



**University of  
Zurich** <sup>UZH</sup>

**Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chinese Studies  
University Research Priority Program (URPP) Asia and Europe**



## **Coming of Age in Sinophone Studies**

**International Workshop  
Zurich, March 23–26, 2017**

# Outline

‘He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him ... It is as though the very foundations of the world are changing, and man must change along with them’ (Bakhtin 2010:23 f.).

Mikhail Bakhtin argues that besides being a story of individual growth, the Coming of Age novel (Bildungsroman) can also highlight wider historical change, especially when the protagonist is situated in a limbo between historical eras.

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In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Bildungsroman studies no longer cling to the premise of it being a genuinely German literary genre; rather it is now discussed in terms of historical and social change, enquiring into the relationship between its originating from a European context on the one side, and its immersion into narratives of a global, transnational modernity on the other.

In the past decade or so, literary historians have adopted a range of new perspectives and methods, especially when studying 20<sup>th</sup> century novels written by minority and postcolonial authors (Jassawala 1997: 25-38; Boes 2006: 239; Wong 2009).

This workshop seeks to understand Sinophone literary and cinematic fields since the 1950s by examining Coming of Age narratives covering the geohistorical span of Chinese modernities. For example, a selected corpus of what has come to be known as southbound literati coming-of-age fiction in Chinese speaking regions, from Hong Kong; Taiwan; Singapore; Malaysia to the broader Asian Sinosphere, will be revisited from new theoretical and methodological angles. By examining the period of disintegration following the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 and, in particular, by tracing a significant portion of modern Chinese literary history by expanding the notion of Southbound literati writing in broader South/-East Asian contexts, this workshop aims to guide us towards a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of that epoch’s cultural productions within a transnational framework. Another highly significant corpus of texts written by Mainland Chinese authors looks back on the vicissitudes of coming of age during

the Maoist years. Rereading Maoist youth literature and the retrospective 1980s narratives through the lens of the self-reflexive cultural critique of Chinese modernity's latest face by these same authors brings up interesting changes of perspective and dramatically different stories about one and the same "reality."

By including both structural and cultural parameters of analysis, the workshop will test the notion of the European Bildungsroman, in light of, and against, a range of theories addressing the individual's transition to modernity and postcoloniality, and will deploy to this end tools taken, among others, from literary and film narratology, sociology, cultural studies; and discourse and textual analyses.

This project has the potential to add significantly to our understanding of Cold War Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Chinese-speaking Southeast Asian countries/regions, as contact zones (Pratt 1992)—places where cultures collide and collude, and where immigrants from China encounter a modernity that appears alien and often hostile.

Eventually, this workshop aims to open up dialogues for better understanding of emergent cultural forms that reflect social instability arising from the global spread of contemporary neo-liberal capitalism, and to constitute the foundation of an innovative history of Sinophone literature. It does not only take into account the complicated survival struggles of the subjects of Mao's revolution including refugee-immigrants turned colonial subjects, but also the interaction between literature and the arts as well as between human and nonhuman agents (place, material culture, nature, etc.).

# Program

Day 1                      Thursday, 23 March 2017

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**11:00**                      **Andrea Riemenschmitter (Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies/  
University of Zurich)**

**Martina Wernsdörfer (The Ethnographic Museum at the  
University of Zurich)**

*Welcome Address*

**4      Session 1                      The Individual and Society in Chinese Literature**

Chair: Jessica Imbach, University of Zurich

**11:15–12:05**                      **Justyna Jaguścik (University of Zurich)**

Coming of Age in Women's Poetry: Feminist Sensibilities After  
"Liberation"

**12:05–12:55**                      **Xinyue Syrinx Liu (Peking University)**

"Return Home" and "Rewrite Youth": Family Portrayal and  
Coming of Age in Recent Post-80s Novels

*13:00–14:00                      Lunch (by invitation)*

Chair: Justyna Jaguścik, University of Zurich

**14:10–15:00**                      **Shuyao Zhou (Beijing Normal University)**

Revenge, Shame, Rite: Narrating the Orphan Growing Up in  
Chinese Revolutionary Bildungsroman

- 15:00–15:50**     **Andrea Riemenschmitter (Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies/  
University of Zurich)**  
New Dreams of Red Mansions: Coming of Age Narratives from  
Post-/Socialist China
- 15:50–16:10*     *Coffee & Tea*
- 16:15–17:30**     **Keynote Speech: Wendy Larson (University of Oregon)**  
The Socialist Bildungsroman and Global Youth: Wang Meng and  
Jack Kerouac
- 19:00*             *Dinner (by invitation)*

