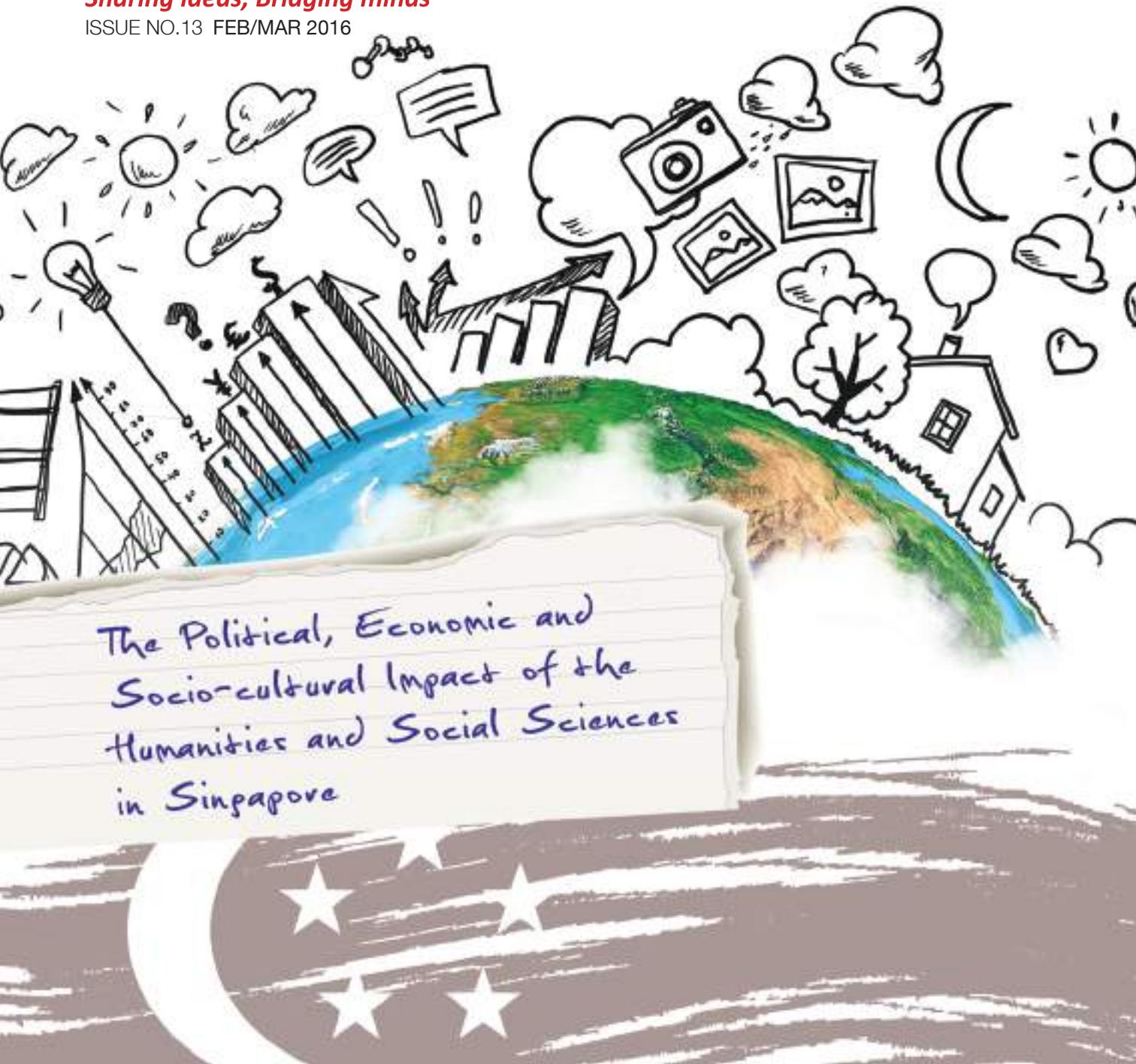


# HORIZONS

*Sharing ideas, Bridging minds*

ISSUE NO.13 FEB/MAR 2016



The Political, Economic and  
Socio-cultural Impact of the  
Humanities and Social Sciences  
in Singapore

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# CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Dear colleagues, students, alumni and friends,

The year 2016 marks the 12th anniversary of our School. Starting off with only one division, we have rapidly expanded over the years and are now nurturing tomorrow's leaders across nine divisions and programmes.

In addition to teaching, we have also built up a flourishing research culture that enhances our understanding of both local and global issues. With over 200 faculty members, HSS is engaged in cutting-edge research that aims to find solutions to some of the most pressing matters facing Singapore and beyond. You will be able to read about some of this meaningful research in this issue's feature story.

The last quarter of 2015 was a fruitful period for HSS. In addition to numerous talks and seminars, the School also organised several well-received conferences that enriched our knowledge of the humanities and social sciences in the local and international contexts.

In October 2015, the Centre for Chinese Language and Culture organised an international symposium on "*Qiaopi* Trade in China and Overseas". *Qiaopi* refers to letters and remittances from Chinese emigrants to their families in China from the 1820s to the 1980s. Thanks to the recent inclusion of *qiaopi* documents into the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, interest in the topic has increased in academe. As one of the very few academic events on *qiaopi* to be held in English, the symposium raised awareness and furthered knowledge of *qiaopi* to an international audience.

Interdisciplinary research and international collaboration are two key pursuits for HSS. To this end, we joined forces with eight other leading Southeast Asian Studies institutions in Asia to establish the Consortium of Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA) three years ago. I am pleased to report that the first SEASIA Conference was held at Kyoto University in December 2015. The event was a great success and attracted over 500 scholars on Southeast Asia from 205 institutions. Moving forward, we expect to establish closer links and synergies in research on Southeast Asia, within which Singapore is strategically located.

Partnering with the University of Tokyo, the Global Asia Research Cluster at HSS co-organised a workshop entitled "Understanding Globalising Asia: Methods and Issues" at the end of November. The workshop cultivates interdisciplinary research and provides a platform for

networking between young scholars from the two universities.

The Chinese Division also co-organised the "Conference on Humanities Research from Multiple Perspectives in the 21st Century" with National Taiwan University in December. The event analysed humanities research from various perspectives and played an important role in fostering academic cooperation between Singapore and Taiwan.

While contemporary philosophy is often conceptualised with reference to Western philosophy, the Philosophy Programme at HSS is at the forefront of elevating Chinese philosophy to greater prominence. In the final two months of 2015, the Programme co-organised two successful events – the "International Symposium on Music and Philosophy in Early China" and the "Conference on Pre-Qin Confucianism".

I would like to end by underscoring the relevance and value of the humanities and social sciences to our lives. We are living in uncertain, but exciting times as the world is experiencing profound changes. Through interdisciplinary research on the humanities and social sciences from both Asian and global perspectives, I believe we can help find innovative ways to solve future challenges and grasp new opportunities.

## **Professor Liu Hong**

Tan Kah Kee Endowed Professor Chair, School of Humanities and Social Sciences



Participants of the “Beyond Fixed Geographies: Diaspora and Alternative Conceptions of Southeast Asia” panel organised by NTU.

## CHARTING NEW FRONTIERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES: SEASIA 2015 CONFERENCE

BY DR CHARLOTTE SETIJADI AND DR TAOMO ZHOU

Aiming to develop new ways of contextualising and conceptualising Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Studies (particularly in terms of the legacy of the Cold War and the transformation of the field in the 21st century), the first biennial conference of the Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA) was held at Kyoto University from 12-13 December 2015. The Conference brought together over 500 scholars of Southeast Asian Studies from 205 institutions, representing 31 countries.

In his opening address, guest-of-honour and former Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Fukuda Yasuo highlighted the importance of Southeast Asia and of Southeast Asian Studies within the context of the rise of Asia. He also spoke of the need to generate research ideas about Southeast Asia by scholars who have both living experience and intimate knowledge of the region.

The first keynote speaker at the Conference, Professor Wang Gungwu, Chairman of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, addressed the importance

of historicity in our contemporary conceptualisations of Southeast Asia. He also reminded the congregation of scholars that our understanding of Southeast Asia has always been shaped by various geopolitical and ideological agenda. Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit from Chulalongkorn University was the second keynote speaker and echoed Professor Wang’s assessment, adding that as the world becomes more complex, scholars need to critically assess the impact of new patterns of governance and knowledge-production on the ways in which we analyse regional trends.

With over 58 concurrent panels over two days, speakers at the Conference covered topics ranging from the intellectual histories of Southeast Asia to contemporary urban development and technological innovations in the region. Led by Professor Liu Hong, Chair, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), NTU was represented at the Conference by 18 scholars. NTU also organised five well-received panels (including innovation, environment, city; intra-Asian dynamics; cooperative

competition, governance and strategic engagement , etc ) which generated much fruitful discussion on Southeast Asian Studies scholarship.

