

Ashmun, Larry. University of Wisconsin, Madison. *The Father Yves Bertrais Collection.*

The Father Yves Bertrais Collection, housed in the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries' Special Collections, is a truly unique resource for Hmong studies. Fr. Bertrais, a lifelong Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) missionary, worked with the Hmong for more than 55 years beginning in 1950, first in Laos until 1975, then, in particular, in French Guiana, China, the Philippines, and Thailand until his retirement due to ill health in December 2005, dying in France in May 2007. Fr. Bertrais holds a very special place within Hmong studies as one of three co-creators in 1952/3 of the groundbreaking Hmong Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA), now the most widely used Hmong script around the world. Moreover, he in particular most actively promoted cultural understanding and Hmong literacy by directing the publication of a seminal series of many Hmong language books from the 1960s on. His Collection is highlighted by copies of these, his diaries and handbooks, photographs, exhibit material, and maps, for example, as well as thousands of letters to him and/or his OMI mission, plus copies of many replies. Other notable aspects of the Collection include photo albums of Hmong life in French Guiana, where some first resettled from Laos in 1977, and of trips to Hmong communities in China beginning in 1985, as well as audio tapes of some of the Radio Veritas broadcasts for Asia prepared under Fr. Bertrais' direction. The Collection was received by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries on a permanent loan basis from the OMI in 2007.

Baird, Ian. University of Wisconsin, Madison. *Presenting a Sensitive History: Different Representations of Hmong Involvement in the Communist Party of Thailand.* Between the late 1960s and the 1980s, large numbers of Hmong joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and fought against the Royal Thai Army. Despite the importance of Hmong involvement in the CPT in northern Thailand, surprisingly little has been written about their crucial role in the CPT. In the early years after the CPT disintegrated as a result of battlefield defeats, internal conflicts, discontinuation of support from China, and the general amnesty in 1981, a lack of reporting about the role of the Hmong in the CPT might be explained by continued political sensitivities. Recently, however, the Hmong people have become more interested in telling their story, and to advocate for land rights based on past CPT involvement. Here, I compare information collected from former Hmong CPT members in Thailand in 2012 with two filmic representations of Hmong involvement with the CPT. The first is a 2010 Hmong language documentary, *Hmoob Thaib Keeb Kwm: Kob Rog 1968-1987*. The second is a 2012 full-length historical fiction movie in Thai and Hmong (with Thai sub-titles) called *Blood for Freedom*. Through considering different representations of Hmong involvement in the CPT, one can see how history is much more than simply clarifying and presenting facts. Rather, I argue that Hmong involvement in the CPT is being represented in quite different ways depending on the presenters, the political context, and the intended audience. Indeed, history is never neutral or apolitical.

Chambers, David. University of Wisconsin, Madison. *The Creation and Contestation of Wat Tham Krabok Space: Monk and Hmong Spatiality and Territoriality.* My presentation comes from a place-based study of residents of Wat Tham Krabok (WTK) Buddhist Temple in

HMONG ACROSS BORDERS CONFERENCE 2013 ABSTRACTS

(LIST BY AUTHORS' NAMES)

2

Saraburi, Thailand, especially the experiences of a large number of Lao Hmong refugees and Thai monk members of the WTK sect. Aspects of territoriality and spatiality played into interactions between these two communities and created hierarchical relationships, including patronage and subordination at WTK. Hmong perceptions of life at the temple seem strongly influenced by the protection and sense of political identity provided by temple patronage and assistance. However, as a population under various forms of control and subordination, the Lao Hmong at WTK sought to express the legitimacy of Hmong identities through the media of WTK symbols and landscape. The spatiality and territorialities constructed at WTK involve the complex interplay of historic and geographic factors—including historical baggage that each group carries—that have created a unique situation which allowed for Lao Hmong refugees to reside at WTK during the past three decades. Many Hmong at the temple had already faced tremendous life changes—in terms of social relations, geography, livelihood, and so forth—before coming. At the temple, Hmong people found themselves in a unique setting constructed by the WTK institution and have struggled to negotiate varying aspects—ethnic, political, and religious—of their identity, including citizenship and political legitimacy. My presentation will explore the expressions of Hmong identity as seen on the landscape of WTK. Hmong not only imposed their identities on WTK landscapes but resisted subordination to WTK authority as well.