## Day 2             Friday, 24 March 2017

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- Session 2**             **Displacement, Global Modernities, and (Post)colonial Identities**     **5**  
Chair: Wendy Larson
- 9:30–10:20**         **Mung Ting Chung (University of Texas at Austin)**  
Turncoats of Modernism at Iowa: Hong Kong Writers in the Global  
Sixties
- 10:20–11:10**       **Mary Shuk-han Wong (Lingnan University)**  
Growing up in the Age of Disturbance: Hong Kong New Writers of  
the 1960s
- 11:15–12:15*         *Free Time*
- 12:30–14:00*         *Lunch (by invitation)*
- Session 3**             **The Nonhuman Turn in Coming of Age: Nature and Urban Space**  
Chair: Kiu-wai Chu
- 14:20–15:10**       **Winnie L.M. Yee (University of Hong Kong)**  
Coming of Age in Post-Urban Hong Kong: An Eco-critical Approach  
to Land-writing and Land-filming

**15:10–16:00**      **Helena Wu (University of Zurich)**  
(Be)coming-of-age... and Again? Lion Rock, Hong Kong Stories, and  
Their Reverberations

*16:10–16:30*      *Coffee & Tea*

**Screening and Discussion of Boundary (dir. Ben Wong, 2015)**

**17:00–17:20**      Director's Introduction (Ben Wong)

**17:20–19:40**      Screening of Boundary (140 minutes)

**19:45–20:30**      Q&A with director Ben Wong  
Moderator: Andrea Riemenschmitter  
Discussants: Mary Wong, Kiu-wai Chu

**Day 3**              **Saturday, 25 March 2017**

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**Session 4**              **Transnational Coming-of-Age in Sinophone Studies**

Chair: Helena Wu

**9:30–10:20**      **Sheldon Lu (University of California, Davis)**  
Mapping and Contesting the Notion of Sinophone: The Coming-  
of-Age of Chinese-language World Literature

**10:20–11:10**      **Danny Weng-kit Chan (Hong Kong Polytechnic University)**  
Beyond Nationhood: Border and Coming of Age in Hong Kong  
Cinema

*11:10–11:30*      *Coffee & Tea*

**11:30–12:20**      **Kiu-wai Chu (University of Zurich)**  
When Yangbanxi Meets Trans-regional 3D Cinema: Reimagining  
Socialist Bildungsroman in Tsui Hark's The Taking of Tiger  
Mountain

*12:30–13:30*      *Lunch (by invitation)*

Chair: Sheldon Lu

**14:00–14:50**     **Enoch Yee-lok Tam (Hong Kong Baptist University)**  
Coming of Age of the (Post)Colonial, Capitalist City:  
Reinvestigating Hong Kong Modernity through Dung Kai-cheung's  
Trilogy

**14:50–15:40**     **Fiona Y.W. Law (University of Hong Kong)**  
Years of the Yearning Youth: Growth, Flows, and the Dilemma of  
Maturity in Chinese Cinematic Bildungsroman

*15:40–16:10*     *Coffee & Tea*

Chair: Brigit Knüsel

**16:10–17:00**     **Jessica Ka Yee Chan (University of Richmond)**  
A Simple Life: Aging in Documentary Realism

**17:00–17:50**     **Wen-chi Li (University of Zurich)**  
The Development of Taiwanese Identity: Yang Mu's Oeuvre as an  
Example

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*19:00*     *Conference Dinner (by invitation)*

## Day 4     Sunday, 26 March 2017

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Chair: Andrea Riemenschnitter

**10:00–10:50**     **Pheng Cheah (University of California, Berkeley)**  
Sentimentality and the Capitalization of Humanity: On Anthony  
Chen's Ilo Ilo

**11:00–12:30**     **Roundtable Discussion**  
(Conference volume and future cooperation)

*13:00–14:00*     *Lunch (by invitation)*

# General Information

<b>Location</b>	Völkerkundemuseum Universität Zürich Pelikanstrasse 40 CH-8001 Zurich
<b>Convenors</b>	Dr. Kiu-wai Chu Dr. Justyna Jaguścik Prof. Dr. Andrea Riemenschnitter (Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies / University of Zurich)
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:justyna.jaguscik@aoi.uzh.ch">justyna.jaguscik@aoi.uzh.ch</a>
<b>Registration</b>	Registration required by March 20, 2017 <a href="mailto:justyna.jaguscik@aoi.uzh.ch">justyna.jaguscik@aoi.uzh.ch</a>
<b>Internet</b>	<a href="http://www.asienundeuropa.uzh.ch/age">www.asienundeuropa.uzh.ch/age</a>

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