Reports for the Asian / Pacific / American Caucus (APAC): 2005-2008

2005-2006
Co-Chairs: Sylvia Chong (University of Virginia) and Renuka Bisht (University of Florida)

This was an extremely active year for APAC. We received much information from dozens of members regarding screening suggestions for the 2006 conference in Vancouver, focusing on Asian Canadian filmmakers in particular. As a result, three of our suggestions were adopted by the screening committee: Ali Kazimi's *Continuous Journey,* Midi Onodera's *The Displaced View,* and Kimi Takesui's *The Summer of the Serpent.* We also co-sponsored a screening of Jia Zhangke's *Unknown Pleasures* with the Caucus on Class. We also co-sponsored 6 panels for the Vancouver conference (1 of which was co-sponsored with the Caucus on Class), and 3 of those panels were accepted. In addition, many of our active members participated at the conference with papers on Asian, Pacific, and Asian American topics, although some of their panels were not entirely on APAC topics and thus were not submitted for co-sponsorship.

Our major activity for this academic year was the organization of a number of events to accompany our screening selections. With the help of the Explorations program at Simon Fraser University—Surrey, and the School of Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser, we were able to bring Ali Kazimi to give a talk and an additional screening at SFU-Surrey the same weekend as the conference. Also, we were able to bring Midi Onodera to the conference with the support of Cineworks, a Vancouver-based, artist-run center for independent film. Both Kazimi and Onodera attended a filmmakers reception that APAC organized and sponsored at the Vancouver conference, which doubled as our caucus meeting. The total attendance for the reception/meeting was 40 people.

One issue APAC tried to raise this year with the program committee was whether a disproportionate number of our sponsored panels were being rejected. (Our acceptance rate, 50%, was much lower than the overall acceptance rate, and lower than that of other caucuses as well.) We brought this to the attention of the Caucus Coordinating Committee as well as the Program Committee that year. Although no plan of action was decided upon, within APAC we agreed to monitor the situation during the next few conferences, and also discuss whether sponsorship was of continuing interest to our members, many of whom seem to be comfortable submitting their proposals independently of APAC. Because of the success of co-sponsored events with other caucuses, we also decided to pursue these opportunities more actively in the future.

2006-2007
Co-chairs: Jyotika Virdi (University of Windsor) and Sylvia Chong (University of Virginia)

Compared with last year's burst of activity, this year was relatively quiet for APAC. Without a wide area of focus, such as on Asian Canadian filmmakers, we recommended only 3 films to the Screening Committee, and only one was accepted, a co-sponsored screening of Sonali Gulati's *Nalini by Day, Nancy by Night* with the Caucus on Class. However, there was much activity surrounding a proposed pedagogical workshop based on the film *Crash*, with participation from four different caucuses (APAC, African/African American, Middle East, and Class). This workshop was accepted to the Chicago conference, with 7 presenters drawn from each of these caucuses, and had a great attendance (over 40 people). Although the workshop this time was built around a film that was ideal for such cross-caucus participation, there was consensus that this event might repeated for future conferences, depending on recent releases that might solicit such interest from the caucuses.

At our APAC caucus meeting, we had roughly 16 people in attendance, although one difficulty we ran into was the fact that caucus meetings were put into the regular schedule, invariably conflicting with many regular members' other conference activities. One of our topics of discussion was the intersection between members who worked on Asian national cinemas and members who worked on Asian American issues within American cinema. Although there was much support for the continuation of collaboration between these two segments of our membership (especially since many members worked on both areas at once), it was agreed that we should continue to pay attention to this potential segmentation and work to encourage dialogue within the membership.

Much of APAC's activities in recent years has moved away from the caucus meeting at the annual convention, to email correspondences throughout the year. It should be emphasized that the number of attendees at the caucus meeting does not reflect the number of members who actively contribute and participate on-line.

There is much anticipation but also anxiety about the potential for a 2009 conference in Tokyo, but an in-depth discussion of this was postponed until next year's conference, by which time we would know for sure whether this international conference would take place.