The next biennial SEASIA Conference will be held in 2017 at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

### About SEASIA:

Aiming to foster exchanges and enhance collaboration among scholars and students of Southeast Asia based in the region and beyond, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at NTU joined eight other leading Asian and Southeast Asian Studies institutions in Asia to establish the Consortium of Southeast Asian Studies in Asia in 2013. SEASIA offers a platform for research collaboration, networking and circulation of information as well as opportunities for education and training of young and up-and-coming scholars. It also connects scholars from different disciplines – ranging from the humanities to the natural Sciences – but with common research interests in Southeast Asia.

# ADVANCING RESEARCH IN ECONOMICS: WEAI 12TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

BY TAN TSIAI SIONG

The Division of Economics at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), NTU hosted the 12th International Conference of the Western Economic Association International (WEAI) from 7-10 January 2016.

Founded in 1922 and comprising over 1,800 academics and professionals, WEAI is dedicated to encouraging and communicating economic research and analysis. The Association's principal activities include publishing two refereed quarterly journals - Economic Inquiry and Contemporary Economic Policy - and staging scholarly conferences that are forums for current economic research.

With over 100 sessions and 350 paper presentations, the Conference attracted more than 400 participants from 42 countries. Distinguished guests included Nobel laureates, Sir James A. Mirrlees, Distinguished Professor-at-Large, Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Professor Peter A. Diamond,

Institute Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Professor Euston Quah, Head, Division of Economics at HSS and Conference Chairman gave the opening address and spoke about the transboundary haze pollution in Southeast Asia. This was followed by the first keynote address on "Generalising Economics and Expanding Markets: Legalising Kidney Sales and Prostitution" by Professor Ng Yew-Kwang, Albert Winsemius Chair Professor, NTU.

Over the next two days, Sir James Mirrlees presented his keynote address, "When Capital Markets Fail", and provided analysis of insurance and issues of imperfect information, while Professor Diamond addressed the subject of unemployment in the United States. At the Conference Dinner on the third day, Professor Naoyuki Yoshino, Dean, Asian Development Bank Institute, gave a speech covering the economic effects of infrastructure development.

The Conference concluded with a roundtable discussion on the issue of inequality, which was chaired by Professor K Ravi Kumar, Dean, College of Business, NTU, with Sir James Mirrlees, Professor Diamond and Professor Ng as the panelists. The insightful session witnessed the multi-faceted investigation of the subject matter; egalitarian policies vs. taxation, automation and inequality, stochastic returns to investment, different measures of inequality, as well as comments on the contemporary works of Thomas Piketty and Anthony B. Atkinson.

After four invigorating days of plenary and parallel presentations and dialogue, the WEAI 12th International Conference came to a successful conclusion, advancing and highlighting current research in many economic matters.



From L-R: Professor K Ravi Kumar, Sir James A. Mirrlees, Professor Ng Yew-Kwang, Professor Darwin C. Hall (Executive Director, WEAI and Conference Chairman), Professor Euston Quah and Professor Peter A. Diamond

## ELEVATING CHINESE PHILOSOPHY TO GREATER HEIGHTS

### INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON MUSIC AND PHILOSOPHY IN EARLY CHINA

BY DR PARK SO JEONG



Music plays many roles in Chinese philosophy, which has been regarded as an indispensable part of understanding human nature and a necessary tool in creating an orderly society. Recently excavated texts in the tombs of remote southern states in ancient China affirm the importance of music for understanding early Chinese thought. The texts describe excellence in hearing as the key characteristic of a sage and elevate music's power to move the human heart above all other forms of self-cultivation.

To further knowledge and explore these subjects, the Philosophy Programme at the School of

Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) in NTU hosted the "Music and Philosophy in Early China International Symposium" from 27-28 November 2015. With over 50 participants including scholars from Harvard University, the University of Michigan, the University of Texas at Austin, and Santa Clara University, the event brought together experts from various fields – such as Philosophy, History, Sinology, Aesthetics and Musicology – to meet and share their ideas with one another.

Besides Professor Alan Chan, Dean College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at NTU, who spoke

on Confucian ritual music, Associate Professor Franklin Perkins and Dr Park So Jeong from the Philosophy Programme at HSS also gave presentations at this event. The former spoke on how music influenced the Xing Zi Ming Chu <<性自命出>>, which is one of the most famous books on human nature and self-cultivation. On the other hand, Dr Park explored two different types of musical ontology in ancient Greece and China.

In conclusion, the Symposium was well-received and reaffirmed the importance of music to understanding Chinese philosophy.

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## ACADEMIC CONFERENCE ON PRE-QIN CONFUCIANISM



To provide a platform to explore Confucianism, the Philosophy Programme at HSS and the Confucius Institute at NTU co-organised the "Academic Conference on Pre-Qin Confucianism" from 5-6 December 2015 at Slim Barracks Rise. There were over 30 participants with prominent Confucian scholars among them. As part of the pre-event activities, the Philosophy Programme also organised

the Present and Future of Confucianism Forum in HSS on 4 December 2015.

Associate Professor Li Chenyang, Director of the Philosophy Programme at HSS, said that the Conference aimed to explore Confucianism in today's global context.

"Confucianism has had a profound influence in the cultures of East Asia and

Southeast Asia. As of today, it is still a living tradition in people's ways of life. This conference helps us better understand this rich and fruitful tradition," said Associate Professor Li. "Multi-cultural Singapore, with its diverse population, stands to benefit from such an endeavour to study various philosophical traditions."

# BLAZING NEW PATHS: QIAOPI TRADE IN CHINA AND OVERSEAS

BY LOW YANLING AND KWA KAI XIANG

*QIAOPI* (侨批) – LETTERS AND REMITTANCE SENT BY CHINESE EMIGRANTS TO THEIR FAMILIES IN CHINA (FROM THE 1820S TO 1980S).

The *Qiaopi* Trade in China and Overseas Conference was held from 9 to 10 October 2015 at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS). A total of 12 papers were presented and discussed during the event, which was attended by more than two dozen academics from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, China, Malaysia and Singapore. The Conference is one of the very few conferences on the topic of *qiaopi* to be held in English and was organised by the Centre for Chinese Language and Culture at Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

In his opening address, Professor Liu Hong, Chair, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, highlighted the importance of disseminating research and facilitating discussions on the *qiaopi* trade to a broader international audience, including non-Chinese scholars and experts on migrant letters and remittances.

The Keynote Lecture cum the Fourth Chuan Han-Sheng Lecture\* was delivered by Professor Takeshi Hamashita of Sun Yat-sen University, who spoke on migration and home remittances in the financial

market between Southeast Asia and South China. Professor Hamashita, who is also Professor Emeritus of Tokyo and Kyoto Universities, is a critically acclaimed scholar of history and is well-known for his research on the network of trade, migration, and financial remittances in Asia.

There were five panel sessions that were held over two days. During the first session, Professor Gregor Benton (Cardiff University) presented a paper on the relationship between *qiaopi* and politics in terms of its impact on local power relations, regional politics, Chinatown politics and China's national politics. This paper was co-authored with Professor Liu Hong and Dr. Zhang Huimei of NTU.

Some of the other topics covered during the Conference include an analysis of British policies pertaining to *qiaopi*; the role of Chinese post offices (*qiaopijiu*); the evolution of the *qiaopi* industry; and the practices of Overseas Chinese diaspora to maintain familial, material, emotional and cultural ties with the communities left behind in China.

In the Closing Speech, Professor Gregor Benton expressed that the Conference was a great success as the complex topic of *qiaopi* was covered from various angles, both thematic (including methodological) and geographic, in the impressive papers that were presented and further enriched by the insightful discussions in the Question and Answer sessions conducted at the end of each panel session. Revised papers will be submitted to a leading journal in the field of Asian and migration studies for publication as a special issue.

\* *The First Chuan Han-sheng Lecture* was hosted by the University of Queensland in 2011 to commemorate Professor Chuan Han-sheng's hundredth birthday and recognise his academic accomplishments and contributions. The Lecture Series is co-sponsored by Nanyang Technological University, the New Asia Research Institute, The University of Queensland, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shandong University, Tsinghua University and Wuyi University.





## NURTURING RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES: HUMANITIES RESEARCH FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

BY LAW LOK-YIN

The “Conference on Humanities Research from Multiple Perspectives in the 21st Century” was held at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), NTU, on 16 December 2015. Jointly-organised by the Division of Chinese at HSS and the College of Liberal Arts, National Taiwan University, the event aimed to nurture and further research in the humanities.

Professor Liu Hong, Chair of HSS, and Professor Kan Huai-chen, moderator of the project of “Cross-Boundary Cultural Transmission” at National Taiwan University, opened the conference by sharing the current research highlights and objectives of both universities. Their addresses were followed by the keynote

speech by Professor Ronald Egan, Head of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Stanford University.

