scholars and Japanese political groups. This observation unfortunately has played into residual orientalist notions of western ‘advancement’ versus the orient’s ‘lack’ in terms of paradigms of sexual liberation. This conceptualization of sexual identity politics of Japan is problematic in both the sense that those western scholars and Japanese gay and lesbian organizations have overlooked indigenously evolved modes of queer activism developed by several influential queer figures and publications prior to the 1980s, and that they have generally not undertaken a critical analysis of an applicability of the western discourses of gender/sexuality to the Japanese context. Problematizing the ways in which a cultural specificity of Japanese queer discourse has been ‘digested’ into a ‘global’ queer paradigm, this paper will attempt to re-articulate an indigenous discourse of Japanese sexuality politics since the post war period to the present day specifically looking at the paradigm shifts of queer discourse in relation to the influence of cultural imports from the West, most saliently the Anglo-American sphere.
Cynthia Suguitan, University of the Philippines

A Semantic Look at Feminine Sex and Gender Terms in Philippine Gay Lingo

Language is a manifestation of culture and to study the language of a particular community is to take a look at how it views the world. The paper A Semantic Look at Feminine Sex and Gender Terms in Philippine Gay Lingo analyses the meanings of gay terms for feminine sex and gender in order to see the particular world-view of the Philippine gay community regarding the female sex.
Anjana Suvarnananda, Anjaree Lesbian Group

Asian Women’s Movement and Their Position on Lesbian Issues

The discussion will focus on the discourse on feminism, lesbianism and lesbian rights within the women's movement at an Asian continental level rather than at a national level. The paper will trace the discussions, regional and international meetings and the mission/programs/campaigns of the women's organizations that focus their work at the Asian continent level. The paper aims to give a layout of how sexuality and particularly lesbianism has been viewed, conceptualized and made part of (or not) strategies and issues of the women's movement. The impact of such approach on the advancement of lesbian rights will also be discussed.
The new American TV show, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy, has highlighted the aestheticization of heterosexual men by queer men. The so-called ‘metrosexual’ phenomenon points to straight men who spend an inordinate amount of time and money on beautifying their appearance and who are ‘willing to embrace their feminine side.’ However, this is nothing new in Japan. Straight men have been beautifying themselves and embracing, even flaunting, their feminine side since the late 1980s. This phenomenon is particularly evident in Tokyo’s host clubs where young Japanese men ‘host’ female customers. These clubs are lavish, female-friendly spaces where male hosts invest heavily in their appearance, using slim bodies, trendy hairstyles and expensive designer suits to attract female customers. It is also a phenomenon that occurs entirely independently of gay influence. This paper demonstrates how the rapidly expanding market for men’s fashion and aesthetics, as well as the growth of urban consumer space such as host clubs, have allowed for a freer expression of men’s beauty and an increase in social tolerance for men’s ‘feminine’ side. By exploring male beautification practices in the context of Japanese host clubs, it also examines the parameters of apparently transgressive gender formations. Just as critics of the meterosexual trend in the US have argued that the gay men in Queer Eye are nothing more than handmaidens for heteronormativity, I will argue that Japanese hosts, practices ultimately reinscribe even as they disrupt prevailing heteronormative notions of beauty and romance.
Kok Kee (Chris) Tan, University of Illinois

