



2016-2017 School of Chinese Seminar

Technology of Memory: How We Remember and How We Forget

Professor Lingchei Letty Chen

Washington University in St. Louis

Date & Time: 4:00 – 5:30 pm, Monday, 26 June 2017

Venue: Room 730, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU

Language: English

The widespread use of the Internet has created a virtual space serving as a venue for ordinary Chinese citizens to post their own recollections of their experiences during the Mao era. Against this memory boom in China, I will set up the “occasion” for creating a new interpretive frame to explore tensions of different memories of a shared traumatic historical moment. I foreground this question: Who remember and why do they remember? Survivor-witnesses give their testimonies because the magnitude of the historical event reaches beyond those survivor-witnesses to many more who perished in the event. This makes their testimonies necessarily an act of ethical remembrance bound by heavy moral responsibility. How memory is utilized thus points to the technology and the ethical dimension of memory.

Lingchei Letty Chen 陳綾琪 (PhD, Columbia University) is Head of the Chinese Section and Associate Professor of Modern Chinese Literature at the Washington University in St. Louis. Her earlier work and publications center on identity politics among various Chinese communities in the world, such as the Chinese mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Chinese American communities, and Chinese diaspora in the West. Her first book *Writing Chinese: Reshaping Chinese Cultural Identity* (2006) will soon be available in Chinese from Fudan University Press (《書寫華人：全球華人文化認同的斷裂與重建》). In addition to identity politics, she has embarked on memory studies and trauma theories and has combined the two with issues concerning identity. Her monograph *Memory's Shores: Remembrance of the Mao Years*, currently under review by Harvard University Press, explores how generational memory functions in a narrative of trauma and how the signification of such interplay bears witness to historical calamities occurred during the Mao era. Aside from the aforementioned research, she also has extended interests in Sinophone studies and topics related to Chinese global cities such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Taipei, and Singapore.



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