

International Conference

“What After Eurocentrism? Phenomenology and Intercultural Philosophy”

Date: 23-25 June 2021 Venue: Zoom or CUHK KHB220

(Final Draft on 15/6/2021)

Day 1: 23 June 2021 (Wednesday) 0930-1900 (HKT)

09:30-10:00	Opening Ceremony Prof. Pui-Yin HO, Director, Research Institute for the Humanities, CUHK Prof. Yong HUANG, Chairman, Department of Philosophy, CUHK Prof. Kwok-ying LAU, Director, Edwin Cheng Foundation Asian Centre for Phenomenology, CUHK
10:00-12:00	Session 1 Moderator: Prof. Yong HUANG (CUHK)
10:00-10:40	(1) Jin Y. PARK (American University, USA) <i>Phenomenology of Violence: Engaging with Kwok-ying Lau's Phenomenological Intercultural Philosophy</i>
10:40-11:00	Discussion
11:00-11:40	(2) Dermot MORAN (Boston College, USA) <i>History, Tradition, Worldview – The Complexities of Embodying the Cultural Flesh</i>
11:40-12:00	Discussion
12:00-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:30	Session 2 Moderator: Prof. Kai-Yee WONG (CUHK)
13:30-14:10	(3) Takashi KAKUNI (Ritsumeikan University, Japan) <i>From World Philosophy to Wild Philosophy. Possibility of Intercultural Phenomenology after Euro-centralism</i>
14:10-14:30	Discussion
14:30-15:10	(4) David CHAI (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) <i>To Flesh or not to Flesh? A Daoist Encounter with Merleau-Ponty</i>
15:10-15:30	Discussion

15:30-15:45	Break
15:45-18:45	Session 3 Moderator: Prof. Zemian ZHENG (CUHK)
15:45-16:25	(5) Héctor G. CASTAÑO (National Cheng-Chi University, Taiwan) <i>Cultural Flesh and the Limits of Culture</i>
16:25-16:45	Discussion
16:45-17:25	(6) Jean-Claude GENS (University of Burgundy, France) <i>Participation to other cultural fleshs in the dark age of exarnation</i>
17:25-17:45	Discussion
17:45-18:25	(7) Zhe LIU (Peking University, China) <i>Foreignness in Cultural Otherness</i>
18:25-18:45	Discussion
19:00	Dinner

Day 2: 24 June 2021 (Thursday) 0900-1900 (HKT)

09:00-11:00	Session 5 Moderator: Prof. Chung-Yi CHENG (CUHK)
09:00-09:40	(8) Kuan-min HUANG (Academia Sinica, Taiwan) <i>Cultural Chiasm and Brut Being: In Face of Border and Boundary</i>
09:40-10:00	Discussion
10:00-10:40	(9) Kwok-ying LAU (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) <i>Title</i>
10:40-11:00	Discussion
11:00-11:15	Break
11:15-13:15	Session 6 Moderator: Prof. Chong-fuk LAU (CUHK)
11:15-11:55	(10) Chung-Chi YU (National Sun-Yat-Sen University, Taiwan) <i>Cultural Renewal and the Problem of Eurocentrism</i>
11:55-12:15	Discussion
12:15-12:55	(11) Nobuo KAZASHI (Kobe University, Japan) <i>Japanese Modernity as "Hybrid Flesh": Confucian Disputes and Engagement with the West</i>
12:55-13:15	Discussion
13:15-14:45	Lunch
14:45-16:45	Session 7 Moderator: Dr. Alex LO Kit-Hung (CUHK)
14:45-15:25	(12) Kwok-kui WONG (Baptist University, Hong Kong) <i>The East and West Dualism and its Metaphysical Root</i>
15:25-15:45	Discussion
15:45-16:25	(13) Xiaomeng NING (Peking University, China) <i>Some Reflections on the Existential Implications of Memory: Taking the Representation of Reminiscence in Chinese Literati Painting as an Example</i>
16:25-16:45	Discussion
16:45-17:00	Break

17:00-19:00	Session 8 Moderator: Prof. Saulius GENIUSAS (CUHK)
17:00-17:40	(14) Jong-kwan LEE (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea) <i>After Eurocentrism: Technocentrism or Decentered Humanism?</i>
17:40-18:00	Discussion
18:00-18:40	(15) Man-to TANG (Sun Yat-sen University (Zhuhai), China) <i>The Oblivion of the Cultural Origin</i>
18:40-19:00	Discussion
19:00	Dinner

Day 3: 25 June 2021 (Friday) 0900-1800 (HKT)

