

# INAUGURAL NEXUS TAIWAN CONFERENCE

*Repositioning Taiwan and the United States*

*April 7-9*

## ABSTRACTS

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### **“If Taiwan, Then What?**

#### **--Reflections on Disciplinarity”**

**Hsiung Ping-chen**

As a young academic exercise, the case of Taiwan studies continues to be made intellectually and institutionally. Together with others at this inaugural event, I would like to argue that this case may be fruitfully made from the perspective of (slightly older yet still bubbling field of) American Studies, employing the reasoning of the “case method”.

The “case method” as advocated by scholars in the history and philosophy of science such as John Forrester asks a judicial process to think in/with instances with an interest in evidential reasoning.

A review of the surfacing of Taiwan studies within the Taiwan academia indicates that as an endeavor over three decades (1986-2015), its roots in the Institute of Taiwanese History at Academia Sinica remains significant, whereas the developments in Taiwanese Literature and cultural studies, within the frame of the college of Liberal Arts continues to be the operative base. From this institutional position, the establishment of Hakka studies (at National Central University, National Chiao Tung University and National United University) and Ethnic Studies (representing native Taiwanese studies at National Dong Hwa University) provide a useful contrast domestically, whereas recent provisions of TLS (Taiwan Lecture Series) from the MOE and the Taiwan Academy from MOC presented an interesting international network for discuss.

Viewing all these from the particular lens of American studies, the mandate of this department at Brown (as a post World War II Institution since 1945) resting on the three areas of American Studies, Ethnic Studies and Public Humanities appears revealing. The ASA’s (American Studies Association) proclamation that the field be a nexus of “democratic inquiry” that represents “an eclectic array of practices and pedagogies” which in many different realms of scholarship and civil life “inside and outside the juridical and geographic boundaries of the nation state” seems productive.

As both Taiwan studies and American studies continue to evolve, under similar or different circumstances, we may together or respectively return to the “case method”, or “the genre of case studies (案類研究)” to reflect on their implications in disciplinarity.

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### **“Imagining the Trans-Indigenous Pacific: Bill Reid, Robert Sullivan, and Syman Rapongan”**

**Hsinya Huang**

American and Comparative Literature, National Sun Yat-sen University

In this lecture, I employ “the Pacific” as a contact zone to examine the shifting relationship between land and sea and, in so doing, I weave Pacific connections by stressing island temporalities and topographies to counteract the logic of US continental exceptionalism. Drawing on North American Haida artist Bill Reid’s piece *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, Aotearoa (New Zealand) poet Robert Sullivan’s *Star Waka* and Pangso no Tau writer Syman Rapongan’s *Eyes of the Sky* as anchor texts, this lecture demonstrates how the Indigenous cultural production from the Pacific decontinentalizes American Studies through the powerful metaphor of the canoe navigating across the “pathway” of the sea. All three poets/artists evidence multiple kinds of Pacific connection and commonality, as do multiple kinds of Indigenous canoes travel across the Pacific. Non-human beings such as whales, flying fish, amphibians, and artistic objects such as canoes literally travel across an Indigenous Pacific. These beings, objects, and canoes detail complex cosmological genealogies at both the macro and micro scale of multi-species relationships. All re-nativizes islands into a counter-continental site as aligned to Oceania. Trans-indigenous seafaring is invoked here as a practice and metaphor for navigating a course that is not overdetermined by the trajectories of Western colonization. All sustains a paradigm of trans-indigeneity, of rooted routes, of a mobile, flexible, and voyaging subject who is not physically or culturally circumscribed by the terrestrial boundaries of island space as small and remote. By placing these maritime/ island literatures/ arts in dialogue with one another, this lecture underscores the shared history of the Pacific indigenous peoples and their complex historical relationships to the waters that surround them.