Chang, Long. University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. *Koob Hmoov: Bridging the Cultural Divide Through the Architecture of Transitional Housing.* Making the transition from traditional Hmong lifestyle to westernized cultural practices is influenced by many factors. This paper focuses on the impact of architectural programming and design as a reflection on Hmong culture and the negotiation with a new environment of place. The primary research for this project is drawn from rigorous analysis of first generation Hmong refugees relocating from the United Nations' Ban Vinai Refugee Camp in northern Thailand to Milwaukee, Wisconsin on the Great Lakes. This research is applied to an architectural proposal to develop a brownfield site that housed the Esser Paint Company from 1893-1986. The site is part of the City of Milwaukee's 30th Street Corridor Economic Development Plan, which proposes development of low-income housing, on an environmentally remediated site. Ninety percent of the existing population of this neighborhood is Hmong, with a majority being refugees from Southeast Asia. The critical research to be presented is based on an informed proposal for the design of the landscape and buildings of this site that reflects Hmong cultural practices through reinterpretation and adaptation of contemporary architectural practice. It explores intensive architectural programming that coupled current multi-family housing practices in America with analysis of traditional Hmong housing to generate an innovative, hybrid Hmong community residential development, and support the need to develop a place for Hmong refugees to shop, farm, and live. The analysis of the central role a community garden plays is also a critical component in this research. Gardening is a social activity that can generate cultural knowledge and Hmong awareness, not only for all generations of Hmong, but also for other neighborhood ethnic groups.

Culhane-Pera, Kathleen. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. *'Either You are Afraid of Not Having a Doctor in the Mountain or You are Afraid of Having a Doctor in the Hospital': Hmong Families' Decisions about Pregnancy Care Services in Thailand.* Background: While HIV perinatal transmission in Thailand is close to "Zero New Infections", a recent Northern Thailand study indicated that not all Hmong women use antenatal care (ANC), or hospital birth services. Our objective was to identify families' explanations for using and not using pregnancy-related healthcare services. Methods: Community-based, one Hmong village, Northern Thailand: census; face-to-face questionnaires with adults with pregnancies in previous 5 years; and case study interviews with 16 families who did and did not have ANC and hospital births. Grounded theory guided qualitative analysis. Results: Families evaluated risks, experiences, and structural issues. Risks: Families without ANC/hospital births assessed pregnancies as healthy, trusted women's ability to deliver, and did not perceive need for medical care, while families with ANC/hospital births were afraid of complications that could arise in the mountains, and trusted doctors to be able to identify and treat unknown conditions. Experiences: Families without ANC/hospital births disliked procedures, distrusted rude personnel, and detested hospital practices that interfered with cultural birth practices, while families with ANC/hospital births tolerated uncomfortable aspects of care in order to be close to doctors. Structural issues: Families evaluated cost, distance, and time as barriers if they had no insurance, were poor, or had no transportation. Conclusions: Some Hmong families do not perceive enough value to overcome negative hospital experiences and structural barriers in order to obtain pregnancy-related healthcare services. Community education about pregnancy risks and innovative health care changes that accommodate people's desires for culturally-appropriate care could influence people's decisions.

Desai, Jigna. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. *Thinking Bollywood, Refugee Identity, and Hmong Diasporic Longings.* It is a truism that diasporic communities narrate their displacement; more recently, this narration has taken a cinematic turn. Transnational cinemas have been critical to Asian diasporic imaginings, identities, and cultures (Desai 2004, Dudrah 2006, and Schein forthcoming). One might suggest that refugee (rather than immigrant) communities may deploy these media-tions with greater intensity, affect, and desire. What happens, however, when a cinematic/visual medium cannot easily become a conduit for transnationalism or merely does not exist? In the case of the Hmong American diaspora, early waves of migration first evocatively utilized other Asian transnational cinema such as Bollywood in lieu of Hmong media for multiple purposes. This cinematic promiscuity and voracity facilitated the production of Hmong diasporic identities as postcolonial subjects within the US. I suggest that a gendered and racialized Hmong American gaze often frames Bollywood because of its perceived "Asianness" as an oppositional cinema strategically positioned to resist Hollywood and American normativities. Ethnographic research with Hmong American youth suggests that young women, who are clearly primed to invest in iconcity and celebrity processes often claim to derive pleasure from Bollywood; counter-intuitively, South Asian Bollywood female celebrities such as Ashwarya Rai and Kajol foster pan-ethnic *Hmong* and *Asian American* racial and gender formations and processes. Moreover, Bollywood as a gendered and racialized performance of identification processes creates opportunities for young women to participate and forward complex, ambivalent, and transgressive sexual politics and agency within the Hmong American community.

