

Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies: Prof. Christopher Lupke Lectures at SOAS on the Films of Hou Hsiao-hsien

This year the National Central Library (NCL) of Taiwan partnered with University of London SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) Centre of Taiwan Studies summer program to hold two lectures in the NCL's Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies series. In the second lecture, held on July 8, 2016, Prof. Christopher Lupke of Washington State University gave a talk entitled "The Illusion of Teleology in the Cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien."

Prof. Dafydd Fell, Director of SOAS Centre of Taiwan Studies, moderated the lecture, which was introduced by Ms. Wu Ying-mei, Deputy Director of the NCL. Previously, the NCL and SOAS jointly established a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies (TRCCS) at SOAS.

Christopher Lupke is a professor of Chinese and Cinema Studies at Washington State University. In 2002, he spent a short time carrying out research in Taiwan, with the financial assistance of the NCL's Center for Chinese Studies. He is an expert in Chinese culture, with training in modern and classical Chinese, cultural theory, and film. He continues to have a strong interest in Taiwanese culture and society, as well as in Sinophone Studies in general.

Prof. Lupke is the author of *The Sinophone Cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien: Culture, Style, Voice, and Motion*. In his lecture, Prof. Lupke drew attention to one thread that runs through most of Hou Hsiao-hsien's films: the visual display of motion. Previous scholars have studied the director's use of static camera in his early films and the slow pan of his later cinematographic style. But after analysing films from various stages of Hou's career, Prof. Lupke observed that though his subject matter, settings, and themes are wide-ranging, the illusion of teleology is constant. With this new understanding, Prof. Lupke showed the audience that an inability to achieve one's goals, an inability to reach a desired destination, or an inability of the movement through space to achieve what one had originally intended pervades Hou Hsiao-hsien's films. His films often begin with a desire to get somewhere, but in the end seldom accomplish it.

Prof. Lupke's incisive analysis illustrated Hou Hsiao-hsien's cinematic style to the audience, who continued discussing the lecture and exchanging their views on Hou Hsiao-hsien and Taiwanese films with the him after the conclusion of the lecture.

At the very end, Ms. Wu Ying-mei, Deputy Director of the NCL screened a short promotional video in English specially produced by the Center for these occasions. The video briefly introduced the work of the Center, the Research Grant for Foreign Scholars in Chinese Studies, the Taiwan Fellowship, and the Chinese Studies digital resources provided by various academic institutions in Taiwan. The video's purpose is to encourage more outstanding overseas scholars to apply for financial support to carry out research in Taiwan and help further enhance Taiwan's research strengths.



Prof. Christopher Lupke (left); Prof Dafydd Fell (right), Director of SOAS Center of Taiwan Studies



Prof. Christopher Lupke



SOAS staff and students enthusiastically attend the lecture



Prof. Christopher Lupke delivers his lecture



Questions from the audience



NCL Deputy Director Wu Ying-mei (left) screens a video introducing the Center for Chinese Studies



Left to Right: Assistant Director, the Education Division, Taipei Representative Office in the UK Ms. Tseng Su-chen; NCL Deputy Director Ms. Wu Ying-mei; Prof. Christopher Lupke; Prof. Dafydd Fell; Prof. Chang Bi-yu