Pinking the Lion City: Interrogating Singapore’s Gay Civil Servant Statement

Even though it has been 20 years since the separate emergence of queer and Southeast Asian studies within anthropology, the state of being queer and Southeast Asian is still heavily under-articulated. This paper seeks to fill this gap by critiquing the survivalist strategies of Singapore’s 2003 statement that promises equal employment opportunities to gay civil servants. Singapore’s embrace of sexual minorities is indicative of a move by neoliberalist states to attract the ‘creative class’ by being highly tolerant of ‘difference’, similar to what Florida (2002) argued with respect to American cities. Despite the significance of this measure, this paper argues that it is not only ineffective because of its inherent contradictions, it is also politically problematic. Homosexuality still remains criminalized in Singapore because of antiquated British colonial laws. The state-regulated media also continues to demonize homosexuality as a symptom of Western decadence as it valorizes the heterosexual patriarchal family as a prop to a declining birth rate. Interrogating Singapore’s gay civil servant statement can not only reveal the state of being queer and Southeast Asian, it can also illuminate the limits of neo-liberal policies that embrace ‘difference’ within the confines of the capitalist logic.
Hong Kong lesbians have identified physical spaces to assert their visibility and to negotiate lesbian identity politics. I define lesbians as self-identified women who have had significant intimate relationships with other women. Due to the density in population and the lack of physical land space, living conditions in Hong Kong do not offer much privacy for lesbians. As a result, one struggles to locate spaces in order to develop support networks with other women. One maps her own spaces to survive, to live, to love and to gather one another for emotional well-being. Some of these physical spaces include karaoke bars and cafes located in high-density areas such as Causeway Bay and Wanchai. Based on the interviews with Hong Kong lesbians, this paper investigates the city and its lesbian-identified spaces as contradictory and complex. By examining the significance of karaoke bars and culture for Hong Kong lesbians, I argue that these physical spaces are in a continuous process to transform themselves through lesbians who take part in the reproduction of social and sexual relations within them.
Hiroyuki Taniguchi, Chuo University

Implementation of International Human Rights Standards on Sexuality within Domestic Courts in Asia-Pacific Countries

The purpose of this paper is to overview the human rights of LGBTQ from international human rights law perspective and to show the way to fulfil the international human rights standards of LGBTQ in Asian-Pacific countries. Firstly, the author demonstrates what kind of international human rights norms are guaranteed in international plane. Since the creation of UN, human rights have become a matter of international concern. Although no treaties, except for Treaty of Amsterdam, contains sexual orientation or gender identity so far, some international courts and quasi-judicial organizations interpret that international human rights law encompass the human rights of LGBTQ. This paper analyzes the judgments, views and resolutions on LGBTQ which had been made by UN family and other international organizations, e.g., the Human Rights Commission under the ICCPR, the UN Commission and Sub-Commission on Human Rights and the European Courts of Human Rights. Thereafter, the author examines the implementation of these human rights within national plane. It is not efficient enough just to show the recent evolution of international human rights standard of LGBTQ. As provided in Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, the obligation to fulfil all human rights and fundamental freedoms are primarily imposed on national level. To make the international human rights standards of LGBTQ into reality in Asia-Pacific countries, this paper shows a model assertion in Japanese courts for instance, based upon the general theory of relationship between international and national law together with the legal characteristic of international human rights norm.
Yik Koon Teh, Universiti Utara Malaysia

The History of the Transsexual Community in Malaysia

This panel will have three speakers discussing the development of the lesbian, gay and transsexual community in Malaysia from the British colonial period until present day. Each of the communities has its own unique development under the multiple influences of industrialization, urbanization, and globalization within the local socio-cultural and political environment. However, it is agreed that the political development of Malaysia, particularly its Islamisation policy, has the greatest impact on the development of the three communities as social and legal barriers are implemented based on this policy. The transsexual community, being the most visible, faces the most discrimination and challenges. This panel will also discuss the organisation of the three communities and the relationship between them. The PT Foundation (formally known as Pink Triangle), a non-governmental HIV/AIDS organization, will be specifically referred to as it was instrumental in bringing together the three communities under its organisation. The establishment of various virtual groups via the Internet will also be discussed. Despite the availability and the increase in the number of subculture groups, there is little contact and cooperation among the three communities. Moreover, majority of these social groups are situated in major towns and cities where access to the Internet requires computer literacy. As such, only certain sections of the communities have access to these facilities. The poor, rural and uneducated or those with little education are left out. Overall, the development/movement of the LGT communities in Malaysia is still behind when compared to their neighbours in Singapore or Thailand.
Angela Kuga Thas, (KRYSS) Knowledge & Rights with Young people through Safer Spaces (Malaysia)

