DEPARTMENTAL SEMINARS (2009)

Islamic Literary Networks in South and Southeast Asia

Dr Ronit Ricci (Postdoctoral Fellow, Asia Research Institute, NUS)

Wednesday, 11 November 2009, 3.30 - 5.30 pm
AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)

Synopsis
This paper presents research done over the past several years on the circulation and translation of literary works among Muslim communities in south India and Indonesia. Drawing on sources in Javanese, Malay and Tamil I suggest that literature can be viewed as one more type of network - in addition to and often overlapping with those of travel, trade, and genealogy - connecting Muslims across distance and diverse cultures. Inspired by Pollock's theory of a Sanskrit cosmopolis in South and Southeast Asia in which language and literature played a pivotal role, I propose an Arabic cosmopolis in many of the same regions during a later period.

The Speaker
Ronit Ricci received her B.A and M.A from the Department of Indian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and a Ph.D in Comparative Literature from the University of Michigan in 2006. After that she was a postdoctoral fellow at Columbia University and the Asia Research Institute (2008-2009). In 2010 she will begin teaching in the Faculty of Asian Studies at the Australian National University. Her main research interests are Translation Studies, Javanese manuscript literature, Islamic literary cultures in South and Southeast Asia and alphabet histories.

SE6770 Graduate Research Seminar (Semester 1, AY2009-2010)

Speakers:
Xin Guangcan (PhD Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Somrak Chaisingkanont (PhD Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Budi Irawanto (PhD Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Andrea Montanari (MA Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Jan Wendell Castilla Batocabe (MA Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Katie Elibazeth Rainwater (MA Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Deyana Goh (MA Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)

Wednesday, 4 November 2009, 2.30 - 5.30 pm
AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)

Synopsis
This module, a Faculty requirement since 2004, is intended to encourage scholarly interactions among the graduate research students. Under a lecturer’s guidance, the students have engaged with each other during the past months, and now share their thoughts with the wider community. They hope to attract comments and suggestions for the further development of their thesis projects.
The Speakers

Xin Guangcan
Buddhist Trail along the Maritime Silk Road – With a focus on standing Buddha images in 4th – 6th centuries C.E.

Somrak Chaisingkananont
Buluotuo Festival: From Local Pilgrimage to National Cultural Heritage Celebration

Budi Irawanto
Securing the Imperial Image: Exploring the Genealogy of Colonial Film Censorship in Malaya and the Dutch Indies

Andrea Montanari
The Stinky King: Attitudes Towards Durian in Colonial Singapore

Jan Wendell Castilla Batocabe
Tracing the Pink Legacy: Looking at the historical trajectory of the LGBT communities in the Philippines and Singapore

Katie Elizabeth Rainwater
Northeastern Thailand: Examining and Reconceptualizing an Area of Study

Deyana Goh
The Elements of Japanese Mysticism

Sojourn in the Heart of Empire: Memoirs of Two Filipinos, 1940-44 and 1967-73

Prof Reynaldo Ileto (Southeast Asian Studies Programme, NUS)

Wednesday, 14 October 2009, 3.30 - 5.30 pm
AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)

Synopsis
Drawing upon scrapbooks of photos and other memorabilia, this paper is a reflection upon the sojourns of two Filipinos – father and son – in the United States in two different eras. The father journeyed to West Point in 1940, and his particular experience of America turned him four years later into a faithful soldier of the empire, to fight in the wars with Japan and, later, the Communists. The son journeyed to Ithaca to pursue graduate studies on Southeast Asia in 1967. This being the time of the Indochina conflict and student unrest worldwide, the site of warfare was the academe itself - quite different from his father’s experience. The paper aims to draw out the complex interplay of personal experience and regimes of knowledge that constitute one’s belonging and response to empire.
The Speaker

Rey Ileto is Professor in the Southeast Asian Studies Program at NUS. His major publications include *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910; Filipinos and their Revolution: Event, Discourse and Historiography; “Religion and Anti-Colonial Movements” (in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*); and ”Philippine Wars and the Politics of Memory” (*Positions*, 2005). He obtained his PhD from Cornell in 1974.