2007-2008
Co-chairs: Jane Park (University of Sydney) and Jyotika Virdi (University of Windsor)

The most significant activity taken up in the period after the Caucus meeting was putting together the caucus mission statement. Several past chairs were consulted and many members weighed in on the final draft that was sent to the CCC, copied below:

Asian/Pacific/American Caucus--Mission Statement

APAC is dedicated to promoting, encouraging, and facilitating the participation and recognition of scholars of Asian and Pacific heritage working in all disciplinary fields,
as well as scholarship on Asian, Asian American, and Pacific film/media. We are especially interested in promoting the following: participation in the annual conference, publishing in and evaluating essays for *Cinema Journal*, and governance of Society for Cinema and Media Studies. APAC serves as a network for senior scholars to mentor junior scholars and graduate students, and it promotes collaboration with both scholars and media makers in Caucuses and Scholarly Interest Groups, and across national boundaries within Asia, the Pacific, and their diasporic communities.

Reminders for films sponsorships and panel submissions were sent before the September 1 2007 deadline. APAC submitted a request to cosponsor, with the Queer Caucus, Evans Chan's *The Map of Sex and Love*. The film was not accepted by the screening committee and so APAC decided to cosponsor the filmmaker, Kamal Aljafari, invited by the Middle East Caucus.

APAC received several requests for panel sponsorships but at the last minute the senders were asked to submit their proposals directly to the open call as caucuses were only to weigh in on sponsoring panels after they were accepted.

By January 11, 2008 APAC requested a sponsorship of 26 panels but were asked to cut it back to 8 panels. We resubmitted 11 panels with the option of eliminating 3 panels to stay within the 8 panel sponsorship limit. Members were sent a reminder of all 26 panels relevant to APAC.

At the conference Jane Park was unable to attend from Sydney and the plan was to organize a conference call. Jane Park will replace outgoing APAC Chair, Jyotika Virdi, in 2008-09 and a new Co-chair, Celine P. Shimizu was elected in 2008.

The meeting was attended by: Ruby Cheung (U of St. Andrews), Alex Cho (U of Texas), Sylvia Chong (U of Virginia), Manishita Dass (U Michigan), Shilpa Dave (U Michigan), Glenn Man U Of Hawaii), Hoang Tan Nguyen (UC Berkeley), Jun Okuda (SUNY Geneseo), Yoko Ono (Oxford Brookes U), Celine Parrenas Shimizu (UCSB), and Jyotika Virdi (U of Windsor) (11 people). Members discussed:

Membership and Email Notification:
The group noted the attendance was thin this year and that membership email ads need systemization by initiating a listserv, or asking the Caucus Coordinating Committee (CCC) to request annual membership renewals be accompanied by checking off caucuses new/old members would like to affiliate themselves with, which would automatically generates a current and updated email address list.

Electing New APAC Co-Chair
Jyotika Virdi announced she would be stepping down as APAC Chair. Jane Park will be taking over as Chair (but was unable to attend this year as she relocated in Sydney this January). While the ideal is to have representation from East Asia and South Asia, it is equally welcome to have a co-chair this year from Southeast Asia and American/East Asian cinema. Celine Shimizu stepped up to co-chair APAC in the coming year. APAC welcomes Jane Park as the new Chair and Celine Shimizu as the new co-chair!

Report of this Year's Film/Panel Sponsorship Process
Panels: The APAC chair reported that this year panel sponsorships were not permitted at the time of submissions to the call for papers and caucus chairs were asked to submit their sponsorship of panels by Jan 11, 2008, *after* the program committee had accepted and put together panels.

The APAC chairs were asked to cut the 26 panels sponsorships they submitted by Jan 11 to a maximum of 8 panels. A discussion ensued on the reasoning behind such a strategy and the primary role of caucuses. It was suggested that this be raised with the CCC and the Program Committee. The chair noted that some panel sponsorship requests made prior to the September 2007 deadline were accepted by the Conference Program Committee, but quite a few were not.