Silent Runs Around the Sapphic Bush

Young women who love women (WWLW) in Malaysia may not prioritise the need to legitimately establish their sexual identity in overt actions as in the demand for sexual rights, but they do persist in seeking opportunities to creatively negotiate the right to individual sexual agency in order to remain true to ‘who they really are.’ In a qualitative research conducted in 2004 with young urbanized and reasonably educated WWLW between the ages of 20 to 29, I found that their first same-sex relationship with a woman is usually with a fellow Malaysian, witnessing that sexuality of whatever orientation, evolves at home. The sexuality of young WWLW seems to lie on an interaction of continua that constantly evolve. What we are usually shown are factors of influence, but the resulting outcomes of these influences which constantly vary due to the differing levels of closetedness, the levels of secrecy, the levels of silence, the levels of acceptance, the duality of the WWLW’s identity, the levels of discrimination are what determines the actions of young WWLW in exercising their individual sexual agency. The same-sex relationships of young WWLW were found to be more egalitarian than heterosexual ones, and gender inequality and unequal power dynamics manifested at a much lower scale. In reviewing existing frameworks and developing one to be more suitable for WWLW, the issue of gender becomes more central as a basis of formation and evolution for all of the other elements of sexuality.
Chung To, Chi Heng Foundation

Tough Road Ahead: Successes and Challenges of HIV Prevention for MSM in China

The Chi Heng Foundation’s HIV/AIDS intervention programme for MSM was one of the first in mainland China that targeted this sexual minority group which had virtually been ignored by previous programmes. This programme is community-based and focuses on mobilizing activists (outreach volunteers) from local MSM communities to disseminate information on HIV/AIDS prevention and promote safer sex in their own communities. To help the outreach volunteers to do a better job, various training workshops have been organised for them in collaboration with local health professionals. An on-line resource centre dedicated to HIV/AIDS prevention and sexual health for MSM has also been constructed to reach out to MSM Internet users. To date, the programme has extended to ten major cities in China including Hong Kong SAR. The programme coordinator travels regularly to these cities to supervise volunteers’ work. The challenges that the programme faces at present are lack of funding, talents, etc. Organisational development also poses some problems which need to be tackled in order to achieve greater success.
Fag Hags in Filipino Queer Culture: Friendships, Identities, and Personality

Fag hags, women who associate with gay men and participate in gay cultural activities, have been part of Western and Filipino queer culture for some time. This paper discusses three research investigations that examine the fag hag phenomenon in the Philippines using various approaches. In one study using interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires, we explored the general development and dynamics of friendships between straight women and gay men. Another study utilized focus group methodology to examine the components that comprise the Filipino fag hag social identity. Finally, from the perspective of personality psychology, we constructed a profile of the traits that are shared by haggy women and that set them apart from other women. Based on the findings of these studies, we developed a tentative conceptual model which suggests that women with certain personality characteristics form a reciprocal attraction with gay men. This leads them to develop close friendships with gay men and in turn fashion a fag hag identity within Filipino queer culture. On-going work and further directions for our fag hag research program are also discussed, including experimental tests of our fag/hag reciprocal attraction model, a stereotype content study to compare cognitive representations of haggy women and of gay men, and other investigations of fag hag experiences in the context of Filipino and possibly other Asian queer cultures.
Richard Totman, Independent Scholar

Ambivalent Attitudes to Thailand’s Kathoey

There is plenty of evidence for a historical role of kathoey (transgender) in Siam, and indeed of transgender minorities in other parts of South-East Asia. Kathoey it seems traditionally enjoyed not only acceptance within the wider community but also a degree of respect. Attitudes in contemporary Thailand are more mixed. In my research, which involved a study of some 50 individuals of various ages, the themes of discrimination and persecution were common ones; discrimination in respect of work opportunities, persecution in the form of gratuitous fines, arrests, confiscation of id. cards, etc. What brought about this change? It would seem to have grown up with the new ideals, so successfully imported from the West, of enterprise, corporate identity and personal prudence. The unspoken fear was that a community of people whose gender does not conform to the superficially respectable dichotomy of male-female would not find favour with this modern cosmopolitan class of professionals. So aside from the showcase ‘ladyboys’ of the cabaret circuit, kathoey are inclined to be dismissed by this class as at best anachronistic and at worse undesirable. Paradoxically, in the ‘West’ an understanding of ‘inter-sex’, or gender ambiguity, is currently the focus of much interest. A movement to accept inter-sex as a natural phenomenon has a growing following. A respectful argument that western scholars have much to learn from the historical integration of such a group within the broader cultural (Siamese) framework could play a constructive part in promoting the rights of today’s kathoey.
Daniel Tsang, University of California