[Keywords: Bill Reid, Robert Sullivan, Syman Rapongan, Pacific connection, trans-indigeneity]

### **“Island Encounters: A Comparison of Global Indigeneity between Taiwan and America”**

**Iping Liang**

English Department, National Taiwan Normal University

In his essay, “Archipelagic American Literary History and the Philippines,” Brian R. Roberts cites the works of Filipino scholars, Jay L. Batangbacal and Merlin M. Magallona, and argues for an archipelagic turn in American Studies. Debunking the continental myth of the US nation, Roberts refers to the work of Martin Lewis and

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Karen Wigen and contends that the continental myth of the US nation has obscured many instances of historical and geographical formations of the nation that actually took place on the island. By challenging the continental myth of the US, Roberts re-constitutes the nation from the perspective of the archipelagic—the numerous islands surrounding the continental mainland and disseminating across the Caribbean and the Pacific—and re-asserts the significance of the peripheral and outlying island borders between continental landmasses and oceanic waters. By drawing on the works of Roberts, Batangbacal, Magallona and many others, I situate Taiwan, or the island of Formosa, in the theoretical framework of the “archipelagic Americas” and argue for the centrality of the island in our mapping of the archipelagic Americas. My point of reference is the Rover Incident, a shipwreck event that caused the losses of American merchants and crewmen in the hands of the indigenous Paiwan tribe, located in southern Taiwan. The Incident resulted in the signing of the Southern Cape Treaty in 1867 between the Paiwan chief, Tauketok, and American consul in Xiamen, General Charles Le Gendre. I argue that the Southern Cape Treaty, like the Medicine Lodge Treaty signed between the US government and the Southern Plain Indian tribes also in 1867, signifies transnational indigenous dispossession—the renunciation of the right to armed attack in the former and the disenfranchising of indigenous lands in the latter. More importantly, from the perspective of comparative global indigeneity, the signing of the Southern Cape Treaty vis-à-vis the Medicine Lodge Treaty proclaims the US colonial power that was not only advancing in the continent, but also “encountered” on the island.

[Keywords: Archipelagic American Studies, Taiwan, Formosa, the Rover Incident, Charles Le Gendre, *Notes of Travel in Formosa*, Comparative Indigeneity]

### **“Global Indigeneity in a Local Space”**

**Lainie Schultz**

Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University

Museum collections and collecting strategies share commonalities in the global movements and intellectual paradigms that shaped their creation, interpretation, and care. Together and individually, these provide common narratives for the construction of ethnographic collections, and for the construction and dissemination of knowledge relating to them. Addressing these histories in a contemporary context, however, requires an individualized approach, with attention to the perspectives, needs, and locations of creator communities; of holding institutions; and of the people engaging with collections. In my paper, I consider the complications (and rewards) of navigating between the global and the local from the

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specific context of my own experiences, working with students and collections at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

### **"Indigenous by Design: A Reflection on How Artists Engage and Shape Museums"**

**Christy DeLair**

Longyear Anthropology Museum, Colgate University

Indigenous artists in Taiwan create objects that range from small gifts to ceremonial objects to fine art, engaging longstanding cultural traditions while addressing contemporary issues through their creative refashioning of traditions. They act as intermediaries in their communities, shaping perceptions of indigenous peoples through their interactions with visitors - including tourists, academics, and museum workers. Artists frequently conduct museum research while developing artistic skills and knowledge of traditional styles and meanings, some even traveling abroad to access collections. Other artists curate and collaborate on museum exhibits, or participate in international exchange programs run through museums. This paper examines how artists' engagements with museums influence the contemporary art they create and help shape the development of indigenous identity and community, while simultaneously helping to reframe representations and professional practices in museums. Through analysis of artist-museum interactions and networks in connection with an examination of narratives of inspiration and creation as told by artists, I demonstrate how creativity and innovation are understood and become tied to artists' perceptions of the meaning of indigeneity.

### **"Returning to the Source: A Comparative Study of a University Museum and a Public Museum in Taiwan"**

**Yuan-Chao Tung**

Anthropology Department, Museum of Anthropology, National Taiwan University

In response to an increasing demand of accessibility by Taiwan indigenous peoples, museums have adopted various practices in the past few years. I will examine the relevant policies, ideas and techniques of collaborative exhibitions of the Museum of Anthropology at National Taiwan University and The Taiwan Museum. Perception of local source communities will also be included.

