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ASIAN MEDIA/PRACTICE

Rethinking Communication and Media Research in Asia

A Small Conference
with Representation from

Asian Media
Information and Communication Centre

School of Communication Studies,
Nanyang Technological University

and

School of Oriental and African Studies,
University of London

School of Communication Studies,
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

11 & 12 June 1999
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### The Conference Website

### About the Presenters

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### Conference Committee

### PAPERS

**Keynote:** "The Position of the Researcher vis-à-vis The Asian Audience." Ien Ang

**Paper 1** "Just Talk? Anthropological Reflections on the Object of Media Studies in Indonesia." Mark Hobart

**Paper 2** "Problems with an Asian Version of the 'Global Newsroom' Research: Critical/Cultural vs. Empirical/Behaviourist Approaches" Vivien Chiong & Hao Xiaomin

**Paper 3** "Heroes for the Masses: Engaging Icons in Chinese Television." Makiko Taniguchi
Paper 4  "Pre-Post-1997: Preposterous Hong Kong Cinema"
Audrey Yue

Paper 5  "Showiness, Exhilaration and Despair: Entertainment in Hindi Film."
Ronald Inden

Paper 6  "Electronic medi(t)ations:
the_religious_subject@Indonesia.net." Richard Fox

Paper 7  "Singapore Gays Go to West Hollywood: On Doing Research
on Minority Representation in Singapore."
Tan See Kam & Michael Lee

Paper 8  "Televising the Aged: Towards a Critical TV Practice in
Singapore." Ivan Kwok

Paper 9  "Hegemonic Engineering: A Contribution from Singapore."
Duncan Holaday & Lee Shu Hui

Paper 10 "Reformasi and the Changing Mediascape: Implications of
Media Liberalisation" Alwi Dahlan
GENERAL INFORMATION & ARRANGEMENTS

Conference Venue

The Asian Media/Practice Conference is conducted at the Television Studio of the School of Communication Studies, Nanyang Technological University. This is located on the ground floor of the school building.

Special Notes on Conferencing in a Studio

The TV Studio as a setting for a conference may be unusual but is most apt for we are talking about the media and its practice. The conference will be recorded live; providing the participants the experience of a parallel reality that may occasionally intrude upon their consciousness. But while the Studio Director calls the shots in a "real" TV recording, it is the participants here who will direct the activity of the Studio Director and her crew. All in all, it makes for a very different kind of conference.

On a practical note, you need to be aware of the appropriate dressing for a TV studio. You should avoid whites and blacks, as well as shirts or blouses with pin-stripes. The television cameras do not take too kindly to them.

Also, while we tried to adapt the lighting condition in such a way that will reduce the amount of heat generated, we can expect the studio to be a little on the warm side. You are therefore advised to dress in light clothes.

Conference Times

The Conference will take place as scheduled on the 11th and 12th of June 1999.

While the conference proper will commence at 9am on both days, you are encouraged to join us for breakfast from 8am. This will give participants a chance to meet and warm up to each other before getting into business.

The Conference is scheduled to end about 5pm each day; with dinner following after. (Details below)

Registration

As a conference participant, you are our guest and no registration will be necessary. But do drop in at the Secretariat during the breakfast hour so that we can hand you a package consisting of the papers and other general information. (International participants, however, will be given their package when they check in the day before).
Conference Secretariat

Housed at the SCS Resource Centre (Rm 01-18), and conveniently located next to the TV Studio, the Secretariat has a photocopier machine, local telephone and fax facilities, three personal computers and a laser printer available.

The Conference Secretariat will also serve as your contact point to which you may leave or direct messages:

Tel: 790-6927
Fax: 794-1632

Feel free to consult Ms Yanti Aris, the Conference Secretary, if you need assistance. You may also refer to the Conference Coordinator, Ivan Kwek (hp 9666-4751).

Finally, you may also use the Secretariat as a place to cool off, relax or catch up with your periodicals or the local news.

Meals

- Breakfast and lunch is provided for all participants during the two-day event. These will be served at the podium in front of the TV Studio and the Conference Secretariat. You are especially encouraged to join in the breakfast, served from 8 am to 9 am, as this will be an opportunity to warm up to each other before entering the serious business of the conference.

- All participants are invited to dinner (Indian food) for the 11th June will be at:

  The Banana Leaf Apolo
  54-56-58 Race Course Road
  Tel 293-8682 / 293-5054

  Time: 7.00pm
  Dress Code: Casual (or as you are)

See Map in folder pocket for directions.
A special appeal is made to participants with cars to give rides to those without.

- After the close of the conference on 12th June, we will adjourn immediately to the campus residence of Chin Woon Ping and Duncan Holaday for a special farewell dinner.