The Pink Dollar: Limits of Gay Tourism Marketing

This paper looks at the phenomenon of gay tourism marketing and its limits. A case study approach is taken, looking at a gay tourism marketing proposal from a Hong Kong foundation that won an award locally from the SAR’s tourist board. It analyzes the proposal and asks what does this proposal say about ethnicity, race, class and gender of the gay tourist.
Gina Velasco, University of California

Queer Diasporas and the Transnational Filipina Body”

This paper will focus on Cosmic Blood, a multimedia performance piece by Gigi Otalvaro-Hormillosa, a queer Filipina-Colombian American artist. Cosmic Blood is a performance piece that incorporates movement, dialogue, percussion, and video art. I argue that Cosmic Blood presents the possibility of a queer diaspora, that is, a mode of transnational belonging that destabilizes the heteronormativity of cultural nationalist formations. Given the material context in which millions of Filipinas are compelled to leave the Philippines to work as domestic helpers, entertainers, and as ‘mail order brides’, Cosmic Blood functions as a surrealist intervention into the everyday ways in which the queer, Filipina body is constructed in relation to labor in a global capitalist order. Cosmic Blood accomplishes this through its imagining of an alternative mode of recognizing Filipina bodies, a mode of recognition that is framed through queer desire. I utilize Jose Muñoz’s notions of disidentification and queer hybridity to describe Cosmic Blood’s intervention against the interpellating call of dominant discourses of race and ethnicity within a context of capitalist globalization. Otalvaro-Hormillosa accomplishes this disidentification through both a retroping of the past and a retelling of first contact through a lens of queer sexuality. Otalvaro-Hormillosa presents this narrative through a science fictional, futurist mode. In this futuristic landscape, same-sex desire functions both as a deconstructive lever for destabilizing cultural nationalist formations, as well as a mode of imagining other forms of transnational belonging. In doing so, Cosmic Blood imagines the possibilities of a queer diaspora.
The purpose of this paper was to consider how “GID” has to do with his life on which he (the person concerned) was getting and how he narratived his life with GID to self and others. Data was obtained from one individual with GID (he was named ‘Ayumu’ in this paper.) by interviewing. Then this data was analyzed from the perspective of ‘self-narrative.’ It was obvious that Ayumu divided his life history into two parts: the first period, Before recognizing himself as GID, and the second period After coming out the fact that he is GID. And, there are ‘Transition Story’ in our analysis that linked two parts. In the first period, Ayumu’s self-narrative shifted in terms of sex, and there seemed to be three turning points which made him shocked. ‘Chapter 1’ has the closed structure to others. There seemed to be ‘Double Persona’ in ‘Chapter 1.’ It has ‘Embedded structure.’ In consequence, ‘Double Persona’ brought difficulty in living with GID. Secondly, in ‘Transition Story’, it was clear that Ayumu tried to solve three problems by narrating self-narrative of ‘I am disorder’, toward his body and himself, toward others, and toward medical society. Thirdly, in the second period, Ayumu’s self-narrative was divided into seven terms. In consequence, there are discrepancies both in male/female axis and in the person-concerned/non person-concerned axis between Ayumu and others.
The popularity of the shounen ai (boys’ love) genre of shoujo manga (girls’ comics) has drawn significant critical attention. While shounen ai has been described as offering a liberatory sphere within which readers are freed to experiment with romance and sexuality, what has little been noted is the genre’s appeal to young people whose sexual desire and identities transgress heteropatriarchal norms. Given the popularity of this genre, with its focus on beautiful, often androgynous boys in love with each other, it is unsurprising that the end of the 1970s saw the appearance of a few magazines aimed at teenage girls and focused on these bishounen (beautiful boys) and their romantic, sometimes sexual relationships with each other. Among the readership of these ‘tanbiha’ (cult of aesthetes) magazines were young women and men drawn to depictions of a range of homosexual and transgender desire and identities. The existence of these readers is evidenced by their contributions to the magazines, sometimes as editorial commentary, sometimes as confessional testimony. Aran (Allan) specifically published a ‘lesbienne’ personals column, which first appeared literally on the margins of the magazine, and which eventually made space for male readers. In allowing readers to make textual if not physical contact with each other, these magazines functioned as sites where queer young people were able to find or create communities of others like themselves. This paper examines reader contributions to these tanbiha magazines and explores their role in community formation among young people resisting heteronormativity.
Debates about ‘queer’ sexualities in Asia focus on their relation to Western formulations of erotic identities: are they an expression of a Westernized global gay identity? Underlying these questions is an assumption that the West as the center of sexual modernity in Asia, a perspective that postcolonial scholarship has criticized. This paper repositions queer sexuality in Thailand by decentering (not denying) the influence of the global north and by arguing for greater attention to sexual flows within Asia. Drawing on fieldwork, secondary literature, and activist materials, I trace regional flows of people, culture, and politics that inform sexual expression in Bangkok. For example, I show how NGO, business, and social networks of ‘lesbians’ across urban Southeast Asia inform the experiences of women who love women or tom and dee in Bangkok. Criticizing an import-export vision of sexual globalization, this paper maps geography of sexual alternatives that provincializes the West.
Sam Winter, University of Hong Kong

