



Strange Encounters: On Sinophone/Xenophone Literature

David Der-wei Wang (Harvard University)

Monday, September 16th, 2019 4:30 pm
Pane Room, Alexander Library
169 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ

This lecture seeks to review the pros and cons of Sinophone Studies as it is received in academia, and propose Sinophone/Xenophone discourse as a new alternative. The extant Sinophone paradigm is largely based on postcolonialism and empire critique. By contrast, Sinophone/Xenophone Studies derives its thrust from rethinking the time-honored concept of “Sino-Xeno differentiation” (hua-yi zhibian). In theory, it highlights ethnic, cultural, and cognitive alterity and changeability within and without China. In practice, it argues that Sinophone imaginary cannot be (de)constructed without invoking the “strange”—as evinced by not only the alien but also the nonhuman and even the posthuman.



David Der-wei Wang is Edward C. Henderson Professor in Chinese Literature at Harvard University, Director of CCK Foundation Inter-University Center for Sinology, and Academician, Academia Sinica. His research interests include modern and contemporary Chinese literature, late Qing fiction and drama; comparative literary theory; colonial and modern Taiwanese fiction, and Asian American and diasporic literature; plus Chinese intellectuals and artists in the mid- 20th century. He is the author, editor, and co-editor of dozens of books in English and Chinese, including *Fictional Realism in 20th Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen*; *Fin-de-siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911*; *The Monster That Is History: Violence, History, and Fictional Writing in 20th Century China*; and *The Lyrical in Epic Time: Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Artists through the 1949 Crisis*.