

"East of West, West of East"

Convenors:

Andrew SHENG

Distinguished Fellow
Fung Global Institute

Jan VASBINDER

Director, Para Limes
Nanyang Technological University

17 – 19 October 2016

Mandarin Orchard Hotel
333 Orchard Road, Singapore 238867

Monday, 17 October

Venue: Mandarin Ballroom 1, Level 6

8:15am - Registration

9:00am - **Welcome and introduction:**

Jan W. VASBINDER
Director, Para Limes, Nanyang Technological University

9:10am - Andrew SHENG
Distinguished Fellow, Fung Global Institute

An overview of how East and West began with very different starting points, and how conflicts arise when concepts from one intellectual tradition are imposed or transplanted too quickly into another intellectual tradition. This problem is further exacerbated in our current times as technology has increased the frequency of cross-cultural communication and cooperation.

Day 1 - Rediscovering the past

9:20am - **Session 1A: *Divergence and convergence between Chinese and Western approach to change***

An overview of how the Chinese concept of change evolved differently from Greek thought, leading to different approaches to science. Chinese conceptualization of ideas was both constrained in precision and open to ambiguity, due to imprecision of the Chinese language relative to the English and Romanized languages. However, as Western science in biology, medicine and quantum physics explored realms of complexity and uncertainty, the two philosophical traditions began to converge. We use a modern interpretation of the Book of Change to illustrate these areas of difference and convergence.

Andrew SHENG
Distinguished Fellow, Fung Global Institute

10:30am - Coffee break

11:00am - **Session 1B: *Divergences and convergences in East and West: A global historical perspective***

A discussion on a deep historical perspective on the relations between East and West, focussing on science and technology, warfare, social organization and international relations.

Tonio ANDRADE
Professor of History, Director of East Asian Studies, Emory University

12:15pm - Lunch at Imperial Ballroom, Level 35

Monday, 17 October

Venue: Mandarin Ballroom 1, Level 6

1:15pm - **Session 1C: *Eastern and Western conceptions of religion***

This discussion will focus on the assertion that Eastern and Western religious traditions are radically different. Beliefs may be different and culture specific, but in what sense is faith different across cultures? The purpose of my presentation will be to provoke further reflection and debate on the alleged incommensurability between cultures and religions. The danger of essentializing traditions, I will argue, should not be underestimated.

Alan CHAN

Dean, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University

2:30pm - Coffee break

3:00pm - **Session 1D: *Constraints of language on thinking and behaviour***

A discussion of how the Chinese and the English languages structure our thoughts to focus on very different aspects of an issue.

Helena Hong GAO

Director of Bilingual Development Lab, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University

4:15pm - **Session 2: *Panel discussion***

Moderator

Aaron MANIAM

Director (Industry), Ministry of Trade and Industry

Panelists

Andrew SHENG, Tonio ANDRADE, Alan CHAN and Helena Hong GAO

5:45pm - End of day one

Venue: Imperial Ballroom, Level 35

6:30pm - Conference banquet

Tuesday, 18 October

Venue: Mandarin Ballroom 1, Level 6

Day 2 - Understanding the present

9:00am - **Session 1: *Cultural differences as opportunities for collaboration in healthcare and medicine***

Western medicine has succeeded through precision through exclusion, whereas Eastern medicine has been organic and mystic. The next breakthrough must be some convergence in understanding how healthcare and medicine is organic interaction between change in body, mind and nature.

Atsushi IRIKI

Head of Laboratory for Symbolic Cognitive Development, RIKEN Brain Science Institute and Visiting Professor, Nanyang Technological University

10:30am - Coffee break

11:00am - **Session 2: *Fusion cuisine***

Differences in food between East and West provide opportunities for fusion cuisine. Fusion involves the creation of new conceptual categories which both cultures never had until they began to mix.

Georges M. HALPERN

Honorary Professor, Department of Applied Biology and Chemical Technology
Hong Kong Polytechnic University

12:30pm - Lunch at Imperial Ballroom, Level 35

1:30pm - **Session 3: *The individual and the community: Managing multiculturalism in Eastern and Western political systems***

No individual can exist in isolation of the community. Yet, in Western societies, individual rights override community interests, whereas in an Eastern society, community interests override individual rights. How does one strike a right balance in a multi-cultural society?

Bilahari KAUSIKAN

Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

3:00pm - Coffee break

Tuesday, 18 October

Venue: Mandarin Ballroom 1, Level 6

3:30pm - **Session 4: *Perspectives on ambiguity***

These remarks use historical examples from several contexts to focus on perceptions that Chinese culture favors ambiguity and Western culture favors precision. They also give examples of models or systems that can produce misleading or false impressions of ambiguity. Nuancing notions of ambiguity can add to reflection and debate on alleged incommensurabilities between cultures, and further illustrate the dangers of essentializing traditions.

Lisa RAPHALS

Professor, Department of Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages, University of California, Riverside

5:00pm - End of day two

Venue: Imperial Ballroom, Level 35

6:30pm - Cocktail reception

7:30pm - Concert by ReOrientate

8:30pm

Performers:

- DE KAI
Creator of ReOrientate, Debrett's 100 most influential people of Hong Kong honoree and percussionist/keyboardist/DJ/composer
- Antoine RICHARD
French Jazz-a-Tours alumnus and gypsy/flamenco/jazz/fusion guitarist/multi-instrumentalist
- Rupert WOO
International Chinese orchestra conducting competition world finalist and erhu maestro
- Gretchell YANEZA YEUNG
Hong Kong ATV Asia Million Star winner and singer/songwriter

Wednesday, 19 October

Venue: Mandarin Ballroom 1, Level 6

Day 3 - Securing the future

9:00am - **Session 3: *The role of Singapore in bridging East and West***

Singapore has often been described as a bridge or connector between East and West geographically, commercially, intellectually. What exactly does that mean, in a world where traditional flows like goods, services and capital are being complemented by flows of people and ideas? Can this role be expanded in the future, or does it need redefining in a fluid future?

Adrian KUAH

Senior Research Fellow & Head, Case Studies Unit, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

Aaron MANIAM

Director (Industry), Ministry of Trade and Industry

Vernie OLIVEIRO

Senior Assistant Director (Policy Strategy), Ministry of National Development

10:30am - Coffee break

11:00am - **Session 4: *A museum of the future?***

What aspects of “East”, “West” and other categories will stand the test of time? Which will prove transient against the tide of history and end up in museums by the time 2050 rolls around?

Stuart CANDY (*via skype*)

Visiting Professor, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Director, Situation Lab

Fellow, Museum of Tomorrow

Cheryl CHUNG

Deputy Director, Strategic Planning, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

Honor HARGER

Executive Director, ArtScience Museum

Aaron MANIAM

Director (Industry), Ministry of Trade and Industry

Sheila RONIS

Chair and Professor, Department of Management

Director, Center for Complex and Strategic Decisions, Walsh College

John A. SWEENEY

Deputy Director, Center for Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies, East-West University in Chicago

Wednesday, 19 October

Venue: Mandarin Ballroom 1, Level 6

12:30pm - Closing remarks by Jan W. Vasbinder

12:45pm - Closing lunch at Imperial Ballroom, Level 35

2:00pm - End of conference

Dinner for speakers and invited guests only

6:00pm - Meet at Mandarin Orchard Hotel lobby
(Take a stroll to the dinner venue)

6:30pm - Dinner at il cielo Restaurant, Level 24, Hilton Singapore, 581 Orchard Road
8:30pm