Why Am I Transgendered?

In recent research with around 300 transwomen in Thailand and the Philippines we prompted participants to ask this question of themselves. We found that participants’ beliefs about the origins of their transgender span inborn biology, karma (in Thailand) or God’s will (in the Philippines), as well as the influence of parents, siblings, other relatives and friends. Within these, some factors are much more commonly believed to be important than others. The patterns of beliefs in the two countries differed somewhat, with each country’s pattern perhaps related to levels of social acceptance enjoyed. Beyond that, some of the belief patterns (for Thai beliefs on the influence of parents and siblings) are counter-intuitive and elude easy explanation.
Lesbians and gay men are often identified as a homogeneous group in struggles for equal rights. Some feminists question whether lesbians’ interests have been ignored, given that such rights movements are associated historically with demands, mainly by gay men, for decriminalization of male homosexual offences. In making no distinction between lesbians and gays, the concern is not simply that possible differences in the experience of social inclusion/exclusion are overlooked, but that lesbians are at risk of being subsumed under the category ‘gay’. Influenced by feminists’ gender differentiated approach, some scholars have begun to recover the histories of lesbians by collecting their life stories. In Hong Kong, there is a tendency that lesbians are made invisible in both the Tongzhi movement and the larger society. Some local female activists believe that lesbians do have a history and that history must be written. This paper discusses how they engage in the making of an oral history which enables voiceless women to speak for themselves. By naming the project as “An Oral History of Hong Kong Women who have Same-Sex Desires,” the organisers were sensitive to difference and included in the project women who have same sex desires/relationships and yet refuse to identify themselves as lesbians. I argue that unlike oral histories which are oriented to cultivation of lesbian consciousness, this project has implications for developing a postmodern politics which emphasizes difference and fluidity of identities.
Ying Wuen Wong, National University of Singapore

“The Making of a Local Queen in an International Transsexual Beauty Contest”

This paper analyses the situation of an international transsexual beauty contest in a discourse of imitation and approximation dominated by Western notions of beauty and femininity. Transsexual beauty contests provide a stage to perform transsexual femininity on the one hand, but subject its participants to imitation of mainstream notions of beauty and femininity on the other. Although transsexual beauty contests market and project a transsexual identity for its participants, pageant participants are expected to perform and imitate femininity and are assessed based on their ability to transgress the gender boundary. A local beauty contest is then compelled to imitate an international one, in a bid to produce a “winner” that matched the mould of beauty constructed by this assessment. Such notions of aesthetics and representation (of one’s country and culture) is determined by the discourse of power, both within and without the beauty pageant. This paper will use ethnographic details of both local and international transsexual beauty contests held in Thailand and Singapore in 2004.
Yuen-mei Wong, University of Malaya

Sexual Citizenship and Transnational Mobility: A Sexual Minority Perspective from Malaysia

While sexuality has not been considered as the basis for civil and social rights of citizenship in Malaysia, often, the sexual minority, as individuals, was rendered oppressed (silenced, invisible, or subject to harassment in public); and as a group, the lack of political legitimacy of their constituency also rendered them to be excluded from political and social participation. In this paper, I would like to focus on the relationship between sexual citizenship and the emerging phenomenon of transnational movement of the sexual minority community in Malaysia during late 90s. I would like to argue that space-place practice of sexual rights is significance to the formation of gay and lesbian identities. Here, my discussion will be drawn from a case study that involves interviewing a few gays and lesbians who have obtained their permanent residency status in countries that recognized homosexuality rights. The purpose of this paper is to identify the mechanisms that facilitate cross-border mobility of sexual minority in Malaysia. Specifically, I would like to examine the regulatory effects of particular cultural institutions, regimes and practices that shape gay and lesbian's motivations, desires and struggles and make them particular kinds of subjects in the 90s. Apart from this aim, I would also examine the cultural and social capital acquired by this sexual minority group that enabling them to make choices for cross-border movement. This case study does not aim to generalize the emerging phenomenon. I hope the findings would draw more attention to examine the issues discussed.
Wen-yu Wu, University of Sheffield