A total of 12 panels and 36 presenters participated in the Conference, including professors and postgraduate students from Nanyang Technological University, National Taiwan University and other Singapore institutions. Presenters utilised multiple perspectives to analyse humanities research from the various disciplines and their methodologies. Some of the topics include: Chinese culture and literature in Singapore and Malaysia; East Asian Religions and Confucianism; Japanese Language and Literature; Interactions Between China and other

Countries; and History and Literature in Medieval China.

Associated Professor I Lo-fen, Head, Division of Chinese at HSS shared that the Conference had provided a platform for postgraduate students to share their ideas on current humanities research. She said, “Through sharing their views and hearing from others, young researchers will be better able to understand and handle the challenges that they will encounter in their future journey as academics. This will also allow them to make their research more meaningful and relevant to contemporary issues.”



## CULTIVATING INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION – UNDERSTANDING GLOBALISING ASIA: METHODS AND ISSUES

BY ASSISTANT PROFESSOR KEI KOGA

In the context of the rapidly globalising world and the rise of Asia, the need to cultivate interdisciplinary research collaboration to meet new challenges in a more complex world has grown in importance. To this end, the Global Asia Research Cluster at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and the University of Tokyo (UTokyo) jointly-organised a workshop entitled “Understanding Globalising Asia: Methods and Issues” at the University of Tokyo on 28 November 2015. UTokyo was represented by delegates from its Department of Pioneering Asian Studies, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia (IASA), International Master’s/Doctoral Degree Programme: Information, Technology and Society in Asia (ITASIA), Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies (GSII), and the Integrated Human Sciences Programme for Cultural Diversity (IHS).

Besides fostering collaboration between various disciplines, the event also sought to provide a platform for networking between scholars from the two universities, as well as nurturing institutional linkages between NTU and UTokyo.

In their welcome remarks, Professor Shigeto Sonoda, the Department Head of GSII and the Head of IASA, UTokyo, and Professor Liu Hong, Chair of HSS, emphasised the importance of international intellectual and educational collaboration in order to deepen our understanding of Asia and beyond. Professor Sonoda also discussed

the cognitive map of “Asia”, whereby the concept and geographical scope of “Asia” has been differently created, developed, and understood in each country, including Singapore and Japan. However, since the evolution of such different cognitive maps can be more deeply understood and investigated in the future due to the advancement of technology and globalisation, international collaboration has become critically important.

Featuring five panel sessions and ten presentations, the Workshop fostered cross-disciplinary interaction and lively discussions. Presentation topics pertained to disciplines such as sociology, history and international relations, and are as follows:

- Making Genomic Medicine in Asia (Associate Professor Shirley Sun, NTU)
- Ceramics, Nodes, and Networks in an Asian World-System, 9th-15th Centuries (Assistant Professor Goh Geok Yian, NTU)
- Diasporic Chinese Factors in China-Malaysia Transnational Relations (Assistant Professor Yow Chuen Hoe, NTU)
- The Ethics of Religious Giving in Global Perspective (Associate Professor Francis Lim, NTU)
- ASEAN Effect: Regional Community Building and Implication for Global Asia (Assistant Professor Kei Koga, NTU)
- Transnational Communicative Networks in Asia: Focusing on the Japan-Korea Solidarity Movement in the 1970s and 1980s (Dr. Lee Misook, UTokyo)
- The Paradox of the Modern Individual: Citizenship and the Nation in 19th Century Europe and Japan (Dr. Zhong Yijiang, UTokyo)
- How does Social Welfare Programme Work in Ethnic Mobilisation?: Examining the Welfare State Channeling Theory with the Korean Community Case in Japan (Dr. Lee Hyun Son, UTokyo)
- Post-development and the Politics of Association: Social Roles of Religious Leaders in Rural South India (Dr. Ikegami Aya, UTokyo)
- Cambodian Election Reform as Explained and Explaining Variables (Dr. Harada Shiro, UTokyo)

The event concluded with a reception where participants were able to network and further discuss future opportunities for collaboration. The second workshop has been scheduled to be held in Singapore in 2016.



## EXPLORING NEW AVENUES OF LEARNING: SINGAPORE'S SPACE OF THE DEAD

Exploring the subject of death in Singapore, a documentary exhibition, "Singapore's Space of the Dead" was held from November 2015 to January 2016 in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Library at NTU. Filmed from September to November 2015 by 17 students from the History Programme, the six documentaries depict topics ranging from preservation and the future status of Singapore's cemeteries, to traditional ethnic and religious customs on death, as well as funeral services in the island-state.

The short films were shot as part of the curriculum for the course, A Global History of Death (HH4014). Course instructor of HH4014, Assistant Professor Chen Song-Chuan said that the assignment aimed to provide students with the opportunity to "experience a new mode of learning, while exploring the subject from multiple perspectives".

"Death is around us, yet it is a taboo subject in most societies, including Singapore. Exploring the topic allows us to not only learn more about our past, but also explore our socio-cultural norms and values in the present, for the future," elaborated Assistant Professor Chen. "Through their projects, I believe the students have gained a more nuanced understanding of contemporary issues and be better able to contribute to discourse on them."

In one of the works, *Collecting the Pink*

Card: Roland Tay's Charitable Funeral Services, HSS student Ms Janine Ong explored the subject of the destitute elderly in Singapore and their funeral arrangements. She had tried to find some links between the elderly and their perception of death and came across Mr Roland Tay, who is one of the most prominent funeral directors in Singapore. Besides interviewing Mr Tay, Janine shadowed him for one day, documenting the latter's efforts in assisting the elderly – who live alone and have no living relatives – with their funeral arrangements, as well as their daily lives. Mr Tay also showed his "collection" of a few hundred identity cards of those whom he had helped with their last rites.

Janine shared that she became interested in learning more about the destitute elderly from a chance encounter with an old lady. She said, "One Sunday morning, I shared a table with an 80-year-old lady for breakfast. She told me that stays by herself in a rented flat at Boon Keng and that her legs hurt because she worked hard for decades in the past and has to live with the strains and injuries today. My own grandparents passed away when I was very young and so I did not have much interaction with old folks while growing up. The encounter compelled to find out more about these elderly who stay alone in rented flats."

For Clara Lim, Tan Yitong, Marcus Teo and Wong Yuebin, they were keen to explore conservation issues as

part of their work. As conservation of Bukit Brown Cemetery had received prominent media coverage over the past few years, the group decided to focus on the less well-known Yin Foh Kuan Cemetery, or Hakka Cemetery. Through interviews with residents of the area, the students found that opinion was split on whether the cemetery should pave way for development or be bestowed conservation status. The documentary also featured an interview with Mr Loh Kwan Ling, the former supervisor of the Cemetery, who provided background information about the tombs and developmental issues pertaining to the area.

"There are almost negligible articles or studies that look closely at the Hakka Cemetery. It is amazing, considering the amount of land it occupies as well as the cultural history behind it," said group spokesperson Clara. "In terms of knowledge, we gained deeper insights into the history of the Hakka Cemetery, as well as what it meant to people – Hakka descendants with their ancestors buried here and residents living around the area. I think the most important fact that we learnt from the project is that Singaporeans do care about their cultures and heritage."

Besides the short films, the exhibition also comprised a book display on the History of Death. The films can also be viewed on Youtube.

## HSS STUDENT WINS INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE AWARD

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) would like to congratulate Mr Dayton Leow from the Division of Psychology as Overall Winner in the Psychology Category at the Undergraduate Awards 2015.

Dayton submitted his second-year paper, "Age-Related Changes in Relational Encoding", which investigated the age-related differences in functional involvement of both inferior frontal gyrus and medial temporal lobe (hippocampus/parahippocampus) during relational encoding of scenes, using the Novel Pictures vs. Scrambled Pictures task contrast.

"Embarking on neuroimaging research was a daunting task as the initial learning curve was steep. Despite the many challenges and uncertainties I faced, I pushed on with a sheer conviction that I will overcome each challenge,"

said Dayton. "This award will definitely serve as a great encouragement for me to continue postgraduate study by research in the future and possibly pursue a career in academia."

Dayton will be awarded a gold medal and certificate and his paper will be published in the annual academic journal, *The Undergraduate Journal*. He will also be invited to attend the Undergraduates Awards Global Summit in Dublin, Ireland, with all expenses paid for.

### About the Undergraduate Awards

The Undergraduate Awards is the world's largest academic awards programme. It is pan-discipline and identifies leading creative thinkers through their undergraduate coursework. It provides top performing students with the support, network and opportunities they require to raise their profiles and further their career paths.



## HISTORY MAJORS CLINCH TOP PRIZE IN MOBILE APP CONTEST

A group of NTU students, comprising Ms Chan Jia Hui (History), Ms Chua Yi Bei (History), Ms Lim Mee Mee (Civil Engineering) and Ms Jade Wee (Information Engineering and Media) created an innovative smartphone app that won Samsung Solve for Tomorrow 2015 (University Category) contest. Dubbed SafeSnooze, the app was designed to combat driver fatigue and thus, help people drive safer.