### **"The Great Mainland Exodus and Two Types of Displacement in Early Postwar Taiwan"**

**Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang**

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Department of History, University of Missouri-Columbia

In the late 1940s and the early 50s, the world witnessed a massive wave of forced migration out of China in the wake of the Nationalist debacle and the Chinese Communist victory. A bulk of this outmigration reached Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist (Kuomintang KMT) regime-in-exile. The subject has remained largely unstudied in the history of Chinese migration, despite a considerable number of monographs and articles published on postwar Taiwan. In recent years, there have been a small number of books examining this great migration through oral history. This paper takes a different approach by looking into printed historical sources such as newspapers and available archival documents. It argues that the history of the mainland exodus to Taiwan cannot be told just by contemporary accounts of surviving civil war migrants. It is important to ask what is left out in these present-day recollections and why. The paper demonstrates that there were in fact two different types of displacement experienced by people in early postwar Taiwan—one by the civil war migrants/first generation mainlanders (*waishengren*) and the other by the local native Taiwanese populations, especially native Taiwanese who resided in major cities and towns.

## **The Student Path to Immigration: Taiwan and the United States during the Cold War**

**Madeline Y. Hsu**

History Department, University of Texas, Austin

Changing dynamics of Taiwanese immigration to the United States after World War II reflect the nature of expanding U.S. influence in east Asia. The intensification of cultural and educational programs as aspects of Cold War outreach programs produced rising levels of international student exchanges. By the early 1950s in Taiwan, such temporary visits were understood as a practical strategy that could lead to permanent resettlement. By the mid 1960s, Taiwan would come to be the most intense sufferer of “brain drain,” in which educated elites chose to remain in their countries of higher education. In the long term, these flows fostered stronger economic and social relationships between Taiwan and the United States through the circulatory mobility of Taiwanese Americans.

## **Building an “Alternative” China in Taiwan: US-Kuomintang Collaboration through an Overseas Chinese Education Program, 1954-1965**

**Chi-ting Peng 彭琪庭**

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History Department, University of California Santa Barbara

From 1954 to 1965, the United States government collaborated with the Kuomintang (KMT), the Nationalist government of the Republic of China (ROC), to promote an overseas Chinese education program in Taiwan. According to the Taiwanese government's statistics, 27,913 overseas Chinese students were admitted to Taiwan's middle schools and higher education during the period. The overseas Chinese students mainly came from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. These overseas Chinese students can be regarded as part of the mid twentieth century Chinese refugee crisis, or the Cold War Chinese refugee crisis. From 1945 to the mid-1960s, the world witnessed the largest wave of Chinese refugee migration in the twentieth century. When mainland China became hostile to overseas Chinese, these students absorbed knowledge about Chinese culture from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and through all kinds of translation works sponsored by the US and published in Taiwan. These transnational education experiences created or preserved their Chinese cultural identity. Many saw their studying in Taiwan as a cultural return to the greatness of ancient China.

### **“Chinos/chinas/chinitas: Taiwanese Immigrants in Cold War Latin America”**

**Justina Hwang**

History Department, Brown University

My paper will be about Taiwanese migration to Latin America, mainly Peru, Paraguay, Panama, and Brazil, from the 1960s to the 1980s. I will explore the reasons for Taiwanese migration to Latin America in this period as well as the individual communities in each country. In addition, I will examine the role these new migrants played in established Chinese communities and how the Republic of China was portrayed in print media during the Cold War. Finally, I will analyze how these communities impacted interactions between their new governments and the Republic of China in terms of foreign policy decisions and the fight for United Nations recognition in this period.