A Copy or Mimicry? The Differences of Landscapes in the Gay Pride Parade in Taiwan

Gay pride parades have been important symbolic events for gay identity quests in Western gay community, and they began to be mimic experiments in some progressive, countries of Asia. This short paper would like to discuss this phenomena happened in Taiwan, a field affected by Chinese and US cultures in the history. The first Taiwanese gay pride parade was hold in capital city, Taipei, in 2003, and coordinated by both the local gay organizations and city government. In this parade, some participants wearing masks to avoid coming out and dislikes of drag queen,s joins for worries to deepen stereotypes of the public showed the differences of landscapes in sexualities and identity quests between the East and Western societies or The Third World and The First World. These differences will be discussed not only implicate cultural differences but also reveal the geopolitics of gay cultures through the mass media. Key words: gay; parade; geography, landscape of sexuality; identity.
Bin Xu, Institute for Tongzhi Studies

Suppressed Voice or Silence by Choice? – Lesbians and the Emerging Lesbian Communities in Contemporary China

While women’s studies is still trying to get more attention from mainstream male scholars in China, most researchers simply leave lesbians out on purpose. After examining the reason of the lack of lesbian studies, I explore the emerging lesbian community in China, taking examples of the city of Beijing and a popular lesbian website, and explain how the community in the virtual space help shaping the one in real life. I also trace the ups and downs of the only lesbian group in China, Beijing Sisters. By analyzing the event that caused the dissolution of the group and the following heated discussion within lesbian community, I examine the different attitudes towards lesbian activism and the struggles lesbian face in contemporary China. In the end, I propose the strategies for lesbian community building as well as for promoting the lesbian visibility in both academe and general public.
The Impact of the Internet on Sexual Health Education among MSM in China

The increasing popularity of the Internet among China’s MSM population and the lack of on-line resources in Chinese addressing MSM’s sexual health concerns make it imperative to use this important new medium for sexual health education among the ill-informed MSM in China. The United Nations sponsored www.chmsm.org website initiative was launched to respond to this need. The aim of the website is to increase knowledge of sexual health (with focus on AIDS and STDs prevention) among MSM Internet users and promote safer sex practices and a healthy lifestyle. Towards this end, an on-line resource centre on sexual health was first constructed and has been regularly updated. An expert Q&A service staffed by qualified health professionals was started later on to answer visitors’ queries regarding AIDS, STDs and sexual health. By exchanging links with gay websites, sending out periodical e-newsletters and a series of other promotional measures, the website has been able to keep expanding the target audience it reaches. This paper examines the different Internet-based techniques the www.chmsm.org website has employed in its work and assesses their effectiveness and the overall impact of the programme on sexual health education among MSM in China.
Huso Yi, Korean Sexual-Minority Culture & Rights Center

No More Déjà Vu: Western Nostalgia Meets Eastern Queerness

Understanding local queerness requires the careful examination of specific domains that are not yet theorized and/or recognized as constraints on idiosyncratic heteronormativity in global context. In the current queer movements of Korea, one of the most salient discussions is the US dominant essentialist view of minority based on sexual orientation, which is strategically used as a tactic of identity politics. Despite such representation of minority in human rights interest in Korea, less visibility of self-identified lesbians or gay men in public and over-emphasized political environments that stimulate coalition for social justice and change rather than individuality made different pathways of queer culture and community from those of the West (US). In the meantime, a nostalgic queer discourse of “back to the 70s” of mobilizing collective movements against compulsory heterosexism has been emerging in the US as well as some other Western countries as reaction to self-limiting (some say, self-defeating) identity politics. It is criticized that “self-regulated normalized gay” that was produced by neo-liberalism may end up with mere achievement of imaginary equality. At the crossing line of the minoritizing and universalizing of queer subjectivity between Korea and the West, I’d like to construct an argument and discuss a new possibility of “West Meets East” in queer politics as to how Korean queers achieve sexual citizenship by not assimilating heteronormative norms and values but liberating their own quotidian sexual subjectivities and reforming institutions to further recognition of sexual diversity and inequality.
Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip, Nottingham Trent University