Representing the group, Jia Hui said, "We identified the problem of fatigued driving in Singapore after many brainstorming sessions. After some research, we found out that the effect

of fatigued driving is as dangerous as drunk driving. With the increase in number of hours Singaporeans work, we also realised that many of our family members and friends face this issue. However, the majority of Singaporeans do not treat this seriously, and we decided to use this opportunity to raise the awareness of fatigued driving."

For their efforts, the students received a \$10,000 cash prize, a four-day study trip to Samsung's headquarters in Korea and an internship for each of them at Samsung's Singapore Office.

From L-R: Chua Yi Bei, Chan Jia Hui, Jade Wee and Lim Mee Mee

## PULITZER PRIZE FINALIST SHARES EXPERIENCES WITH HSS STUDENTS

The Division of English at HSS was honoured to host famous American playwright Mr Rajiv Joseph on 17 September 2015. The visit was coordinated with Advanced Studies in Drama (HL4012), in which Joseph's work is a central text. During his visit, Mr Joseph presented his working methodology for making theater based on documentary material and spoke about the collaborative process with actors and directors. He also described how research and scholarship inform his creative work, before joining our ongoing discussion of his play in terms of the course themes.

Mr Joseph is the winner of numerous playwriting awards and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 2010 for *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*.



Mr Rajiv Joseph (Leftmost) with HSS faculty and students

# THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN SINGAPORE

Since its launch in 2004, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), NTU, has cultivated a vibrant research culture that contributes to our understanding of both local and global issues. Besides fostering new interdisciplinary research and education programmes based upon the School's comparative strengths and leading-edge research trends in the international academe, HSS also critically engages in dialogues of complex issues confronting the humanities and social sciences. Its researchers have situated these dialogues not only within the changing context of Asia and its long-standing interactions with the rest of the world, but also within the context of Singapore, making meaningful contributions to the island-state.

Today, with over 200 faculty members, HSS continues to pursue excellence not only through providing holistic education to students and nurturing the next generation of thinkers, but also undertaking relevant and meaningful research, contributing and influencing the political, economic and socio-cultural landscapes of Singapore. The next few pages explore HSS research which have and may play an important role in Singapore's future.

## Governance and Public Policy: Strengthening Institutions

Since Singapore became a sovereign state in 1965, it has faced and overcome many considerable challenges to remain a viable entity, as well as progress as a nation. The country's GDP per capita has grown from less than US\$600 at independence, to more than US\$55,000 now, making it one of the richest countries in the world according to Forbes magazine. Much of the country's growth has been credited to its model of governance, and many studies have analysed Singapore's system to not only to learn from it, but also to find ways to improve on it.

Assistant Professor Yu Wenxuan, from the Public Policy and Global Affairs (PPGA) Programme at HSS, focuses his research on performance measurement in the public sector, citizen participation and E-governance, especially within the context of Singapore. He has published articles and book chapters on public administration in Singapore and contributed to the body of knowledge in

the subject. His works include the *Tao of Public Management: A Singapore Perspective (in Chinese)*, which explores Singapore's practices in governance.



Assistant Professor Yu Wenxuan

A topic which Assistant Professor Yu has investigated in depth is the set of anti-corruption measures Singapore adopts. His work in this area explores the strengths and weaknesses of Singapore's approach. Besides critiquing, he also offers possible solutions that would strengthen Singapore's anti-corruption framework.

"Corruption has a negative impact on a country's development," said Assistant Professor Yu. "How well a country tackles the problem boils down to the effectiveness of its system of public administration."

Through his research, Assistant Professor Yu was also able to develop a governance evaluation framework, which has allowed him to perform a comprehensive review of the Singapore model. This has enabled him to lecture and explain the system's intricacies to local and international audiences, generating discussion on public management and enhancing Singapore's global reputation.

Like Assistant Professor Yu, Assistant Professor Woo Jun Jie is also interested in exploring public management issues in Singapore. He is an active contributor to Singapore's national dailies and writes about issues pertaining to national development and public administration. Informed by his research work, these articles contribute to national discourse and stimulate fruitful discussion among the

3Ps – public, policy-makers and private organisations, as well as strengthening linkages between all stakeholders in the nation’s progress.



Assistant Professor Woo Jun Jie

Assistant Professor Woo’s research also explores Singapore’s status as a leading financial centre and ways which Singapore can remain so. For him, Singapore’s weakness in financial innovation means that it must always “remain on its toes and find new niches” to stay ahead of regional competitors. Besides analysing financial regulations, he also often acts as a bridge between regulators and the financial sector.

“It is a challenge for academics to obtain information from bankers as we are seen as part of the Establishment,” said Assistant Professor Woo.

“However, we need their input as we want to establish their needs and challenges in order to craft effective recommendations to regulators and enhance Singapore’s ability to be a premier financial hub.”

Similar to the first two researchers from PPGA, Professor Liu Hong is concerned with changing ethnic identities and public policy implications, and has investigated the formation and transformation of the socio-economic and political structure of post-1965 Singapore. Using a wide range of primary data such as archival and interviews, he highlights the importance of interpreting Singapore’s development from 1945 to the present from two interconnected angles, namely

institutional building and evolution (as hardware) and the entrepreneurship/ talent strategies (as software).

Professor Liu recently published a book entitled *Singapore’s Talent Strategies and Practices* (in Chinese). It is the first book-length analysis pertaining to the foundation of Singapore’s successful stories, namely, how does the country recruit and nurture talents, both domestically and globally. Aimed at a wide-ranging readership especially scholars and government officials who are keen in understanding and learning from the Singapore model, this book provides a systemic examination of relevant policies, institutions, implementations, and outcomes of Singapore’s talent strategies.

### **Economic Challenges: Pioneering New Perspectives**

One aspect of governance that is studied closely is the area of economics or the “the allocation of scarce resources to competing demands” as described by Professor Euston Quah, an expert on cost-benefit analysis and Head of the Division of Economics at HSS.

“In resource-scarce Singapore, cost-benefit analysis helps the public sector to not only make informed decisions on how to distribute resources in Singapore, but also makes the decision-making process transparent,” he said.

Professor Quah, who is also a member of the newly launched Social Sciences Research Council of Singapore, has published two influential books on cost-benefit analysis. His work has been made a reference reading by the US White House Office of Management and Budget for research grant applications, and he was the keynote speaker when Singapore’s Ministry of Finance launched Centre for Public Management, a new departmental unit on cost-benefit analysis. Having pioneered courses on the topic at two universities in Singapore, Professor Quah’s expertise has enabled him to



Professor Quah’s books on cost-benefit analysis

serve as advisor to various government ministries and statutory boards including the Ministry of Transport and the Energy Market Authority. He was also a member of the Prime Minister’s Economic Strategies Sub-Committee on Energy and Environment, as well as being involved in various projects such as examining the cost-benefits of building a new sports hub and the costs – direct and implied – of various types of crimes in Singapore.

Given the record levels of transboundary haze experienced by Singapore in 2013 and 2015, Professor Quah’s work on Environmental Economics has also proved most useful and relevant to the country. Besides investigating the economic impact of air pollution for the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, he has also conducted studies on the costs of various air pollutants and the impact of rising sea levels.

“Costs of the haze or air pollution may include tourism losses, medical bills, businesses affected and school closures,” said Professor Quah. “It also helps us to better decide on the amount of aid to render Indonesia and solve the haze problem, as well as which sectors of the economy to assist, and how to assist.”

Professor Quah is also working on two books – one on transboundary pollution, and the other on the Southeast Asian transboundary haze – which will be published in 2016.

On the other hand, Professor Tan Kong Yam, also from the Division of Economics, is working on projects that

examine how Singapore (and Southeast Asia) may prosper from China's economic rise. Professor Tan, a former Chief Economist of the Singapore Government at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, believes that China will be the engine of growth for the global and ASEAN economies.



*Professor Tan Kong Yam*

"China and the ASEAN economies can be complementary," explained Professor Tan. "Because of China's One Belt, One Road development strategy, ASEAN is in position to attract infrastructure and capital investment from China, which will lead to economic growth in the region, making Southeast Asia a market for China's exports and vice versa."

Professors Quah and Tan are just two of the prominent economists at NTU, which also includes Emeritus Professor Lim Chong Yah and Albert Winsemius Chair Professor Ng Yew Kwang, all of whom have contributed much to the field of economics in Singapore.

### **The Social and Cultural: Redefining Norms and Practices**

Beyond economic utility and wellbeing, research at HSS also involves changing societal mindsets and cultural expectations. According to various surveys, Singaporean workers work some of the longest hours globally, with rising stress levels over the past few years.

