**ART AND EMOTION**

International Postgraduate Conference

University of Hong Kong  
**Dec 12-13 2013**

Arts Academic Conference Room, Room 436, 4/F, Run Run Shaw Tower,  
Centennial Campus, University of Hong Kong

**Programme**

**Thursday 12 December** *(9:30-17:45)*

9:30 – 10:30
**Keynote** speaker Matthew Kieran, ‘Art, Emotion and Sentimentality’

10:30-11:00  
*Coffee break*

11:00-12:00  
**Panel 1:**  
Chung-Chen Soong (University of Auckland), ‘Understanding Kendall Walton in the Dream’  
Ekin Ulas (University of Hong Kong), ‘On the Ethical Value of Transgressive Literature’

12:00-14:00  
*Lunch break*

14:00-15:00  
**Panel 2:**  
Lorraine Yeung (University of Hong Kong), ‘The Role of Non-Cognitive Affective Appraisal in Horror Fiction’  
Hong-Ting Li (Chinese University of Hong Kong), ‘A Heideggerian Answer to the Paradox of Horror’

15:00-15.30  
*Coffee break*

15:30-16:30  
**Panel 3:**  
So Young Moon (National University of Singapore), ‘Finding Inspiration in the Odes for Moral Reasoning’  
Qingjuan Sun (Nanyang Technological University), ‘On the Function of Music’
16:30-16:45

Break

16:45-17:45

Comments and discussion, led by Amy Coplan

Evening

Conference dinner (speakers and organizing committee)

**Friday 13 December** (10:00-17:30)

10:00-11:00

Keynote speaker Amy Coplan, ‘The Low Road to Affect: How Film Elicits Non-Cognitive Affective Responses’

11:00-11:30

Coffee break

11:30-12:30

Panel 4:
Elaine Kwok (University of Hong Kong), ‘A Five-Dimensional Approach to Painting and Emotion’
Yasushi Nakamura (Seijo University), ‘Daniel Buren’s Works and Their Emotive Aspect’

12:30-14:30

Lunch break

14:30-16:00

Panel 5:
Tiina Nevanpera (Aalto University), ‘Thinking Through Emotions Inside the Artistic Process’
Lucía Piquero (Roehampton University), ‘How Are Emotions Involved in the Making of Art? With Tentative Examples from the Work of Pina Bausch’
Estela Ibáñez García (University of Hong Kong), ‘Music as a Trigger for Performances of Meaning: Articulating Emotional Experience through Embodied Minds’

16:00-16:30

Coffee break

16:30-17:30

Comments and discussion, led by Matthew Kieran

This conference is supported by the Postgraduate Students Conference Grant of the Research Grants Council, Hong Kong; the Department of Philosophy and the School of Humanities, University of Hong Kong.
ABSTRACTS

• Chung-Chen Soong (University of Auckland)

Understanding Kendall Walton in the Dream

This paper interprets Kendall Walton’s claim that it is only fictional that we have emotions toward fictional characters. I approach Walton’s claim from his theory of dreaming. First, I illustrate the realistic manner of the dream, the first-person consciousness in the dream, and the psychological attitudes we have in the dream. And then I explain the distinction between our psychological attitudes in the dream and our psychological attitudes toward the dream itself. Once the nature of dreaming is understood, we could proceed in a similar way to Walton’s theory of imagining, and finally understand his claim that it is only fictional that we have emotions toward fictional characters.

• Ekin Ulas (University of Hong Kong)

On the Ethical Value of Transgressive Literature

This talk will explore readers’ strong emotional and affective responses to fiction. I will try to show how those emotional experiences can be ethically significant, especially considering emotions and affective states like empathy and sympathy in relation to what I will call "transgressive" literature. As this kind of fiction transcends norms of acceptability and expectations, it provides a platform for the emergence of ethical dimensions. I will try to show how the ethical effect on the reader can be acquired through feeling "positive" emotional responses towards condemnable characters, refining our emotions, enhancing our understanding of alien minds, and impacting our moral judgments in life. I will then try to explain how the arousal of positive affective states, that can be controversial in the case of transgressive fiction, not only enhances our understanding of others, but of ourselves, putting us face to face with our own capacity for "transgressiveness". Building on Morton’s idea that a certain "barrier of decency" constrains one’s imagination, I will argue that empathizing with atrociously behaving fictional characters can train one to let go of this "barrier" and identify with different atrocious acts, understanding that they are actually not so alien. Thus, in caring for "immoral" fictive characters one can reach a better understanding of the human capacity for immorality, even one’s own.