09:00-11:00	Session 9 Moderator: Prof. Gregory MOSS (CUHK)
09:00-09:40	(16) Philip BUCKLEY (McGill University, Canada) <i>Title</i>
09:40-10:00	Discussion
10:00-10:40	(17) Thomas NENON (The University of Memphis, USA) <i>Stefan Zweig's and Edmund Husserl's Nostalgia for a Lost (Non-exclusionary) Europe</i>
10:40-11:00	Discussion
11:00-11:15	Break
11:15-13:15	Session 10 Moderator: Kwok-ying LAU (CUHK)
11:15-11:55	(18) Yuen-hung TAI (The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) <i>Struggle with the state's irresponsibility: revisiting Arendt's idea of responsibility</i>
11:55-12:15	Discussion
12:15-12:55	(19) Zhihua YAO (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) <i>Beingness (sattā) and Isness (astitva)</i>
12:55-13:15	Discussion
13:15-13:30	Closing Ceremony
13:30-15:00	Lunch
15:00-18:00	Movie Show Moderator: Prof. Chung-yi CHENG (CUHK) <i>A Passage to Philosophy</i>
18:00	Closing Dinner

Abstracts

(Draft on 15/6/2021)

Session 1 (1) *Phenomenology of Violence: Engaging with Kwok-ying Lau's Phenomenological Intercultural Philosophy*

Jin Y. PARK (American University, USA)

The “crisis” that the world has been facing at least for the past year and a half seems to beg us to rethink the role and meaning of philosophy in our time. Phenomenology can be one of the candidates that we can engage with as we remap the territory of philosophy. But what would it mean to get engaged with a philosophical tradition that began in the West in order to go beyond the West? What kind of philosophy do we envision after “Eurocentrism” when we do so without leaving the European philosophical traditions? Will there ever be “after” Eurocentrism?

This paper engages with Eurocentrism (and any kind of centrism) as an example of violence and considers its relation to our philosophizing. In so doing, the paper examines why it is essential to rigorously redefine the nature and role of intercultural philosophy and envision a concrete strategy for carrying out that philosophy, not only for the survival of philosophy as a discipline but also for envisioning more meaningful lives for many people.

Session 1 (2) *History, Tradition, Worldview – The Complexities of Embodying the Cultural Flesh*

Dermot MORAN (Boston College, USA)

In this paper I address directly Professor LAU Kwok-ying's innovative but challenging call for a new ‘cultural flesh’ to interpret other philosophical cultures in his monograph, *Phenomenology and Intercultural Understanding*. Classical phenomenology stresses that human beings are inextricably ‘embedded’ in a world that provides the horizon for all thought and action. Phenomenology further recognizes the deep resistance of the life-world to thematization. This makes intercultural understanding highly problematic. Expanding on the late Merleau-Ponty's novel, non-dualistic conception of ‘flesh’ (*la chair*), Lau coins the term ‘cultural flesh’ for the sensible and material conditions necessary to understand another culture. Drawing further on Merleau-Ponty, Lau also proposes the idea of a ‘lateral universal’ as a way of bridging difference without imposing a unity from above (*pensée de survol*). In this paper, I will explore the problem of the thickness of our embeddedness in our life-world and the difficulty of breaking out of our habitual bodies. I will emphasize the difficulty of taking

on the cultural flesh of the other and seek to identify and evaluate ways in which Lau's proposal for intercultural understanding can be advanced (e.g. Lau proposes a 'disenchanted worldview').

Session 2 (3) *From World Philosophy to Wild Philosophy. Possibility of Intercultural Phenomenology after Euro-centralism*

Takashi KAKUNI (Ritsumeikan University, Japan)

Session 2 (4) *To Flesh or not to Flesh? A Daoist Encounter with Merleau-Ponty*

David CHAI (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

Session 3 (5) *Cultural Flesh and the Limits of Culture*

Héctor G. CASTAÑO (National Cheng-Chi University, Taiwan)

Professor Lau Kwok-Ying's notion of "cultural flesh" produces a valuable framework to reconsider phenomenology from an inter- or transcultural perspective. However, the concept of "culture" carries a series of connotations that require careful criticism. I structure my presentation into two parts. First, I try to show why we should not extrapolate directly Merleau-Ponty and Derrida's dispute on the access to the other to the field of ethnic/cultural differences and inter-ethnic/cultural understanding. Second, I pay attention to the difficulties associated with the word "culture", which Prof. Lau does not fully delimitate in his book. By considering the relation between culture and non-cultural boundary-production, I ask whether what he calls "cultural flesh" belongs strictly to the domain of "culture" or not.