One project that addresses the issue of work-related stress is the "Mindful-

Compassion Art Therapy (MCAT) for Palliative End-of-Life Care in Singapore", conducted by Assistant Professor Andy Ho from the Division of Psychology at HSS.

In MCAT, palliative care professionals are exposed to the combination of art therapy and the practice of mindfulness, with the aims of facilitating introspection, reflective self-awareness and creative expression among participants. According to Assistant Professor Ho, participants arrive at a "better understanding their own needs and get in touch with their emotions, and ultimately, find greater meaning and new perspectives for growth and transformation".

"The need for empathy and the difficulties of coping with morality when caring for the dying pose great psychological strains on palliative care professionals. Given the intense emotional and existential nature of their work, they are particularly prone to burnout, and supervision is one important way to provide adequate support. My research in this area strongly indicates that the inclusion of art therapy within supervision can effectively reduce burnout and enhance emotional regulation among palliative care workers."

To date, more than 60 palliative care professionals including doctors, nurses, social workers and personal care workers have participated in and completed the MCAT supervision and are able to apply their learning to their work.



*Some of the artworks by MCAT participants*



*Nanyang Assistant Professor Gianluca Esposito*

Besides workers, family members, especially mothers, are also under strain in Singapore. Findings from past research indicate that the prevalence of post-natal depression is as high as one in 12 women. To improve mental health and adjustment of families, Nanyang Assistant Professor Gianluca Esposito and Assistant Professor Setoh Pei Pei from the Division of Psychology are



*Assistant Professor Setoh Pei Pei*

investigating the caregiving practices of various caregivers in Singaporean families and how these practices are influenced by cultural beliefs, parenting styles and mothers' work-life balance. According to Assistant Professors Esposito and Setoh, "Mothers are usually the primary caregivers for babies, and mothers have to cope with frequent night waking because of breast-feeding and/or babies' waking up at night. Besides experiencing more sleep deprivation and fragmentation,

mothers are also susceptible to post-partum depression which affects their ability to provide optimal stimulation to their babies; mothers' ability to return to work; and possibly the family's decision about having more children. The project aims to contribute to family policy research, with the findings used to re-examine the support provided to families, and to educate with evidence-based care recommendations. Ultimately, we hope to enhance the quality of family life in Singapore."

As described above, psychologists analyse individuals. In contrast, sociologists such as Assistant Professor Kamaludeen bin Mohamed Nasir from the Division of Sociology at HSS engage in the study of social relations and examine social structures that shape societies.

Assistant Professor Kamaludeen has conducted research on various aspects of Singapore society from youth culture to elite cohesion. He has shared his findings with other Singaporeans from university students to policy makers in government ministries and statutory boards to social and grassroots organisations. He has also given talks and participated in closed door sharing sessions with various government bodies such as the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Manpower and the Housing Development Board on various issues from meritocracy to poverty.

He has also emphasised the need to look at Singapore society from a comparative perspective in his three most recent books. He believes that such analysis will "allow us to go beyond the coercive Singaporean exceptionalism narrative which tends to cloak the convergences of living in a global city".

For him, Singapore's economic success has made the city-state attractive to migrants who are forming an increasing proportion of the overall population. In the context of 2013's Population White Paper by Singapore's National Population and Talent Division, Assistant Professor Kamaludeen's

book (co-authored with Bryan Turner), *The Future of Singapore: Population, Society and the Nature of the State*, is a timely analysis of the challenges facing Singapore society. The book discusses the "growing opposition to migration, and explores how the factors which have underpinned Singapore's success ... are at risk of being undermined by the population changes and their effects".



*Assistant Professor Kamaludeen bin Mohamed Nasir*

"While we continue to engage Singaporeans, we need to ensure that others have an accurate depiction of our society. This will benefit us socially, politically and economically as understanding between the various communities are enhanced," he said. "Living in an interconnected world, which is unfortunately shrouded with prejudices and preconceived notions, this is something that is not only necessary, but also urgent."

In addition to Assistant Professor Kamaludeen's work, Professor Liu Hong's research on Singapore Chinese society and the complex responses of locals toward newcomers have demonstrated the need to view integration issues from both ethnic/national and policy perspectives. Professor Liu argues that Chinese entrepreneurs' homeland connections have actually reinforced their embeddedness in the Singapore society. His findings have been published in the past two years, in leading migration journals (such as *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and *Asian-Pacific Migration Studies*) and top area studies journals (such as *Journal of Asian Studies* and *Journal of*

*Contemporary China*).

## **A Key to our Future: The Humanities and Social Sciences**

As evidenced in Singapore and around the world, change is inevitable. The exponential progress of technological advancement has modified traditional ways of doing and thinking, bringing wholesale changes to society on a global scale. In the face of these new challenges, the importance of the humanities and social sciences has never been greater than now.

"The Humanities and Social Sciences are fundamentally concerned with understanding human beings and societies. History and geography, language and religion, emotions and behavior, literature and the arts, the economy and the impact of technologies on society and the environment—these are some of the issues the Humanities and Social Sciences seek to address, and we do so integrally, demolishing artificial disciplinary boundaries along the way, with the view of understanding the complexities of human life and bringing meaningful progress to society," said Professor Alan Chan, Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences.

In this increasingly complex world, the humanities and social sciences empower us to navigate uncertainty and find answers to new and complex questions. They will remind us of the primacy of human agency; they will act as an anchor to the past; but most importantly, as Singapore progresses into the 21st century and beyond, the humanities and social sciences will be a key to finding innovative solutions to solve future challenges.



# AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

BY ABIGAIL CHUA

**“EVERYTHING IN THE BRAIN TAKES TIME. THE SIGNALS FROM THE EYES CAN TAKE UP TO A TENTH OF A SECOND UNTIL THEY ARRIVE IN THE VISUAL PROCESSING CENTRES IN THE BRAIN. THIS MEANS, ALL INPUT THAT WE RECEIVE IS ALWAYS OUT OF DATE, YET WE ARE VERY GOOD AT, FOR EXAMPLE, HITTING A TENNIS BALL FLYING AT US AT 100 KM/H, OR POURING A CUP OF TEA OR *KOPI* WITHOUT THE CUP OVER-SPILLING.”**

In deciding what discipline to pursue as an undergraduate in the University of Osnabrück, Germany, Nanyang Assistant Professor Gerrit Maus was torn between varying fields of study, and struggled in restricting himself to choose just one. Eventually he settled for a unique major that was interdisciplinary in nature – Cognitive Science. Even now, under the Psychology Division at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, he still identifies himself as an interdisciplinary scientist at heart.

“After finishing high school, I was interested in so many things – Physics, Computer Science, Psychology, Languages, Literature, etc. I really had a hard time deciding. Finally, I came across this intriguing ‘interdisciplinary’ study programme called Cognitive Science. It was the first degree of its kind in Germany, so we always had to explain it to others. Basically, it’s a big mixed bag of disciplines; from neurobiology, psychology to artificial intelligence, mathematics, and philosophy, it is all about studying how the human mind works. For me, it was a perfect match, because I could study and explore a wide area range of interests while focusing on really interesting questions.”

For Assistant Professor Maus, who grew up in Fulda, Germany, the most interesting question would be: how

exactly does the brain work? He elaborates, “Everything in the brain takes time. The signals from the eyes can take up to a tenth of a second until they arrive in the visual processing centres in the brain. This means, all input that we receive is always out of date, yet we are very good at, for example, hitting a tennis ball flying at us at 100 km/h, or pouring a cup of tea or *kopi* without the cup over-spilling.”

Apart from understanding how the brain functions, visual illusions and phenomena are also fascinating topics of study for him. He said, “For instance, a visual illusion in popular culture that many would be familiar with would be the picture of a lace dress that went viral on social media. Netizens were split into two camps – those that visually perceived the dress to be gold and white versus blue and black. Such an incident not only makes for great social media fodder, but also tells us a little more about how the brain works in perceiving information, in this case colour.”

Assistant Professor Maus’ interest in the field of visual perception and cognitive neuroscience was first piqued during his exchange in England, where he attended a talk about visual illusions. He then approached the speaker, requesting for a chance to contribute to the latter’s research. The subsequent

project he undertook turned into his bachelor’s thesis. After graduation he returned to England, and worked on follow-up projects, which in turn became his PhD thesis. As such, his journey into academia was organic, and he enjoys the flexibility of combining science and teaching.

To him, NTU has a lot to offer with the new Experimental Medicine Building which houses a state-of-the-art cognitive neuroscience laboratory. Presently, his lab’s research focuses on extrapolation and interpolation in sensory systems or “how the brain fills in gaps when there is missing information in the input from the senses.” His research sheds light into “why the world does not disappear each time we blink”, and how the brain controls eye movements so that the environment around us is perceived as a stable image.