• Lorraine Yeung (University of Hong Kong)

The Role of Non-Cognitive Affective Appraisal in Horror Fiction

There has been a growing interest in the role of non-cognitive affective appraisals in engaging fictional emotion in philosophical discussion of art and emotion. This flurry of scholarly interest is partly a reaction to accounts of fiction and emotion that take cognitive emotions, which necessarily involve spectators’ gathering information from plot and narrative and forming propositional
evaluative judgments as the focal point of theorization. It has been argued that accounts that center on cognitive emotions are bound to be inadequate. A limitation is that these accounts fail to account for the role of formal devices and stylistic elements in engaging spectator emotion. As philosophers like Jenefer Robinson (2004) demonstrates convincingly, to better understand how fiction engages emotion, the primacy of non-cognitive affective appraisals in emotion shall be acknowledged. Following contentions like Robinson’s, in this paper I propound a conception of the emotion “horror”, into which non-cognitive affective appraisals is incorporated. Following from my conception of “horror”, I shall sketch views regarding how horror fiction engages emotions, in which formal devices and stylistic elements play a crucial role. It is hoped that my discussion will provide a strong case for the significance of non-cognitive affective appraisal in our understanding of how fiction engages emotion on the one hand, and to facilitate understanding of how horror fiction operates on the other.

- Hong-Ting Li (Chinese University of Hong Kong)

A Heideggerian Answer to the Paradox of Horror

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that mood and emotion have a disclosing function which can reveal the truth of things and self. He gives a detailed analysis on Fear and Angst. He suggests that Angst is a peculiar mood of human being which can reveal the usually covered truth of human being, namely our existential condition. As a consequence, this mood can push us to reflect on our own lives.

The aim of this essay is to give an explanation to the intractable problem of horror fiction: *the paradox of horror*, in the light of Heidegger's theory of mood and emotion. More specifically, why do people desire to see horror films while fear is an aversive experience?

I argue that people desire to see horror films because these films can comfort their existential Angst. However, this consolation is only a temporary distraction. It covered up the most fearful thing with the less fearful object (e.g. monster, ghost), so that we can flee from facing the thing that we truly fear, namely the fate of human mortality.

I suggest that there is a kind of film, though they may not be labeled by the popular as horror films, could arouse the mood of Angst to the audience. The purpose of these films is not to comfort but to compel us to face our existential condition. Audience may feel uneasy while watching these films, but also have a satisfying feeling which comes from the awareness of human dignity.

- So Young Moon (National University of Singapore)

Finding Inspiration in the Odes for Moral Reasoning

Theories of Chinese art, especially in relation to classical Confucianism, have focused on the relationship between ethics and aesthetics. In classical Confucian point of view, since ethical and aesthetic activities arise from the same origin in human experience, the arts are crucial part of ethical learning and living.
Although the discussion on intimate relation between ethics and aesthetics has been conducted in relation to moral education or ethical cultivation, it seems that another important dimension of moral life, such as moral reasoning, deserves more attention than it has received in the past half century. As the cultivation of aesthetic and ethical sensitivity has the same source in classical Confucianism, refined aesthetic taste and appropriate moral sentiment are indispensable for moral judgment. However, this interrelated notion of ethics and aesthetics does not subordinate the arts to morality. Rather, this approach would contribute to dealing with moral alienation by situating morality in the diversity of everyday human life based on aesthetic activities. In this paper, I focus on the interrelationship between ethics and aesthetics in Confucius’ thinking in the Analects and relate this discussion to moral reasoning in which aesthetic sensitivity and creativity play a crucial role. I first explore the function of art in Confucius’ ethical thinking by referring to the passages on the Odes (shi 詩) and music (yue 樂) which are the resource of moral insights and aesthetic activities. I then elaborate further on the importance of art in moral life in terms of moral reasoning and moral judgment.