  The address is: 69 Nanyang Terrace (See NTU Map in folder)
  Tel: 791-3974
FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS:

Accommodation

Accommodation is available to international participants at the Nanyang Lodge. The lodge is located along Nanyang Avenue, within campus grounds. It is within a 15-minute walk to the conference venue. You can find details, including photographs of the interior and exterior of the Nanyang Lodge at our website: www.scs.ntu.edu.sg/amp. It is fully furnished with cooking and washing facilities, as well as a telephone, the number of which will have been given to you earlier.

Directions from the airport

From the airport, take a taxi directly to the Nanyang Lodge. Tell the driver to go into the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) via the Jalan Bahar entrance. Once on the campus ground, just follow the same road straight up, passing one major cross-junction, up the slope, and you will see Nanyang Lodge, a small double-storey building, on your left.

The fare should come up to about S$25 including an airport surcharge of $3. It should be easy but should you need assistance, call Ajit at 790-6494 or Ivan at 9666-4751.

Checking In and Out

Check-in: Upon arrival at the lodge, check in at Room No 34. The keys as well as the conference package will be handed over to you.

Check-out: Just check yourself out whatever time you are ready to go on the 13th by locking up and dropping the keys into your unit’s letter box located by the stairways.

Transport

You can call for a taxi at:

- Comfort 552-1111
- CityCab 552-2222 (cash) 553-8888 (credit card)
- Tibs 481-1211

Foreign Exchange

Foreign exchange services are NOT available on campus. You are therefore advised to make any necessary foreign exchange beforehand. This can also be done at the airport. You are advised to prepare about S$30 for the taxi fare to NTU.
Rethinking Communication and Media Research in Asia

A Small Conference with Representation from
SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)
SCS (School of Communication Studies, Nanyang Technological University)
and
AMIC (Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore)

11 & 12 June 1999
SCS – NTU, Singapore

"Our subject has repeatedly recreated itself in the half-light of its enigmatic object. Rippling across the field of vision of communication study from generation to generation, the epic question of 'intellectual' labour has been episodically remodulated and reshaped."

- Dan Schiller in Theorizing Communication: A History

Topic and Themes:

The position of the researcher in national, international, diasporic, network-based and other spatially fragmented contexts is becoming increasingly problematic as the phenomena under study cross borders and appear to transform in the process. Communication researchers themselves are increasingly compelled to cross, stay within, or straddle borders of various kinds, and to answer to a variety of "bodies" represented in and by their work.

At the same time, critical media studies has raised questions about the adequacy of the models current among media producers and the theoretical frameworks and assumptions of media studies itself. Media studies remains largely Western in the way it naturalizes certain kinds of media practices and assumptions, while it remains largely Anglophone in its object of study. With the rapidly growing importance of Pacific Asia economically and culturally, rethinking these biases has become urgent. Among the phenomena to be considered are the kinds of media-related practices emerging in different parts of the region, as well as the forms of understanding, commentary and criticism Asians engage in, through and about the media. In general, it needs to be asked what kinds of research are needed to study these phenomena.
The conference focuses on the following interwoven themes:

- What are the key media practices in different parts of Pacific Asia? How are these to be studied? How is the researcher her- or himself part of the growing practice of inter-media (media productions that comment on the media?)

- What are the specific constraints on media research and researchers in Asian contexts – national, cultural and institutional?

- How to address the antagonisms between critical-cultural and empirical ‘schools' in Asian media research?

- How to imagine, study and engage with Asian audiences? Issues here include the gap between effects and participatory approaches, the audience as critical participant or object of study.

All participants are engaged in studies of media and audiences in a variety of national and cultural contexts in Asia. After introducing their particular study, each is encouraged to reflect on their role as researchers in terms of problems posed by the subject, the research context, and the potential for application or practice. The focus on antagonisms is intended to be productive of new perspectives or positions, and to help move beyond entrenched positions of the past few decades. The focus on the position of the researcher vis-à-vis the audience, in terms of presuppositions, marginality, voice, identity, consequences, control and media practices should help to pull together the various threads of discussion.

Goals and Outcome:

One impetus for this conference is the prospect of continued collaboration between SOAS and SCS, especially in light of the new MA Programme in Anthropology and Media at SOAS and the evolving SCS curriculum embracing both empirical and cultural approaches. The role of AMIC as an umbrella for ‘rethinking’ Asian media research is well known. Works published by AMIC, such as Rethinking Development Communication, may serve as models for the conference publication. This conference is expected to give momentum towards discussion of related topics in the forthcoming IAMCR Conference in Singapore in July 2000.
Papers and Participants

Representing SOAS:
- Prof Ron Inden: "Showiness, Exhilaration and Despair: Entertainment in Hindi Film."
- Ms Makiko Taniguchi: "Heroes for the Masses: Engaging Icons in Chinese Television."
- Mr Richard Fox: "Electronic medi(t)ations: the_religious_subject@Indonesia.net."

Representing SCS:
- Assoc Prof Duncan Holaday & Lee Shu Hui: "Hegemonic Engineering: A Contribution from Singapore."
- Mr Ivan Kwek: "Televising the Aged: Towards a Critical TV Practice in Singapore."