Still getting used to the tropical climate in Singapore, Assistant Professor Maus loves local food like Ayam Buah Keluak. Weekends are spent exploring nature enclaves such as Sungei Buloh and Pulau Ubin together with his wife.

“I love Singapore. Sometimes it feels like living in a science fiction movie. When walking around the Fusionopolis area, I’m reminded of the Star Trek scenes playing on 24th century earth!”

# GLOBAL INSIGHTS

BY ABIGAIL CHUA

Fresh out of high school in South Korea, Dr. Ahn Hyejeong took a leap of faith and made a bold move. Desiring to see the world, she travelled by herself for almost one and a half years, backpacking across Australia as well as Southeast Asia. Through interaction with locals during her travels, she was able to fine-tune and understand the accents of various countries' Englishes, and their cultural contexts. It was such first-hand exposure that triggered her love for linguistics. A lecturer at NTU's Language and Communication Centre (LCC) since 2015, Dr. Ahn speaks fondly of her new job as well as the caliber of the students under her.

"It has been absolutely fantastic. So far, I have only taught for one semester, but students here have gone way beyond my expectations. Additionally, many of the researchers and lecturers at LCC are prominent in the field of linguistics, so I was excited when there was an opening to teach as a lecturer."

Born in South Korea, Dr. Ahn longed for freedom beyond the societal pressure to excel in South Korea and thus pursued her degree in primary school teaching at the University of South Australia. She attributes her love for teaching to her parents and grandparents, who were also teachers before her. However, after working as a primary school teacher for five years, she was eager to broaden her horizons and embrace a new challenge.

"I worked as a primary school teacher and I loved it, but I wanted and needed something more. I decided to move on and pursue my PhD in Applied Linguistics at Monash University in Melbourne."

Dr. Ahn's interest in linguistics was accidental. She had attended a linguistics conference on the complexities of English as a language and managed to link what she learnt from the conference to her own experiences and interactions during her travels.

"I realised that I wanted to learn how English, as an international language, can accommodate people's different identities and culture. For instance, apart from accents, I find it fascinating that there are culturally specific ways in which people greet and thank each other."

Presently, her new interest lies in deciphering the differences in writing styles between Singaporean and Australian students, despite English being the *lingua franca* of both countries. She delights in sharing an international and cosmopolitan perspective with her students, drawing upon her own travel experiences, as well as her Korean ethnicity and

Australian citizenship. She loves the dynamic exchange she has with her students, and enjoys gaining a deeper understanding of Singaporean culture through her local students.

As for Singapore, Dr. Ahn says that it is "an awesome country". She finds living in Singapore incredibly convenient, and hails the MRT as being really affordable. On weekends, she catches up with fellow friends, and tries out the many different local and international cuisine Singapore has to offer. Weekends trips to Thailand or Malaysia are also occasional treats, as she appreciates Singapore's centrality.





“My dreams and ambitions evolved throughout the years,” mused Assistant Professor Andy Ho. “From a law enforcement officer, to a fashion designer, to a recording artist. But no one, not even myself, thought I would be an academic in Psychology. Life is full of surprises.”

Assistant Professor Ho shared that he has always been fascinated by the human mind – how it thinks, operates and controls emotion and behavior. He reveals that he is very interested in one particular mind.

“How is the human mind not interesting? Tell me you do not want to find out what actually goes on underneath Donald Trump’s hair!” he expressed with a grin.

On a more serious note, Assistant Professor Ho shared that prior to joining the Division of Psychology at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), NTU, he was a researcher at the University of Hong Kong. His research interests span end-of-life issues, public health and mental health, holistic therapy and community empowerment.

# THE LOVE OF LIFE

## “HOW IS THE HUMAN MIND NOT INTERESTING?”

Teaching-wise, he wishes to “integrate mindfulness practices” into his classrooms and build compassion and resilience among his students through affective curriculums.

Assistant Professor Ho has also been a practicing Marriage and Family Therapist for a decade, working specifically with dying patients and bereaved families. “From my years of experience working in palliative end-of-life care, I came to realise that most people do not fear death itself, but rather, the consequence that death brings to their families,” he said. “What dying patients want in their final days are immaterial, but simply peace of mind and heart, knowing that their loved ones will live on with their wisdoms and blessings.”

Having worked with many patients, Assistant Professor Ho reveals that his patients have had a profound influence on his attitude towards life and sharing a story on how a terminally ill patient “illuminated the meaning of our humble existence” and taught him to cherish the “finite time” he has on earth to appreciate the people who love and care for him.

“A 78-year-old gentleman with terminal cancer who lived in a nursing home once told me during an interview, ‘I lived a long life and I am not afraid of death. What I am afraid of is not living my life well enough. What I am afraid of is having wasted much of my life worrying

about money and chasing the dream of an affluent life, while not realising that the love of my family is what truly makes me rich.’”

Speaking about love, Assistant Professor Ho shared that he joined NTU partly because of love. He said, “I met my fiancé and soon to be wife at a Life and Death Education Conference in 2013. Little did I know that I would move sea and mountain because of this kind and beautiful Peranakan Singaporean lady. And of course, NTU being a young and vibrant university, affords me ample opportunities to build on my prior work and positively impact Singapore.”

Besides being able to work on his passions and make meaningful contributions to his new home, life at NTU and in Singapore has been “fabulous” for him as he has discovered the food paradise that Singapore is.

“Who would not love the greenery and peaceful nature that our campus is immersed in?” he exclaimed. “I was born in Hong Kong and grew up in Vancouver Canada. With the love snow and the cold, while breathing and bleeding hockey, I consider myself a true Canadian. With my recent infatuation with bak kut teh and hawker centres, I also discovered a little Singaporean in me.”

## BOOKS

### Digital Culture and Religion in Asia

Assistant Professor Sam Han (*Sociology Division*) and Assistant Professor Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir (*Sociology Division*). Routledge. 2015.



This book critically analyses the functions and interconnectedness between religion and digital media in a range of East Asian countries. It discusses both how

religious organisations make use of new technologies, and also explores how new technologies are reshaping religion in novel and interesting ways. Based on extensive research, the book focuses in particular on Christianity in South Korea, Neo-Shintoism in Japan, Falun Gong in China and Islam in Southeast Asia. Offering a comparative perspective on a broad range of media practices including video gaming, virtual worship, social networking and online testimonials, the book also investigates the idea that use of technology in itself mirrors religious practices. With an analysis of the impact of religion and new technology on national consciousness in a range of geographical locations, the authors offer a broadening of the scope of the study of religion, culture and media.

### Technologies of Religion: Spheres of the Sacred in a Post-Secular Modernity

Assistant Professor Sam Han (*Sociology Division*). Routledge. 2015.

Bringing together empirical cultural and media studies of religion and critical social theory, the book investigates the powerful entanglement of religion

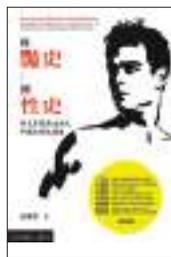


and new media technologies taking place today, taking stock of the repercussions of digital technology and culture on various aspects of religious life and contemporary culture. Making the argument that religion and new media technologies come together to create “spheres” – environments produced by an architecture of digital technologies, the book suggests that prior social scientific conceptions of religious worship, participation, community and membership are being recast. Using the case of the strain of American Christianity called ‘multi-site’, the book details and examines the way in which this new mode of religiosity bridges the realms of the technological and the physical. Lastly, the book situates and contextualises these developments within the larger theoretical concerns regarding the place of religion in contemporary capitalism.

### From Amorous Histories to Sexual Histories: Tongzhi Writing and the Construction of Masculinities in Late Qing and Modern China

《从艳史到性史：同志书写与近现代中国的男性建构》

Assistant Professor Hee Wai Siam (*Chinese Division*). National Central University Press. 2015.



This book unearths queer writings that have been concealed in the grand narrative of early modern and contemporary Chinese literary

history (1849-2001), and rethinks how the early modern and contemporary constructions of Chinese masculinity, guided by patriarchal ideology, control

Chinese queer writing and gender politics. The book highlights how the traditional “amorous history” narrative preference, which once formed a Chinese ars erotica, was marginalised by the nationalist state’s use of the pathological narrative mechanism of “sexual history”, known as scientia sexualis, in early modern and contemporary China.

### Guide to Research Projects for Engineering Students: Planning, Writing, Presenting

By Associate Professor Leong Eng-Choon, Dr Carmel Heah Lee Hsia and Dr Kenneth Ong Keng Wee (*Language and Communication Centre*). CRC Press (Taylor and Francis). 2015.



Competence in planning, writing and presenting research projects is required of academics. This book serves as a guide for engineering graduate and undergraduate

students as well as novice supervisors taking them through the research project process from start to finish. The process is presented as comprising three critical components: planning, writing and presenting. The planning component covers project planning and management, including knowledge of empiricist principles in research design. Advice for the writing component is based on a synthesis of content patterns found in engineering discourse, Toulmin-based argumentation and language conventions. Strategies in conducting academic oral presentations successfully are also included in the book.