### **Huang Can Cook: Transpacific Food Culture in *Fresh Off the Boat***

**Ping-chia Feng**

Foreign Languages and Literature Department, National Chiao Tung University

Eddie's Huang's 2013 memoir *Fresh Off the Boat* opens with a childhood memory of having bad soup dumplings in a D.C. restaurant because the restaurant was using off-brand soy sauce instead of a Taiwanese name-brand. This experience of one of “the three biggest dishes in Taiwan” losing its original flavor in

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transnational migration metaphorically embodies Huang's close tie with transpacific food culture, as well as his anxieties over the need to negotiate and construct his own Taiwanese American identity. Growing up in the American South, on numerous occasions, Huang experiences racist denigration, being ridiculed, battered and discriminated against because of his different "face." Huang grows into an angry young man determined to fight his way to a better life, and who finds solace in hip-hop music and food. The memoir ends with Huang opening his own restaurant, Baohaus, in New York's East Village and finally making a name for himself selling his own version of Taiwanese *gua bao*—soft bread with braised pork fillings. *Fresh Off the Boat*, however, is by no means a model-minority success story as Huang sets out to challenge every kind of racial stereotype, especially what he calls "the model-minority myth," and Huang specifically claims that his "main objective with Baohaus is to become a voice for Asian Americans" (264). Filling this memoir with slang, curse words, street language, and references to hip-hop culture, Huang has indeed created a different voice for Asian America. This paper investigates Eddie Huang's negotiation of his transnational identity and his engagement with transpacific food culture as represented in *Fresh Off the Boat*. Examining Eddie's close connection with his Taiwan roots, especially in terms of culinary affiliation, and Eddie's position as a professional cook as well as the host of the food travel program *Huang's World*, this paper argues that while Huang's public image as an idiosyncratic and unconventional Asian American chef has successfully overturned the emasculated stereotyping of Chinese American cooks, he can be highly conservative when it comes to gastronomic authenticity.

### **"America the Brand: How the Marshall Plan Logo traveled to Taiwan"**

**Jason Petrusis**

History Department, Colgate University

This paper examines how the US government worked with Madison Avenue ad agencies in the late 1940s to develop a logo for Marshall Plan aid. Tracing the "life" of the logo from design to label to brand, it asks how the logo helped to create a new definition of corporate brands, and examines how US officials struggled to define an American "brand" in a world where capitalism was not always embraced. Then, as Marshall moved into Asia and the middle Cold War, it tracks the logo as it was used in Taiwan. The brand moved quickly out of US control and into Taiwanese hands: though the logo was stamped on cloth flour sacks funded by US development agencies, Taiwanese people repurposed the fabric for use as shirts or underwear, transforming the meaning of the brand along with the sack. Today, the logo decorates t-shirts in bourgeois boutiques – a sign of Taiwan's economic transformation, but also evidence of the importance of forgetting in sustaining the

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Cold War, as brands and memories float free of the objects to which they were attached. I suggest that the logo – a symbol originally designed to translate US capital into goods, and designed to keep its meaning through every transformation (from capital, to flour, to bread and flour sack, to clothing) – has become a once-again embodied symbol of empire, as the US shield for Taiwan transforms for a new moment.

### **T.A. Hsia and Diasporic Liberalism**

**Chris Lee**

English Department, University of British Columbia

In 1956, *Literary Monthly*, a well-known liberal journal of literary thought published before the Sino-Japanese War in Beijing, was revived in name in Taiwan under the editorship of T.A. Hsia, a professor at the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department of National Taiwan University. As editor, Hsia rejected both aestheticism and instrumentalism in order to advocate a literary practice based on the recognition of reality, honesty, and truth. In foregrounding these themes, Hsia drew heavily on liberal intellectuals from the US, some of whom were featured in his journal in translation, but reframes such debates in relation to recent events including the success of the 1949 Revolution. This paper traces an incipient “diasporic” sensibility in Hsia’s criticism, which stems not only from his own exile from the Mainland, but also from his participation in a literary-critical community that greatly affected by the exercise of US power in Cold War Taiwan. In this sense, his career suggests a trans-Pacific history of liberal thought during the early years of the Cold War (Hsia himself would move to the United States in 1959). Following this itinerary, this paper focuses on “The Jesuit’s Tale” (1955), an English short story published in *Partisan Review* and his posthumously published study of Communist Chinese literature “The Gate of Darkness” (1968).