Session 3 (6) *Participation to other cultural fleshs in the dark age of excarnation*

Jean-Claude GENS (University of Burgundy, France)

Session 3 (7) *Foreignness in Cultural Otherness*

Zhe LIU (Peking University, China)

Session 5 (8) *Cultural Chiasm and Brut Being: In Face of Border and Boundary*

Kuan-min HUANG (Academia Sinica, Taiwan)

In the age of glocality where global and local mingle together without losing its specificity, there is still a need to invent new model for animating the mutual understanding and self-understanding between different cultures. To respond to this problem, I will first describe the intralingual and interlingual aspect of translation as cultural chiasm. Secondly, I will discuss the border setting in the process of identification by evoking the difficulties in defining Eurocentrism and others. Thirdly I will suggest another dimension of cultural chiasm by inserting the concept of brut Being as the barbarian principle to avoid a simple dichotomy between culture and nature.

Session 5 (9)

Kwok-ying LAU (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

Session 6 (10) *Cultural Renewal and the Problem of Eurocentrism*

Chung-Chi YU (National Sun-Yat-Sen University, Taiwan)

This paper explores the intercultural implication of Husserl's idea of renewal that is demonstrated in the Kaizo articles written between 1922 and 1924. In his treatment of the relation between Europe and non-Europe, his intention is to spread the European theoretical rationality to non-European cultures. Even though Japan is the country that Husserl addresses in these articles, this paper elaborates Husserl's comprehension of China, insofar as China was regarded by him as a typical alien culture at that time. This paper supports the idea of introducing European theoretical rationality to non-European cultures, because by learning from Europe the non-Western cultures can renew themselves in the sense intended by Husserl. Non-European cultures do not become European cultures just by learning from Europe. Rather, they become new cultures by transforming themselves.

KEYWORDS: ethics, interculturality, renewal, theoretical, Waldenfels

Session 6 (11) *Japanese Modernity as “Hybrid Flesh”: Confucian Disputes and Engagement with the West*

Nobuo KAZASHI (Kobo University, Japan)

In response to the “intercultural employment” of the notion of “flesh” unfolded by Kwok-ying Lau in *Phenomenology and Intercultural Understanding: Toward a New Cultural Flesh* (2016; hereafter P&IU), we attempt to reflect anew on modern Japanese thought as “hybrid flesh” formed between China and Europe. After glancing through some of the major points of intercultural encounter in Japanese history, we look at how Confucian thought was accommodated or tackled by representative thinkers of the Edo period (circa 1600-1850) in contrast to the way, as presented in P&IU, Confucian thought was greeted by their European contemporaries, notably by C. Wolff (1679-1754) and Voltaire (1694-1778).

We focus on the influential but controversial evaluation, given by the leading postwar thinker M. Maruyama (1914-1996), regarding the innovative thought of Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728), a central figure in the Edo Confucian debates; Sorai criticized the prevalent Zhuzi (neo-Confucian) studies and highlighted the importance of going back to the Cardinal Texts and distinguishing “institutions” as human-made and different from the natural order.

Allegedly, Sorai opened a way toward modern political thinking in Japan, and such a view had critical implications for Maruyama who spent his young years under the wartime regime. However, recent work sheds new light on the significance of the Confucian debates as a whole in terms of having provided a stage for plural ways of daring thinking, thus paving a way toward engagement with Western thoughts (K. Tsuchida, *Zhuzi Studies of Edo*, 2014; Y. Yama, *Thought-Strife in Edo*, 2019).

We expand our consideration by making brief reference to some other formations of “intercultural flesh” as embodied in Chomin’s translation of Rousseau’s *Du contrat social* (1882), T. Watsuji’s *Fudo* (Human Milieu; 1935), S. Kato’s *Hybrid Culture: Japan’s Little Hope* (1956), and the fusion, in style and motif, of Chinese-Japanese and American literary heritage in contemporary novelist H. Murakami as well. Hopefully, we end by touching on the possibility of further employment of the notion of “flesh” in questioning military acts, digital governance, and “after anthropocentrism.”

Session 7 (12) *The East and West Dualism and its Metaphysical Roots*

Kwok-kui WONG (Baptist University, Hong Kong)

This paper investigates the possible metaphysical roots of East-and-West dualism in inter-cultural understanding. It begins with accounts of real-life experiences of such

dualism in Hong Kong and China, and then moves on to argue that apart from cultural prejudice, ignorance and simplification, there are deeper reasons why we are used to divide different cultures into two large groups according to the spatial arrangement of east and west. First, because “two” is an optimal number in the simplification of our picture of the world; and second because of the geographical significance of *oriens* and *occidens*. It will then try to understand these two poles as “horizons” in Gadamer’s hermeneutics. Finally, rather than justifying any “binary opposition”, this paper concludes that this dualism serves only as starting-points, or Gadamer’s “prejudices” (*Vorurteile*), of intercultural understanding, while not excluding the possibility of further development into multi-perspectival horizons.