Gettys, Richard. Brigham Young University. *Making a Profit at What Cost? Sociality and the New Economic Realities Facing Hmong Entrepreneurs in Thailand.* How has the way people value money changed relationships in village and city life? In his piece "Hmong Confucian Ethics and Constructions of the Past" (1992), Nicholas Tapp states that "behavior previously appropriate to those furthest from oneself is now also appropriate to those relatively close to one" in the urban center Chaing Mai and cites the change comes from globalization and a switch from subsistence farming to a reliance on trading. This study takes a deeper look into Tapp's claims on globalization coming with urbanization and comparing the views on money, morality and familial relations between Hmong who still live in a village and are heavily reliant on farming and Hmong from the same village who have moved to urban centers to do business. Furthermore, the switch of environment or occupation are seen to be parts of the bigger picture, that the morality and sociality are changing as a result of the way that said Hmong value money.

Hadjiyanni, Tasoulla. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. *Toward culturally sensitive housing: The Hmong experience in Minnesota.* Following the Vietnam war, thousands of Hmong refugees relocated to the United States, with Minnesota now having one of the largest Hmong communities in the country. A better understanding of the housing needs of Minnesota's Hmong allows designers, planners, and policy makers to develop housing that supports diverse ways of living, that is, culturally sensitive housing, helping retain the state's diverse population. Interviews with Hmong community members in 2002 and 2013 shed light on the challenges Hmong families experience in crafting a home in Minnesota. In spite of the decade that passed in between the two studies, the interviewees still spoke of efforts by Hmong to live close to each other for support and a sense of connection and how living in typical American houses often limited their ability to engage in vital cultural traditions. For example, preparing food for large numbers of people along with providing them with a place to eat was often difficult in small, open-plan type kitchens that permitted the smells from frying and using spices to permeate the rest of the house. Furthermore, accommodating large households and in some cases, extended households, was also difficult and this was accentuated by generational differences and the need for privacy due to activities such as studying. Plan layouts and housing characteristics, including material finishes that were not easy to clean and maintain added stress, impacting the interviewees' health and well-being. The findings point to the need to revisit guidelines and housing regulations for cultural sensitivity as well as for synergies to be built among all stakeholders.

Hickman, Jacob. Brigham Young University. *The Art of Being Governed: Managing the Soul of General Vang Pao through the Rituals of Aspirational Statecraft.* The funeral and soul-releasing (*tso plig*) ceremonies of General Vang Pao were perhaps the largest occurrences of coordinated public ritual in recent Hmong history. Beyond merely resolving the affairs of his life and sending his spirit to the ancestral realm (the common functions of these rites), I argue that these events became sites of the ritual enactment of Hmong (would-be) statehood, both for those involved in the coordination of the rites, as well as for those observing and participating more broadly in the events. Through an ethnographic analysis of the iconography at the events, the

political elements included, the discursive construction of the events, and ritual modifications designed to mark something of a meridian of time for Hmong society, I demonstrate how these rituals served to fulfill the longstanding desire for Hmong statehood. I further tie these trends to those found in contemporary messianic movements and other forms of religious revitalization found in the Hmong diaspora. In each of these cases, the problem of ritual fracturing in different clans and kin groups is understood to be directly related to the political fracturing of Hmong society more broadly. Ritual consolidation itself is seen as a key element to realizing the aims of these political theologies, and the ultimate realization of Hmong statehood—whether imagined or predicted.