### Singapore's Talent Strategies and Practices

《新加坡的人才战略与实》

Professor Liu Hong (*History Programme*) and Wang Huiyao. Beijing: Dangjian Duwu Chubanshe. 2015.



Commissioned by the China Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security for the "Key National Publication Project on Talent Development"

and written for both scholars as well as government officials involved in China's talent development, this monograph is the first book-length analysis of the development of Singapore's talent strategies and their implementation at the macro and micro levels. Co-authored by Professor Liu Hong and Professor Wang Huiyao (President of the Centre for China and Globalisation and a State Council Advisor), this book examines key policies and specific measures the Singapore government has formulated in nurturing domestic talents and recruiting international talents. It also provides cases studies of talent management in the biomedical sciences, higher education and media sectors. The book concludes with policy-oriented discussions and recommendations with respect to the ramifications of Singapore's practices for China's talent strategy.

### The Tao of Public Management: A Singapore Perspective

《道法无常：新加坡公共管理之道》

Assistant Professor Yu Wenxuan (*Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme*). Shanghai Sanlian Shudian. 2015.



The author argues that it is problematic to believe that every culture and country should embrace *Tao*, a fixed set of public management principles. Using

Singapore as a case study, the author examines the compatibility and necessity of these public management principles in this book, which comprises four sections. The first section explores the values and philosophy of public management in Singapore, while analysing community management and anti-corruption practices of Singapore's People's Action Party. The second section analyses Singapore's bilingual policy and also provides suggestions on how China may reform its education system and enhance its international soft power. The third section offers constructive policy solutions to complex public policy issues in China. The last section covers debates on Chinese administrative reform and Singapore Education.

### Dermot Healy: The Collected Short Stories\*

Associate Professor Neil Murphy (*English Division*) and Keith Hopper (Eds.). Dalkey Archive Press. 2015.



Dermot Healy wrote intricate and innovative short stories that, along with works by Neil Jordan and Desmond Hogan, relaunched the Irish short story tradition. Set in small-town Ireland and the equally suffocating confines of the Irish expat communities of 1970s London, Healy's stories show

compassion toward the marginalised and the dispossessed. Gathering all of Healy's stories together for the first time, this collection includes the long prose-drama "After the Off" and Healy's final short works, "Along the Lines" and "Images."

### Fighting with Shadows\*

Associate Professor Neil Murphy (*English Division*) and Keith Hopper (Eds.). Dalkey Archive Press. 2015.



Initially published in 1984, Dermot Healy's stunning first novel, *Fighting with Shadows*, returns to print after almost thirty years. Largely set in the border

village of Fanacross, Co. Fermanagh, as Ireland stumbles clumsily toward modernity, the Allen family negotiate a bitter and troubled terrain. *Fighting with Shadows* offers extraordinary and poetic glimpses of the compelling lives of ordinary people. The novel's landscape is of borderlands, of in-between spaces; it tells of violently sundered geographical borders, of maddening religious differences, of the anguished gaps between people as they struggle to find each other, and of how the dead reside among its inhabitants long after they've passed. A realist account and nightmarish fable, *Fighting with Shadows* is critical to the history of modern Irish fiction.

\*These books were launched by Booker Prize winner Anne Enright at an event which was held at Trinity College Dublin and attended by many authors and artists, including Oscar winner Neil Jordan.

## BOOK CHAPTERS

### Interview with Divya Victor

*Caleb Beckwith with J. Gordon Faylor, Danny Snelson and Assistant Professor Divya Victor (English Division) and an afterword by Joseph Mosconi, Reconflating. Conversations with Conceptual Affiliated Writers, pp. 35-62. 2015.*

Interview with Divya Victor is a 27 page long written interview between authors and critics Divya Victor and Caleb Beckwith. It records a six-month conversation about North American Conceptual writing, race and ethnicity, South Indian migrant identity, and the formal and political notions of “naturalisation” as it pertain to the author’s diasporic position. The long interview uses these issues to frame a discussion about craft, affect, genre, and social responsibility that builds to broader commentary about the current state of independent publishing and writing communities in the United States. The conversation aims to isolate a critique of social networking as a viable source of aesthetic critique and considers the values of communal activism within localised poetry communities in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia and New York.

### Three Deconstructions: On Wu Pen Seng’s Photography

*Assistant Professor Divya Victor (English Division). Eye/Feel/Write: Experiments in Ekphrasis. 2015.*

This series of three poems was commissioned by the Singapore Writers Festival in collaboration with Squirle Line Press, The National Gallery Singapore, and Singapore Art Museum. Edited by Singaporean poet and critic Desmond Kon, the collection features ten distinguished authors from

Singapore. The collection hosts the ekphrastic responses to ten artworks by Singaporean painters, photographers, and multi-media artists currently held in The National Gallery Singapore. *Three Deconstructions* takes a minimalist lyric and documentary approach to produce an ekphrastic response to Wu Pen Seng’s photograph Construction, which was captured in 1958 during the construction of a temporary exhibition hall at the Old Paya Lebar Airport. The poems explore the themes of migrant labour and the power dynamics between construction-sector labourers from India and the public gaze.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

### Introduction: Sustaining the Eighteenth Century

*Assistant Professor Samara Anne Cahill (English Division), 1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era 22, pp. 193-200. 2015.*

This interdisciplinary essay was co-authored by a range of international scholars interested in sustainability pedagogy in East Asia and Southeast Asia. Combining anthropological and literary approaches within a historical framework, the article shows how eighteenth-century English literature can be made relevant and timely for students in the contemporary Southeast Asian classroom while promoting awareness of historical and cultural differences. By focusing on representations of water use during the period 1700-2015, students can analyse how poor sanitation planning leads to such issues as the odor pollution that plagued the urban space of eighteenth-century London and continues to plague the Pacific island of Tuvalu. In addition to studying historical representations of water

use, students can self-analyse their water-consumption patterns to link socio-economic concerns (who has access to clean water and under what conditions?) to students’ own “water footprints” (individual impact on water availability) in contemporary Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

### Novel “Modes” and “Indian Goods”: Textilic Nationalism in A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies and The Lining of the Patch Work Screen

*Assistant Professor Samara Anne Cahill (English Division). Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, 44, pp. 163-184. 2015.*

In this article, I coined the term “textilic nationalism” to discuss the convergence of English protectionist rhetoric targeting the global textile trade; national security concerns in England after the Revolution of 1688; and the experimental realist fiction of Jacobite novelist Jane Barker. I conclude that in her formally innovative fiction, Barker used interlocking synecdoches of cultural hybridity to argue that England’s national security could only be protected by importing goods associated with a Stuart-aligned Anglo-Indian-Portuguese trade network and by purging the Dutch financial influence that had led, in her view, to the formation of the Bank of England, England’s dependence on an unreliable credit-based economy, and the South Sea Bubble stock market crash.

### Realist Latitudes: Textilic Nationalism and the Global Fiction of the 1720s

*Assistant Professor Samara Anne Cahill (English Division). Digital Defoe 7.1, <http://english.illinoisstate.edu/digitaldefoe/>. 2015*

This article builds on the work of Rachel Carnell, Margaret Doody, and Srinivas Aravamudan to argue that the “prescriptive” Whig realism of the eighteenth-century English novel became naturalised over the course of the early eighteenth century so that alternate, more global, trajectories of the novel (and therefore the alternate, less nationalistic “realisms” that could have subtended it) were ignored. In other words, the domestication of the English realist novel elided not only the English voices that complicated or challenged British colonialism, but also the complex global trade dynamics that situated England in equal relation to, rather than superior to, other cultures.

**Popular Memory, Chineseness and Female Immigrants: A Case Study on Wu Cun’s *Mahua* Cinema**

《人民记忆、华人性与女性移民：以吴村的马华电影为中心》

Assistant Professor Hee Wai Siam (Chinese Division). *Router: A Journal of Cultural Studies* 《文化研究》, 20, pp. 103-148. 2015.

This article examines three Sinophone films shot in Singapore by director Wu Cun from China after the Second World War. Through close reading of these filmic texts, and reportings and discussions of them in the 1940s Singapore-Malayan cinema tabloids *Amusement* and *Dianying Quan*, this article aims to reconstruct the popular memory of “*Mahua* (Malaysian Chinese) Cinemas” and their relationship with “*Mahua* Literature” and Chinese film culture. It also probes the naming of “*Mahua* Cinema” in their temporal context and how they re-present post-war Malayan Chinese female migrants, loyalists, and foreigners, with reference to historical materials on the migration of Chinese females to Nanyang in early days.