Uniquely Positioned?: Lived Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Asian Muslims in Britain

This paper highlights themes from a qualitative study of 42 LGB British Muslims of Asian origin (e.g., Indian, Pakistani). Straddling the Western, culture (that is secular and tolerant of sexual difference) and the Asian/Muslim culture (that is religious and prioritizes social obligations), their experiences offer important insights into the cultural embeddedness of sexual identity. Given the pervasive censure of homosexuality within the Asian/Muslim community, complicated by the emphasis on family honour, marriage, and familial/kin relations, the participants devise various strategies to manage their dissident identity. Most conceal their sexuality for fear of rejection, and conform to cultural expectations. Their experiences challenge hegemonic/Western-centric discourses of LGB identity construction that prioritize expressive individualism, and over-rationalize agency, underpinned by individualized reflexivity. The participants, experiences demonstrate that while agency is present, structures (e.g., family and socio-centric norms) significantly inform their identity management. The participants also face the dominant discourse within their own community that homosexuality is not only a religious abomination, but also a Western disease, reflective of the secularity and perceived cultural degeneracy of British society. Thus, the expression of an LGB identity not only signifies one’s immorality, but also the contamination of one’s religious and cultural heritage. Such us, and them, sentiment significantly polices the boundary of sexual and cultural purity. Overall, the participants, identity management is significantly informed by their attempt to balance individualism and socio-cultural responsibilities. Thus, this paper demonstrates the significance of cultural-embeddedness of LGB identity construction, which is relevant to LGBs living in Asia.
relationships as the basis of migration. Under the compassionate and humanitarian visa category, same-sex applications were assessed through ministerial discretion. In 1991, the interdependency category was introduced to recognize non-familial migration. Same-sex migration has been hailed as reflecting Australia’s progressive sexual law reform and modernizing Australia’s immigration history. This paper will review official discourses, life experiences and queer social movement history to examine how Australia’s same-sex immigration policy is a site for the regulation and production of diasporic Asian sexuality. It extends existing studies on migration and gender to argue that the regulation of sexuality has also paradoxically enabled the production of new sexual identities.
People Who Have Homosexual Behaviours in Contemporary China

The attention to homosexual behaviours, especially the attention to the same sex relationship that involves emotional attachment, is the result of the dramatic cultural, economic, and political transforms in China since 1980s. The advocacy of peace and harmony in Chinese traditional culture plays a huge role in this progress. The emergence of AIDS, while caused damage to MSM, pushed the issues of the sexual orientation into the open at the same time. Groups of volunteers, mostly gay men and lesbians, emerged in more and more big cities in China. These groups are playing increasingly important role in promoting the acceptance of the people who have homosexual behaviours by the public, as well as fighting against the challenge of AIDS. The effect of the heterosexual scholars leading the public to re-understand the homosexual phenomenon is gradually decreasing. Due to the traditional procreation cultural however, people of homosexual behaviours are still under huge pressure and seldom appeal for human rights. Nevertheless, one can predict that such request will soon be brought forward.
Dan Zhou, Fudan University, Shanghai, China

Queer Theory: Queering Chinese Laws?

In the past twenty years, a school of thought called "Queer theory" has blossomed in the arena of sociology in the United States and other English-speaking countries. “Queer theory” has been imported and introduced to China. Can the US-born “Queer theory” be “Chinese”? What is or ought to be the relations between “Queer Theory” and the Law? As a social product and construct, the law is used as a vehicle to regulate “queerness”. Can the law be, in turn, queered? Will “Queer Theory” have implications for Chinese laws? In this paper, I would make explorations into those questions. First, I will discuss the major tenets of Queer theory and outline its historical context and debate its “Americanness”. Second, I will describe the doctrinal debate surrounding Queer theory and its relationship to existing social, political, and legal theories. In particular, I will consider the identity-politics issues central to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or transsexual. Finally, I will explore Queer theory’s implications for Chinese laws in a globalizing and localizing world.