- Qingjuan Sun (Nanyang Technological University)

On the Function of Music

Music (yue 樂) has always been an important element in the tradition of Confucianism, and often mentioned together with ritual propriety (li 禮). Lots of attentions have been paid to the concept of ritual propriety. This essay, however, will focus on the role of music specifically, and try to explicate its cultivation functions based on the Xing Zi Ming Chu, bamboo text excavated from the Guodian Chu Tomb 1, and also on Mencius, especially its chapter of 1B: 8. It holds that, on the one hand, music has the function of moving one’s heart. If music comes from genuine feelings and emotions, like the ancient music, it swells the heart, which results in a harmonious statement of one’s inner world; on the contrary, if it does not come from genuine feelings and emotions, like excessive music such as the music of Zheng and Wei, it swells appetites and ends up with ambitions within one’s heart. On the other hand, music can also operate socially. If the governor loves music, the one in consistence with ancient music, and is willing to enjoy it with the governed, the governor will make pleasure a thing common to the governed and himself. This will contribute to a harmonious external world, that is, the community. These two functions are not well-defined, but interact with each other all the time. What’s more, such functions of music still have great meaning in both self-cultivation and social-civilizing today.

- Elaine Kwok (University of Hong Kong)

A Five-Dimensional Approach to Painting and Emotion

The chief objective of the proposed paper is to show in what sense art and emotion can be understood and analyzed on five dimensions. By doing so, this paper not only lays out an organizing categorization to analyze the concepts of art and emotion as understood by major scholars but also introduces an
approach to analyzing different kinds of emotional engagement with art works, especially painting. By adopting this five-dimensional approach, the origins of emotion can be traced in the process of art reception. The five dimensions from which emotional engagements take place are the expressed, which is what a painting is meant to say; the dimension of the method, which includes the method, techniques, or approach adopted by a painter to represent the represented; the dimension of the picture, which is the painting itself as an object showing the presented features on the canvas or on a surface as a denotation system presenting the pictorial cues of the painting; the dimension of the unfolding process, carried out by the spectator when unfolding the development of a painting’s pictorial features; and the dimension of the dwelling process, which encompasses the effects or emotions experienced by the spectator as induced in the process of contemplating a painting. The major scholars selected in the paper are Ernst Gombrich’s Art and Illusion; Michael Fried’s Absorption and Theatricality; Svetlana Alpers’ The Art of Describing; Norman Bryson’s Vision and Painting; Gilles Deleuze’s Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation; and Nelson Goodman’s Of Mind and Other Matter. These scholarly works bring light to the emotional engagements taking place on the five dimensions.

- Yasushi Nakamura (Seijo University)

Daniel Buren’s Works and Their Emotive Aspect

This presentation will discuss the emotional feature of Daniel Buren’s works, compared with that of Minimal Art; both styles have a common position characterized by impersonality and geometric configurations. Daniel Buren is recognized for his work in situ transformed by his visual tool, the 8.7 cm wide vertical stripes, alternating white and color, which is his neutral expression of the pursuit of impersonality. His stripes are regarded as the index (as defined by Charles Sanders Peirce) based on their nature of attracting beholders’ eyes. This index indicates the landscape to which it is attached, and Buren’s stripes induce the landscape to the metalandscape stage, the semiotic plane. This alienation of the site interrupts the conventional view of beholders, confuses them with a knowledge emotion, and then compels them to question the context. By comparing Buren’s works with Minimal Art, which is similarly based on impersonality and exhibits a “presence” of objects, the difference of emotions between the two is revealed. The objects of Minimal Art neither indicate any internal meaning nor referent. Beholders are put into confusion by not encountering another subject, and they try to create meaning for the work by using their imagination and by cathartic participation in a white, institutionally protected cube. The emotions caused by the two art approaches have a common point categorized as knowledge ones. However, in Buren’s works, emotions are distinguished by the aesthetic question of the public space positioned apart from the artistic institutional space.
Thinking Through Emotions Inside the Artistic Process