**Gao Xingjian’s Early Theory and Practice of the Art of Fiction: A Focus on A Preliminary Examination of Modern Fictional Techniques**

《高行健早期的小说艺术理论与实践：以《现代小说技巧初探》为中心》

Assistant Professor Hee Wai Siam (Chinese Division). *Journal of National Taiwan Normal University* 《师大学报(语言与文学类)》 60(2), pp. 29-55. 2015.

This article reviews and examines Gao Xingjian’s early theory and practice of the art of fiction. Its main focus is A Preliminary Examination of Modern Fictional Techniques, but several essays that were not included in this book are also incorporated. This article explores the modern context and advocacy of innovation in fictional forms seen in Gao Xingjian’s early theories of the art of fiction. This article discusses the degree to which the above mentioned theoretical works for the reform of the fictional form were applied in Gao Xingjian’s early novella *Such a Pigeon Called Red Lips* and the short story *Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather*, and assesses their effectiveness.

「화어계」로 싱가포르와 말레이시아의 첫 영화를 논하다

**New Immigrant: The First Locally Produced Film in Singapore and Malaysia from a Sinophone Perspective.**

Assistant Professor Hee Wai Siam (Chinese Division). *영화중국(Global Journal of Cinema China)* 2, pp. 29-49. 2015.

Based on historical evidence from a large number of newspapers from the 1920s, this article disputes the

assertion of the international academic circle that the film *Xin Ke* was never released. The article demonstrates the historical significance of *Xin Ke* and establishes its status as the first Singaporean-Malayan film. This article describes the origins of, and public response to, the Nanyang Liu Bei-jin Film Company. It also describes the *Xin Ke* production team and the film’s reception. It investigates the problems that the film confronted at the time of its production, including censorship imposed by the British colonial government during the 1920s. Finally, it examines the manner in which the film addressed the disputes between the two major Chinese communities in Nanyang, namely, the ‘*Xin Ke*’ (new immigrants) and the Peranakan (Straits Chinese).

**More than Metamorphosis: The Silkworm Experiments of Toyama Kametarō and his Cultivation of Genetic Thought in Japan’s Sericultural Practices, 1894–1918**

Assistant Professor Lisa Onaga (History Programme). *New Perspectives on the History of Life Sciences and Agriculture, volume 40 of Archimedes*, pp.415-437. 2015.

The scientific investigations of Mendelism in silkworms by Toyama Kametarō during the early 1900s aired questions about biology beyond the genetic determinants of inheritance. As he sought to instill scientific thought in sericulture, Toyama gained insights into different kinds of hereditary phenomena, and he considered the implications of environmental effects. Toyama

explored instances of non-Mendelian inheritance that did not seem to reflect the predictive Mendelian ratios of dominant to recessive traits, and he communicated his experiment-based ideas to sericulturists. Analysis of his efforts to convey new or unsettled scientific ideas to instill practical changes in silkworm improvement contributes to a fuller historical understanding of his investigations and his legacy. The changing knowledge of the silkworm's sexual reproduction serves as an illustration of how scientific understanding of genetics grew in Japan.

**Impacts of reminders on children's cognitive flexibility, intrinsic motivation, and mood depends on who provides the reminders.**

*Assistant Professor Qu Li (Psychology Division). *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2015.*

Reminding children to think about alternatives is a strategy adults often use to promote children's cognitive flexibility, as well as children's engagement in and enjoyment of the task. The current study investigated whether the impacts of reminders on kindergarten children's cognitive flexibility, intrinsic motivation, and mood are moderated by who provides the reminders. Eighty-three healthy 5-year-old kindergarten children were randomly assigned to 2 (Reminder: No reminders vs. Reminders) X 2 (Agent: Tester vs. Partner) conditions. Children's cognitive flexibility was measured via the Block Sorting Task (Fawcett & Garton, 2005; Garton & Pratt, 2001). Children reported their

motivation and mood before Block Sorting, after practising for Block Sorting, and after the actual Block Sorting. Children's intrinsic motivation was measured by evaluating children's choices during a period of free play after Block Sorting. The results revealed that, depending on who provides the reminders, reminding children of alternatives can influence kindergarten children's performance on Block Sorting, children's intrinsic motivation, and children's self-reported mood.

***A Dream Play Dramaturgy: A Glossary of Fragments***

*Assistant Professor Kevin Andrew Riordan (English Division). *Theatre Topics*, 25(2) 2015.*

This essay details Theatre Mitu's dramaturgical process for their 2013 production of August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* in Abu Dhabi. While dramaturgy typically is conceived as the research process in consultation with the making of theatre, for this project Theatre Mitu assumed a collective form of research tethered to the generation of performed material. Drawing on Strindberg's own modernist methods, Theatre Mitu developed a process more closely aligned with contemporary devised theatre than with the usual presentation of canonical modern drama. This essay describes this evolution of the research and creation methods by assessing the company's history, the provocations from Strindberg's work, and the specific context of the Abu Dhabi production. The essay includes this commentary

as well as illustrative documentation from this process.

**Hiroshi Sugimoto and the Photography of Theatre**

*Assistant Professor Kevin Andrew Riordan (English Division). *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 20(2). 2015.*

Hiroshi Sugimoto is best known for his photography, particularly his ongoing series of cinema interiors, of seascapes, and of museum dioramas. But since 2001, Sugimoto has been involved in staging live performances—with a particular interest in Japanese classical forms—and this engagement offers a retrospective vocabulary for articulating what has always been at stake in his artistic practice, namely a rigorous experimentation with time, space, material objects and (sometimes) the body. In light of Sugimoto's increasing interest in theatre, this article proposes a set of performance-inflected tactics for engaging with the provocations and resistances across all his work. Examined in this way, Sugimoto's practice comes to expose many of the common features of theatre and photography and, as the cameras and the stages begin to blur together, the distinctions between these forms are revealed to be only matters of scale, position, or perspective.

### Excerpts from Kith, “Color: A Sequence of Unbearable Happenings” and “Parent Patterns”

Assistant Professor Divya Victor (English Division). *boundary2: Race and Innovation Special Issue*, pp. 51-57. 2015.

The manuscript Kith engages Indian diasporic culture in the United States in the twentieth century in order to give an account of darkness (as abstraction and identity) and racial determinants in the construction of American “nationhood”. It approaches this engagement through elemental themes – Water, Paper, Salt, Blood, Paint – and departs from these through an autobiographical estimation of what “kith” might mean outside national boundaries, and for those who belong to diasporic categories. It queries and describes the terms of the economic and affective transactions of the members of the South Indian diaspora in order to imagine how “brownness” and “blackness” emerge as traded commodities in this transaction. In particular, “Color” considers the historical practice of lynching in the United States, whereas “parent Patterns” considers vernacular Indian-English, as two sites where communal belonging is articulated through the body.

### Race Card

Assistant Professor Divya Victor (English Division). *Crux: Journal of Conceptual Writing*, 6. 2015.

*Race Card* is the full-color document of a performance score created for the performance *Race Card*. *Race Card* responds directly to the continued under-representation of minorities in independent and traditional publishing houses. It asks poetry audiences to discuss race and nationality as critical aspects of the poem’s reception in the spectacle of the live poetry reading. The stakes of this demand evolve as circles of readership and coterie become increasingly identical, and are thus delimited by racialised modes of sociality. *Race Card* invokes both the minimal use of props and the possibility of audience participation deployed in Yoko Ono’s *Cut Piece* (1964) and Adrian Piper’s *Calling Card #1* (1986). In tandem with these iconic works, *Race Card* engages the cultural expectation that an artist’s visibility in her industry/coterie and the visibility of her racial marking must converse in order for the artwork to become visible to audiences.

### Subjects of Poetry

Assistant Professor Divya Victor (English Division). *Ps v no*, 72. 2015.

*Subjects of Poetry* is the score of a durational performance of the same name, which focuses on the themes of economic sustenance, private-foundation arts funding, and national identity in the North American “poetry” – both as a genre and as an institution. This long prose poem utilises language from the high-traffic website of The Poetry Foundation, one of the most renowned and prestigious poetry

institutions and funders of the arts in the United States, in order to critique the instrumentalisation of national and ethnic identity in their public relations, pedagogic, and archival practices.

### External Government Performance Evaluation in China

Assistant Professor Yu Wenxuan (Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme). *Public Performance & Management Review*, 39(1), pp. 144-171, 2016.

Since the early 2000s, external government performance evaluation (EGPE) activities have been burgeoning in China as an important venue to enhance government’s external accountability, but there have been few studies of this important phenomenon. We bridge the gap by examining the emergence and development of EGPE in China and evaluating its performance. We find that EGPE in China is generally of satisfactory quality but has some serious problems; it needs to improve its independence, validity, and reliability. One way to enhance its quality, credibility, and functionality would be by releasing raw data to the public for verification and duplication. Although EGPE is a necessary and promising tool to promote external government accountability, systematic political and administrative reforms will be required to ensure an effective performance management system that does not only serve hierarchical control and internal accountability but also external and democratic accountability.