### **“Taiwanese Ghosts and their Ancient Roots”**

**Mu-chou Poo**

History Department and Centre for the Comparative Study of Antiquity, Chinese University of Hong Kong

The past is a place filled with memories, and also with ghosts. We connect with the past through memory to gain some knowledge about our present position, and we gain some knowledge about ourselves through remembering the ghosts. When a group of people is trying to invent for itself a new past, it would have to invent a host of new ghosts. For it is by identifying and identified with the ghosts that a people can establish its own identity. Who are the ghosts of the people(s) who live on Taiwan now? And how are the ghosts remembered and treated, in a time of



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political freedom and confusion and contention of cultural identity? This paper will trace the roots of some Taiwanese ghosts and try to evaluate if they, the ghosts, are still the old ghosts from across the Strait, or new ghosts that live in a different past.

### **“The Economic Life of Cold-War Frontier Islands: A Fisherman’s Tale”**

**Song-chuan Chen**

History Department, Nanyang Technological University

When Chiang Kai-shek’s troops occupied the Matsu Islands in 1949 Hou Xidi was 11 years old. In the stalemate of the Civil War, even though mainland China was less than ten miles away visible with the naked eye, Matsu belonged to Taiwan—270 miles away. That year, Chiang’s troops started heavy fortification turning the islands into a frontier in their struggle against Communist China. A borderline was created dividing the sea space between the mainland and Matsu into two halves. The islanders which numbered about 10,000 were cut off overnight from their traditional economic life of supplying fresh fish and fish products to the markets of Fuzhou. Hou Xidi was 19 years old when he was jailed for three months for stealing American aid flour to feed his hungry mother. Hou appeared in official records again when he was 29 for burgling a jewellery store but got away this time because he sold the jewels to secret military personnel operating on the islands. By this time, the new economic lives of Matsu centring on supplying the troops with farming and fishing products were well established. In the process of change, some islanders became richer, some found ways to get by, and some like Hou became poorer. When he was 38 years old Hou crossed the sea border and got married in mainland China, a marriage which he could not afford on Matsu. In the following 20 years Hou was categorised as a communist spy and was put on the wanted list. He returned to Matsu in 1995 after the relationship between the two sides eased. Centring on Hou’s life this paper tells the history of China’s Civil War—also a Cold War—from the perspective of everyday politics of how ordinary people on the Matsu Islands exploited the global Cold War logic to survive and prosper.

### **“Uncle Sam Said *Very Clearly* You Are Not a Country”: Independence Activists and the Mapping of Imperial Cosmologies in Taiwan**

**Derek Sheriden**

Anthropology Department, Brown University

In 2006, a group of Taiwanese independence activists began arguing that

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Taiwan, claimed by China, was actually under the legal jurisdiction of an unrecognized U.S. military occupation. Drawing on fieldwork among both grassroots Taiwan independence activists and those who argue Taiwan should be (or already is) part of the U.S., I argue that “empire” is not a pre-given entity, but something that has to be imagined, mapped, and made legible. I do so by tracing how in the context of grassroots campaigns, individual projects, and everyday political conversation, activists reinterpret the archive of statements and actions of imperial actors and use them as the basis for retroactively imagining new political communities, revealing the logics through which people map empire and their place within it. [Keywords: Empire, Nationalism, Political Imagination, Taiwan]

### **Online Creation of War Memories:**

#### **The Denial and Pursuit of Matsu and Self in *The Childhood of Leimengdi***

Wei-Ping Lin

Anthropology Department, National Taiwan University

Starting on September 14, 2005, a series of writings appeared for a period of 3 years on the website of the Matsu islands. These works, which were illustrated by a native islander who moved to Taiwan in the 1980s, were written by his Taiwanese wife (based on his memories). The series describes the childhood of a boy called Leimengdi, including his life in a fishing village and his family's suffering in a battlefield. It quickly became the most-read piece on the website and was finally compiled into a book, entitled *The Childhood of Leimengdi*. This paper discusses the memories created by the online memoirs. How do they start from a person's imagination of a place and finally turn into collective memories? I will show how the online creation of memory has reconnected diasporic people who experienced trauma and affliction during a period of war in their homeland. I will explore how a new kind of subjectivity has been shaped by this process and how an aspiration towards a different future has taken form.