The recognition of physical sensation in artistic practice as one of the most constitutive elements of art has become an area of interest in current aesthetic academic study: what is the role of the entire human body and the total physical sensorium in aesthetic experience. This paper investigates what it means to act as an artist inside the artistic process from the perspectives of embodied sensibility and materiality in which both emotions, affects and feelings are suggested. My paper considers emotion as the aggregate of the surface feeling; a necessary element in structuring the understanding of both the artistic process and artistic thinking. However, emotion as a process of reaction is an issue that no research, neither art theory nor aesthetics, has adequately addressed. Invoking the work of Henri Bergson, and also some recent scholarship, e.g. that of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, on physical sensation and movement in aesthetic practice, this paper will examine art as practice on journeying into one’s body as an infinite material entity of possibility. Emotion is a lived experience, it is more a process that a structure, it moves one through matter as if one became material for that emotion. Emotion means that something that cannot be entirely grasped is happening in the human body. In my paper I will give an analysis of emotional complexity within the artistic process. To examine the notion of emotion presupposes an assumption that emotion always has a contextual relationship with materiality as an open system.

How Are Emotions Involved in the Making of Art? With Tentative Examples from the Work of Pina Bausch

By synthesising ideas from three bodies of literature: philosophy, psychology and philosophy of art, this article reviews the different perspectives on the relationship between emotion and art and illustrates its possibilities by applying practical examples from Pina Bausch’s work. The work of Pina Bausch is recognised as one of the most emotionally invested in the world of contemporary dance, more specifically Tanztheater. This interdisciplinary approach allows for a more comprehensive exploration of ideas and serves as a review of past and current approaches to the question of art and emotion.

The concept of emotion used for the discussion will be based on Noel Carroll's idea of the four components of emotion: cognitive, conative, somatic and behavioural (Carroll, 2003: 522) but the argument will focus more specifically on the relationship between emotion and cognition, first, and then on the different possible implications of the artist’s personal emotions in the making of his/her work. Three such possibilities will be explored in more depth: (a) psychoanalytical ideas of unconscious and sublimation; (b) art as a personal therapeutic/cathartic process; (c) art as a way to reflect on life or societal issues. Another key argument in the discussion is the importance of the artist’s intention. In this sense, this article argues that the intention of the artist is key, not only to understanding the meaning of the work, but also the actual
involvement of emotion (defending possibility (c) and giving agency back to the artist)

- Estela Ibáñez García (University of Hong Kong)

Music as a Trigger for Performances of Meaning: Articulating Emotional Experience through Embodied Minds

What did Franz Schubert feel when he realized he had syphilis? This question sets off Ingmar Bergman’s *In the presence of a clown* (1997). Facing death, a madman confined in a psychiatric hospital tries to make sense of his personal situation through Schubert’s via his music. Neither the disembodied sounds coming from his gramophone nor the doctor’s answer give him a note of hope. Only the arrival of another patient who endorses the relevance of one’s inner freedom and imagination prompts “a joint project against chaos and dissolution,” namely the creation and performance of the first talking film in history. Schubert’s music is thus put into context and acts as a trigger for meaningful performances – first cinematic then theatrical – which will give this man a new perspective of the composer’s feelings at the end of his life.

Drawing on speech-act theory and Jerome Bruner’s notion of the “dual landscape” of narratives, this paper considers film as a communicative context in which the process of meaning making is displayed. Schubert’s music becomes a situated action within a symbolic system of interpretation whereby the protagonist of the film can frame, articulate, and share his own experience. The representation of the audience in the film foregrounds art’s social dimension and generates a “mirror effect” between the internal and external audiences. The heightened attention to performance blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality and makes consciousness available through embodied minds.