Films: APAC also forwarded a request to sponsor a film at SCMS that was not accepted by the Film Program Committee this year.

APAC did respond to the Middle-East Caucus request this year and contributed part of its funds to sponsor filmmaker, Kamal Aljafri and his films *The Roof*, 2006 and *Visit Iraq,* 2003 at the 2008 SCMS.

Sylvia Chong, who was in a position to attend the CCC meeting at the end of the conference this year volunteered to take these issues of the panel sponsorship process up with the CCC.

2009 Conference in Tokyo Plans
Members discussed the opportunities and challenges presented by conference being held in Tokyo next year. Given the minuscule size of the caucus budget ($300) one suggestion was to

pool resources with different caucuses and request caucuses to take turns in inviting filmmakers/scholars representing different caucus area/interests.

Another idea was to solicit suggestions from APAC members film scholars working in Asia and to forge links with them to showcase APAC oriented panels/films in Tokyo.

With regard to sponsoring important commercial Asian filmmakers, it was felt that it might necessitate separate fundraising work to get a filmmaker to perhaps address a plenary session in Tokyo.

Another suggestion was to skirt unaffordable commercial filmmakers and perhaps support and show case the work of alternative and struggling independent or documentary filmmakers in the region, again, based on suggestions from scholars.

An APAC member on next year's Film Program Committee, Yoko Ono, requested sending suggestions for films to be screened in Tokyo that she would ensure receives fair consideration.

The meeting adjourned with Sylvia Chong promising to take a number of APAC's concerns to the CCC.

MARCH 7, 2008 SCMS, PHILADELPHIA
APAC MEETING MINUTES
&
CAUCUS COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CCC) MEETING MINUTES

APAC MEETING

Attended by: Ruby Cheung (U of St. Andrews), Alex Cho (U of Texas), Sylvia Chong (U of Virginia), Manishita Dass (U Michigan), Shilpa Dave (U Michigan), Glenn Man U Of Hawaii), Hoang Tan Nguyen (UC Berkeley), Jun Okuda (SUNY Geneseo), Yoko Ono (Oxford Brookes U), Celine Parrenas Shimizu (UCSB), and Jyotika Virdi (U of Windsor) (11 people)

The meeting began with introductions and a collection of email ads

Membership and Email Notification:

The group noted the attendance was thin this year and that we have to systemize member ship email ads, perhaps by initiating a listserv, or asking the Caucus Coordinating Committee (CCC) to request annual membership renewals be accompanied by checking off caucuses new/old members would like to affiliate themselves with that automatically generates a current and updated email address list.

New APAC Co-Chair

Jyotika Virdi announced she would be stepping down as APAC Chair. Jane Park will be taking over as Chair (but was unable to attend this year as she relocated in Sydney this January). Someone needed to step up to co-chair with Jane Park, and take over as Chair when Jane steps down next year. While the ideal is to have representation from East Asia and South Asia, it is equally welcome to have a co-chair this year from Southeast Asia and American/East Asian cinema. Celine P. Shimizu stepped up to co-chair APAC in the coming year. APAC welcomes Jane Park as the new Chair and Celine Shimizu as the new co-chair!

Report of this Year's Film/Panel Sponsorship Process

Panels: The APAC chair reported that this year panel sponsorships were not permitted at the time of submissions in September and caucus chairs were asked to submit their sponsorship of panels by Jan 11, 2008, *after* the program committee had accepted and put together panels.

The APAC chairs were asked to cut the 26 panels sponsorships they submitted by Jan 11 to a maximum of 8 panels. A discussion ensued on the reasoning behind such a strategy and the primary role of caucuses. It was suggested that this be raised with the CCC and the Program Committee. The chair noted that some panel sponsorship requests made prior to the September 2007 deadline were accepted by the Conference Program Committee, but quite a few were not.

Films: APAC also forwarded a request to sponsor a film at SCMS that was not accepted by the Film Program Committee this year.