Representing AMIC:
- Prof Ien Ang: Keynote: "The Position of the Researcher vis-à-vis The Asian Audience."
- Prof Alwi Dahlan: "Reformasi and the Changing Mediascape: Implications of Media Liberalisation."

Special Guest from Univ. of Melbourne
- Ms Audrey Yue: "Pre-post-1997: Preposterous Hong Kong Cinema."
Discussants:

Assoc Prof Chua Beng Huat
Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology,
National University of Singapore

Assoc Prof Chua Siew Keng
Head, Division of Electronic & Broadcast Media,
School of Communication Studies, NTU

Dr C.W. Wee Wan-ling
Fellow
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Asst Prof Cherian George
School of Communication Studies, NTU
# PROGRAMME

**Day One:** 11th June 1999 (Friday)

**Convenors:** A/P Duncan A Holaday (morning session)  
Prof Ien Ang (afternoon session)

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<td>0800-0900</td>
<td>BREAKFAST</td>
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| 0900-0930 | Welcome Speeches                                                       | Prof Eddie Kuo  
Mr Vejay Menon                                         |
| 0930-1000 | Keynote Paper: "Position of the Researcher vis-à-vis the Asian Audience." | Prof Ien Ang                                         |
| 1000-1030 | Break                                                                 |                                                    |
| 1130-1230 | Comments & Discussion                                                  | A/P Chua Beng Huat                                  |
| 1230-1400 | Lunch                                                                  |                                                    |
| 1430-1500 | Paper 4: "Pre-Post-1997: Preposterous Hong Kong Cinema"                | Ms Audrey Yue                                       |
| 1500-1530 | Break                                                                  |                                                    |
| 1530-1600 | Paper 5: "Showiness, Exhilaration and Despair: Entertainment in Hindi Film" | Prof Ronald Inden                                  |
| 1600-1700 | Comments and Discussion                                                | A/P Chua Siew Keng                                  |
| 1700-1830 | FREE TIME                                                             |                                                    |
| 1830-2100 | Dinner                                                                |                                                    |
# PROGRAMME

**Day Two : 12th June (Sat)**

**Convenor :** Prof Ron Inden (morning session)  
Dr Mark Hobart (afternoon session)

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<td>0800-0900</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<td>0900-0930</td>
<td><strong>Paper 6:</strong> &quot;Electronic Mediations: <a href="mailto:the_religious_subject@Indonesia.net">the_religious_subject@Indonesia.net</a>&quot;</td>
<td>Mr Richard Fox</td>
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<td>0930-1000</td>
<td><strong>Paper 7:</strong> &quot;Singapore Gays Go to West Hollywood: On Doing Research on Minority Representation in Singapore.&quot;</td>
<td>Asst Prof Tan See Kam &amp; Mr Michael Lee</td>
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<td>1000-1030</td>
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<td>1030-1100</td>
<td><strong>Paper 8:</strong> &quot;Televising the Aged: Towards a Critical Practice in Singapore Television&quot;</td>
<td>Mr Ivan Kwek</td>
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<td>1100-1200</td>
<td>Comments and Discussion</td>
<td>Dr CJ Wee Wan-ling</td>
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<td>1200-1330</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>1330-1400</td>
<td><strong>Paper 9:</strong> &quot;Hegemonic Engineering: A Contribution from Singapore&quot;</td>
<td>Prof Duncan Holaday &amp; Ms Lee Shu Hui</td>
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<td>1400-1430</td>
<td><strong>Paper 10:</strong> &quot;Reformasi and the Changing Mediascape: Implications of Media Liberalisation&quot;</td>
<td>Prof Alwi Dahlan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1430-1530</td>
<td>Comments and Discussion</td>
<td>Asst Prof Cherian George</td>
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<td>1530-1600</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>1600-1630</td>
<td>Conference Roundup &amp; Closing Remarks</td>
<td>Prof. Eddie Kuo</td>
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<tr>
<td>1630-1830</td>
<td>FREE TIME</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830-2100</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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The Conference Website
(www.scs.ntu.edu.sg/amp)

The Conference Website is the communication platform on all matters regarding the conference; notably, the registration, submission of abstracts and papers, and information about the conference and ground arrangements. You are encouraged to check the site occasionally for updates.

The conference website is designed for you to:

• Register and confirm your participation on-line.
• Communicate with the conference secretariat.
• Introduce yourselves to and get in touch with other participants.
• Read the abstracts on-line.
• Find out more about the participating institutions – SOAS, SCS, AMIC.
• Get practical information – maps, airport & transport information, accommodation details, places to visit and food to savor.
• Learn more about Singapore, the conference venue.
• After the conference, read the full text of the papers, along with comments and discussions, on-line (subject to the concurrence of the respective authors).

Communication through Email:

As a complement to the website, all other communication between the conference secretariat and the participants will be channeled through email.

NB: The following is an alternative route to the Conference Website:

http://www.ntu.edu.sg/studorgn/chronicle/asianmp/default.html