Rural Male Leadership, Religion and the Environment in Thailand’s mid-South, 1920s-1960s

Dr Craig Reynolds (Adjunct Professor, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University)

**Wednesday, 16 September 2009, 3.30 - 5.00 pm**
**AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)**

**Synopsis**
Phantharakratchadet (1898-2006), born in the southern town of Nakorn Sithammarat (Ligor) who had an amazing arrest record and also the reputation as something of a *nakleng*. Discussion points include the local environment, the arts of self-defence, protection and invulnerability, the hugely remunerative and now collapsed Jatukhamramthep amulet cult, and banditry in southern Thailand just before and after World War II. My aims in this research are 1) to shift historical writing away from the court, the aristocracy and the capital; 2) to study a social setting that is not merely “local” or “peripheral”, because it is an amalgam of elements found throughout the country; 3) to give credit to local historians who are often dismissed by "big shot" academics (*nak wichakan phu nam*) for being parochial, insufficiently theoretical and disposed to myth-making; 4) to show how tantric practices (*saiyasat*), policing, banditry and masculinity intersect in the career, exploits and adversaries of Khun Phan. The local setting is sketching in a recent review of the southern Thai *encyclopedia*.

The Speaker


Christian 'Extremism' in Singapore

Assoc Prof Natasha Hamilton-Hart (Deputy Head, Southeast Asian Studies Programme National University of Singapore)

**Wednesday, 19 August 2009, 3.30 - 5.00 pm**
**AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)**
Synopsis

The idea that Christian extremists could be operating in Singapore became a topic of contention in April 2009, when the takeover of the leadership of a non-governmental organization was subjected to the full force of mainstream media attention and extensive scrutiny on the internet. The takeover was portrayed as a religiously-motivated attempt to take control of a secular organization, raising fears in many quarters about the potential for destabilization of Singapore's multi-religious society and avowedly secular public sphere. While the takeover was soon reversed and the issue faded from public view, it raised questions about the nature of some Christian groups operating in Singapore. Are there groups in Singapore which merit the label 'extremist'? Do they present a threat to the secular political order? This seminar presents tentative answers based on an analysis of some materials produced by selected protestant groups.

The Speaker

Natasha Hamilton-Hart is an Associate Professor in the Southeast Asian Studies Programme at the National University of Singapore, where she teaches in the areas of political economy and international relations. Prior to joining NUS, she held a postdoctoral fellowship in International Relations at the Australian National University. She received her PhD (Government) from Cornell University and her BA (Hons) from the University of Otago.

SE6770 Graduate Research Seminar (Semester 2, AY2008-2009)

Jay Cheong Han Wen (MA Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Preciosa A. de Joya (PhD Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Annie W. Karmel (MA Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Pitra Narendra (MA Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)
Takamichi Serizawa (PhD Candidate, Southeast Asian Studies Programme)

Wednesday, 15 April 2009, 2.30 - 5.15 pm
AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)

Synopsis

These presentations by graduate students are intended to facilitate the development of their thesis topics and proposals. They share their preliminary thoughts and findings with the wider scholarly community in the hope of securing helpful comments and feedback.

The Speakers

Jay Cheong Han Wen
LOCATING PERSPECTIVES: Naga Fireballs at the Mekong River
I discuss various perspectives from academics, journalists, and travelers on the "half-fiction, half-truth" phenomenon of Naga fireballs that can be observed at the Mekong River along Northeastern Thailand. I primarily attempt to locate these perspectives within their own contexts.

Preciosa A. de Joya
PAKIKIPAGKAPUWA AND KEJAWEN: Reflections on the Paths of Filipino and Javanese Thought
I wish to explore how pakikipagkapuwa and kejawen constitute paths of thinking about the nature and task of human existence. How have these ideas determined the object and expression of thought? How do these words resonate with each other, and where do their meanings diverge?

Annie W. Karmel
THE HOSTESS WITH THE MOSTEST? Singapore, Its Students, and Intercultural Learning
I will be looking at Singaporean undergraduate students and how they perceive their international counterparts. I also aim to explore how these views may be a symptom of Singapore's need for foreigners and its reactionary efforts to mould a national identity.

Pitra Narendra
LASTING MEMORY, BLURRING IDENTITY: Personal Narratives of Javanese in Singapore
I take a preliminary look into social memory as a source of identity for Javanese in Singapore. I am particularly interested in the dynamics of remembering and forgetting among different generations.