Session 7 (13) *Some Reflections on the Existential Implications of Memory: Taking the Representation of Reminiscence in Chinese Literati Painting as an Example*

Xiaomeng NING (Peking University, China)

Session 8 (14) *After Eurocentrism: Technocentrism or Decentered Humanism?*

Jong-kwan LEE (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea)

Has Eurocentrism come to an end? Actually, it is said so. The European hegemony, which had dominated the world with the imperialism and the industrial revolution, came to end with the massive suicide of European civilization by itself, i.e. with World War I and II. And what does replace the Eurocentrism when Europe emptied its place as the protagonist of world history? Is it American-centrism or China-centrism? As we all know, from a geopolitical point of view, controversy is mounting between the U.S. and China, but in fact, technocentrism is working behind it. Especially in the face of this Corona crisis, humans are gripped by fears comparable to World War II and are looking for a way out only in the technology. In particular, the digital space manufactured by digital technology has become a shelter into which the human life world has rapidly fled. Now the digital transformation that has taken Quantum-Jump since Covid-19 will undoubtedly determine the human future. And the leader who actually pulls the course of history that determines the future of human beings is, in fact, giant digital tech companies. Now the cutting edge technologies that drives the digital technology will undoubtedly determine the human future. And the leader of history who actually pulls the course of history that determines the future of human beings is, in fact, giant tech companies.

This paper will explore phenomenologically the devices that the tech giant launched on the market around 2010 in order to get very meaningful insights about the interaction between humans and the digital technology. And from the insights the paper will attempt

to illuminate a milestone in civilization that suggests how humans and technology should interact to each other in the future in the crossroad of technocentrism and decentered humanism.

Session 8 (15) *The Oblivion of the Cultural Origin*

Man-to TANG (Sun Yat-sen University (Zhuhai), China)

Session 9 (16)

Philip BUCKLEY (McGill University, Canada)

Session 9 (17) *Stefan Zweig's and Edmund Husserl's Nostalgia for a Lost (Non-exclusionary) Europe*

Thomas NENON (The University of Memphis, USA)

One way to read Husserl's statements about Europe in his 1935 essay "The Crisis of European Humanities and Philosophy" is to understand what he has to say about Europe as stressing a contrast between Europe and other cultures. He certainly does contrast what he sees as one key, or perhaps the key European culture achievement, namely its claim to seek a universal grounding of beliefs and norms through reason and critique, with that of other cultures within the geographic bounds of Europe itself and as well as with other cultures around the world. My claim in this paper, though, is that the main thrust of the essay, the primary contrast he has in mind, is the difference between an ideal of Europe, a Europe that has never really been fully realized, with Europe as Husserl sees it at the time he was writing his essay. In fact, what he identifies as most important about Europe is not something that he believes is a uniquely European possibility. He sees it as a possibility for non-European cultures and as a way of thinking that was being adopted around the world. Rather, what concerned him was the way that Europe itself was moving in a direction diametrically opposed to what he claimed was supposed to be the essence of Europe.

Session 10 (18) *Struggle with the state's irresponsibility: revisiting Arendt's idea of responsibility*

Yuen-hung TAI (The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

This article argues that the original insight of Hannah Arendt's concept of political responsibility lies in resisting the state's dissipation of the personal responsibility of human beings. Under my reconstruction of her thought, the idea of responsibility must be articulated through the dynamic relation between the individual and the state, meaning that there is neither merely individual responsibility nor collective guilt in politics. First, I will outline the backdrop of the problematic of political responsibility in Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and her claim that totalitarianism aims at destroying the moral character of human beings. Second, I will clarify in what ways Arendt's account of responsibility in her *Responsibility and Judgment* surpasses that of Heidegger by emphasizing Heidegger's inadequate attention to the effect of the state in totalitarian regimes. Third, I will demonstrate why Arendt's insistence on the struggle with the state has the continued importance in the post-totalitarian age. I believe struggle with the state's irresponsibility represents one of the lessons we can draw from Arendt's life-long rumination of the devastating events of Europe.

Session 10 (19) *Beingness (sattā) and Isness (astitva)*

Zhihua YAO (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

Both Indian and Western philosophical traditions are rooted in the Indo-European language family, in which they share their kinship. In contrast, they look alien from the perspective of Chinese language or Chinese philosophy, and therefore present difficulties in translation. Based on my experience of translating Sanskrit ontological terms into Chinese, in the current paper I will discuss the Chinese translation of Sein or being, a topic hotly debated among scholars of Western (especially Heidegger's) philosophy in China. I will introduce the ontological theory of the Vaiśeṣikas and its possible contribution to the understanding of Western ontological tradition. The Chinese translations of Vaiśeṣika ontological terms will help us clarify the relationship between several alternatives for the Chinese translation of Sein, namely, *cunzai* 存在, *cunyou* 存有, and *shi* 是.