Hillmer, Paul. Concordia University, St. Paul. U.S. Foreign Policy Toward the Hmong in 1975. In a July 18, 1975 cable, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Charles Whitehouse prepared his staff for a number of questions he thought the press might ask them. To the potential question, “Will the U.S. take some or all of the Meo refugees to the U.S.?” Whitehouse instructed U.S. embassy staff to reply, “There is no plan to resettle Meo refugees in the United States.” U.S. refugee personnel from the time, including Mac Thompson and John Tucker, confirm this stance. “My understanding,” says Thompson, “is that decisions had been made that the Hmong . . . were not eligible for U.S. resettlement.” According to Tucker, a “senior USAID management-type” issued a cable stating that the Hmong “were far too primitive to ever be considered for settlement in the U.S. because they were straight out of the trees.” If such ignorant opinions were held by decision-makers in Thailand and Washington, D.C., who were the individuals and what were the circumstances making it possible for the Hmong and other hill tribes to be accepted for resettlement to the United States? What other questions might be answered or at least re-contextualized in the light of consultations with recently declassified US State Department cables? This paper will present an overview of that information and discuss possibilities for further research.

Jiang, Yonglin. Bryn Mawr College
Wu, Jinting. University of Luxemburg
Zujie Yuan, Sichuan University.

In China, the Miao hold a special position in the country’s multi-ethnic cultural and social landscape. The Miao identity, however, is often constructed and imposed by outsiders. Not only is the name of “Miao” a Han Chinese term that often carries pejorative meaning in Chinese history, the Miao ethnicity such as their ancestral origins and cultural features is also often created and represented by the Han-led socio-political forces. This panel aims to address the problem by examining the Miao cultural identity in their own eyes. Based on both historical document analysis and anthropological fieldwork research, it asks the central question of what makes the Miao an ethnic group according to their own perspective? Drawing on his fieldwork interviews and observations, Yonglin Jiang studies how the Miao communities in west Hunan Province perceive their identity in their differentiation between the “Miao priests” and “Han priests.” From a historical perspective, Zujie Yuan finds in Miao dressing style that the ordinary

Miao dress was reinvented by the Manchu and Han governments since early modern times. And the anthropologist Jinting Wu explores the Miao beliefs and practices of learning and its disjuncture with the Han-centered official compulsory education policy at southeast Guizhou. Together, taking religion, housing, dress, and education as examples, these papers intend to demonstrate the cultural traits that make the Miao identity from the Miao people's own perspective.

Kue, Jennifer. Ohio State University. *Notes From the Field: Insider Perspective on Conducting Community-Engaged Research With the Hmong.* Community-centered research involves active participation of community members at all levels of the research process and, in turn, can enrich the quality of the study and produce more relevant results. At the same time, conducting community-centered research also has its unique challenges and opportunities. This presentation shares lessons learned from an insider's perspective during the process of planning and conducting qualitative research with the Hmong community. These lessons have the potential to provide guidance to Hmong researchers on methodological and practical issues related to conducting research within their own community, specifically, and to researchers who are considering conducting research with the Hmong community, in general. Methods: Key informant and in-depth interviews (n=101) were conducted with Hmong women and men living in Oregon. Research team discussions, insights from Hmong research team members, reflective notes, input from Community Advisory Committee, and project documents were sources of information about the process of conducting research in this community. Results: Practical challenges concerning several areas included building community partnerships and support; establishing and working with a community advisory committee; recruiting and training bi-lingual, bi-cultural staff from the community; using culturally appropriate materials and methods; obtaining informed consent; addressing language and literacy issues; obtaining accurate translations and transcriptions; and protecting privacy and maintaining confidentiality in a small, clan-based community. Conclusions: What an 'insider' sees and understands brings a unique perspective to any research. The involvement of community members from conception to dissemination is critical in the success of community-engaged research.

Lo, Aline. University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. *Forever Indebted: The Obligation to Retell Refugee Flight in Yang's *The Latehomecomer*.* The recovery and narration of the refugees' escape plays a crucial role in re-imagining forced displacement, and, indeed, the process of mass flight does act as one of the defining points of refugee experience. Without the act of flight, the movement from one nation to another as a result of persecution, there is no legal refugee. This is not to say that there are no other factors in creating refugees, such as U.S. neocolonialism, deportation, and government sanctioned oppression, but that flight is now an identifying action within forced displacement stories. Working against this obligation to recount an escape narrative, in this paper, I will argue that Kao Kalia Yang's *The Latehomecomer* (2008) offers a model in which the flight trope is used strategically and not emblematically. In Yang's case, the

retelling of escape narratives not only allows for personal and forgotten histories to emerge but also for new accounts that subtly reclaim and sentimentalize her family's flight. A product of retold memories and pure fancy, the retelling fills in some of the gaps in the larger history and also forges an entirely new and embellished version based on the author's imagination. In Yang's text, the romanticized escape narrative reworks the more common image of Southeast Asians frantically running away from Communist forces, and negotiates between the different claims to such memories, revealing how a resistance to such retellings both drives the act of writing and also works to destabilize the desire for such accounts of forced displacement.