Takamichi Serizawa
DILEMMA OF A JAPANESE HISTORIAN: Tatsuro Yamamoto and Southeast Asian Studies in Japan
Tatsuro Yamamoto's life and work (1910-2001) reveal how vestiges of the occupation of Southeast Asia reconfigured the study of this area in postwar Japan. I locate Yamamoto's "forgetting" of the occupation in the interactions among scholars in Japan, the US and Southeast Asian countries.

Suvarnabhumi, Nanyang, Nusantara, Southeast Asia, East Asia - What Next?
Professor Wang Gungwu (University Professor, National University of Singapore)

Wednesday, 25 March 2009, 3.30 - 5.00 pm
AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)

The Speaker
Professor Wang was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong from 1986 to 1995. He is the former Director of the East Asia Institute and now its Chairman. He is also University Professor at the National University of Singapore (NUS), and Emeritus Professor, Australian National University, Canberra.

Intimate Exclusion and Racialized Displacement in Urban Indonesia

Dr Tsai Yen-ling (Postdoctoral Fellow, Southeast Asian Studies Programme National University of Singapore)

Wednesday, 11 February 2009, 3.30 - 5.00 pm
AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)

Synopsis
This seminar will explore the ways in which cross-racial interactions produce racial boundaries between Indonesian citizens of Chinese decent and their non-Chinese counterparts. I argue, contrary to the conventional wisdom, that intimacies -- defined here as instances of physical proximity and social affiliation -- produce a fusion of identities, but that the lived experiences of the Chinese Indonesians suggest complicated dynamics of group- and subject-making in which intimacies create differentiated identities rather than dissolving them. Terming these dynamics of group- and subject-making as “intimate exclusion,” my dissertation takes them as central to contemporary Indonesian politics of ethno-racial formation and seeks to explore them ethnographically by focusing on the social world of the Chinese Indonesians in Medan.

The Speaker
Dr. Tsai is a post-doctoral fellow in the Southeast Asian Studies Programme at NUS. She conducted her dissertation fieldwork research in Medan, Indonesia. She’s currently researching on the Southeast Asian context of Taiwanese Independence Movement during the 1950s and the 1960s.

Disciplines, Area Studies, and the Global Age: Southeast Asian Reflections

Assoc Prof Goh Beng Lan (Head, Southeast Asian Studies Programme National University of Singapore)

Wednesday, 28 January 2009, 3.30 - 5.30 pm
AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)

Synopsis
This presentation addresses the crisis of area studies from Southeast Asian perspectives. Using a longitudinal picture of human science practices in Southeast Asia gathered from intellectual biographies of regional scholars whose works spans the era of decolonization to the current post-Cold War period, it presents alternative disciplinary and epistemological dimensions in local human sciences and explores their potential to help address fundamental questions surrounding knowledge production on Southeast Asia/Southeast Asian Studies.

The Speaker
Associate Professor Goh Beng Lan is currently the new head of the Southeast Asian Studies Programme at NUS.

Philippine Studies as Postcolonial Response to Western/US Academic Hegemony

Professor Priscelina Patajo-Legasto (Professor, University of the Philippines-Diliman)

Wednesday, 21 January 2009, 12.00 - 2.00 pm
AS3, Level 6, SEASP Seminar Room (06-20)

Synopsis
Twenty first century Philippine Studies is a discursive field that critiques vestiges of supposedly "universalists" paradigms, that affirms our "traditional" and "emergent" cultural/social practices, that gives new readings of "old" texts as well as "new" popular forms brought into the ambit of
serious scholarship, and that provides space for scholarly experimentation and cutting edge inquiries.

This talk will explore the transformation of Philippine Studies from the American colonial period until the present.

**The Speaker**

Priscelina Patajo-Legasto is Professor of Comparative Literature of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, College of Arts and Letters, University of Philippines-Diliman. A winner of several teaching and books wards, her publications include *Philippine Studies: Have We Gone Beyond St Louis?* (2008), *Sarawelang Pangasinan* (1996), and *Philippine Post Colonial Studies: Essays in Language and Literature* (1993/2004).