APAC did respond to the Middle-East Caucus request this year and contributed part of its funds to sponsor filmmaker, Kamal Aljafri and his films *The Roof*, 2006 and *Visit Iraq*, 2003 at the 2008 SCMS.

Sylvia Chong, who was in a position to attend the CCC meeting at the end of the conference this year volunteered to take these issues of the panel sponsorship process up with the CCC.

2009 Conference in Tokyo

Members discussed the opportunities and challenges presented by conference being held in Tokyo next year. Given the minuscule size of the caucus budget ($300) one suggestion was to pool resources with different caucuses and request caucuses to take turns in inviting filmmakers/scholars representing different caucus area/interests.

Another idea was to solicit suggestions from APAC members film scholars working in Asia and to forge links with them to showcase APAC oriented panels/films in Tokyo.

With regard to sponsoring important commercial Asian filmmakers, it was felt that it might necessitate separate fundraising work to get a filmmaker to perhaps address a plenary session in Tokyo.

Another suggestion was to skirt unaffordable commercial filmmakers and perhaps support and show case the work of alternative and struggling independent or documentary filmmakers in the region, again, based on suggestions from scholars.

An APAC member on next year's Film Program Committee, Yoko Ono, requested sending suggestions for films to be screened in Tokyo that she would ensure receives fair consideration.

The meeting adjourned with Sylvia Chong promising to take a number of APAC's concerns to the CCC.

CENTRAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Submitted by Sylvia Chong (attended on behalf of Co-Chairs, Jyotika Virdi & Jane Park)

Jonathan Hall, continuing CCC co-chair, presiding

1. Discussion of process of screening panels and papers, reiterating many of the issues we discussed in APAC. One suggestion raised at the Exec Committee (EC) meeting earlier in the year: should each caucus get 1 panel they can have automatically approved outside of the normal screening process? This would allow caucuses to organize special panels or nontraditional workshops without worrying that their panel will be rejected by the program Comm.

2. Should caucus funding be increased to $500-600 each / year?

3. More discussion on the process of caucuses sponsoring panels. There is general discontent with the way the system worked this year, and some talk about how this process of post-approval (only getting to sponsor panels after they've been approved) was introduced to streamline the process on the side of the home office, but caused much confusion for the caucuses.

4. The EC has been talking about taking SCMS to an overseas venue every 5 years, with cheaper domestic sites in between. Re: Tokyo, there are two main efforts to make the conference more affordable, including doubling the number of grad scholarships and also offering cheap rooms at the venue.

5. Central office is annoyed that the caucses are missing deadlines(don't know which ones specifically, but they include the deadline to pick a caucus meeting time, and another to request caucus funding). CCC is going to work with home office to try to provide a central calendar of deadlines.

6. Issue of how CCC and caucuses are represented on the SCMS website. In particular, this is a conflict between the caucuses (which represent various constituents who have been historically marginalized within the larger membership) and the SIGs (Special Interest Groups, which represent collections of scholarly interests such as TV, Eastern European cinema, etc.). The by-laws of SCMS were amended to address this issue by defining the purpose of the caucuses vs. SIGs in writing. We discussed placing this information more visibly on the SCMS website. (subnote: the home office provides web space and an email list serve for each caucus to use. I have sent an email to Jane Dye to inquire about APAC getting access to these services.)

7. Bambi Higgins (outgoing CCC co-chair) is developing a mentorship program for SCMS as a whole, as a way of allowing junior scholars and grad students access to senior

scholars in the caucuses. This also provides an opportunity for mentorship to take place across caucuses, and not just within them. More info to follow.

8. A reminder that SCMS by-laws mandate that 30% of screenings are reserved for the caucuses! This seems to have been forgotten by the Screening Committee, whose members change every year.

9. Note about keeping track of our attendance at meetings (#s, not names). Home office is very concerned to know how active the caucuses are, b/c it is part of the rationale for our special existence within SCMS.