Long, Jason Yu-Xiao. Guizhou Institute for Advanced Study in Anthropology and Ethnology. *Ways of Tracing Roots Back to China: A Critique of Current Western Writings on Ancient Hmong History.* This paper examines the ways in which the Hmong history was traced back to China, through a critical reading of the writings of ancient Hmong history written by Hmong and non-Hmong and published in the West since late 1970s. After the Hmong migrated as refugees to the Western countries such as the United States, France and Australia, English and French writings about the Hmong and their history started to grow significantly. The diachronic evolution of Western writings of ancient Hmong history seems to have stood out as a sound case to exemplify how cultural politics was involved in the making of ethnic history. Different from earlier writings such as the Orientalist classic by F.M. Savina, the discursive connections between the Hmongs in the West and China were somehow either reluctant or ambivalent in the Western writings during 1980s and even up to early 1990s. The trend of discourses gradually changes afterwards along with the transformation of China's image and role in the world marketplace. While the historical writings of Quincy and others romanticize the ancient Hmong history in China, those of Hmong scholars such as Gary Lee and Thomas Vang demonstrate the predicament that the Hmong academics in the West have experienced. Inflicting questions such as what history and whose history of the Hmong we may have are besetting both the Hmong community and the Hmong Studies academics, and how to deal with the ancient Chinese roots will remain as a critical issue in the studies of global Hmong history.

Lopez, Lori Kido. University of Wisconsin, Madison. *Hmong Radio and Mobile Phone Connections.* This paper investigates the way that Hmong American communities are using mobile phone technology to create a new kind of transnational radio. Through radio broadcasts that share much in common with multi-user conference calls, Hmong Americans are able to connect to broader diasporic communities in ways that are different from the face-to-face interactions that usually form the basis of identities for immigrant communities. Although scholars like Louisa Schein and Ian Baird have begun to explore transnational Hmong video, there have been few studies of the way that Hmong Americans produce and consume other kinds of media. Radio programs accessed by mobile phone technology offer the possibility of constituting a kind of community that is both participatory and performative. In this paper I explore how this form of media came to be, who participates in creating and consuming its

content, and how this specific form of radio offers a new site for understanding both radio as a mediated form of communication and the development of Hmong diasporic community through media.

Moua, Chong. University of Wisconsin, Madison. *Hmong Refugee Cosmopolitanism: (Re)Imagining Southeast Asia through a Stateless Perspective.* As a genre of knowledge production, Hmong story cloths embroider narratives of war, escape, separation, displacement, and trauma. This paper seeks to historicize the production of story cloths as a refugee phenomenon, born out of the refugee camps in Thailand, to explore the ways in which Hmong story cloth narratives represent an articulation of refugee cosmopolitanism that foregrounds a sense of peoplehood and belonging that is borderless but simultaneously within and between nation-states. Refugee coupled with cosmopolitanism creates a new paradigm to reveal how the specter of Hmong refugeeism signifies a re-articulation of the Vietnam War as a broader Southeast Asian War that haunts American national narratives of exceptionalism. Specifically, this paper will argue that the text of Hmong story cloths stitch and expose Laos, Thailand, and the Hmong as integral sites of the global Cold War conflict. Historically stateless, the figure of the Hmong refugee, as a product of U.S. cold war ambitions, manifest the contradictions of U.S. democracy as it works not only to signify how the nation “saved” displaced immigrants from political persecution but more importantly to contest narratives about American exceptionalism, revealing the U.S. as an imperialist force that compromised the freedoms of individuals and the political sovereignty of nations. Devoid of recognizable text and a clear chronological scheme, the Hmong story cloth documents refugee figures through a composition consisting of war, escape, flight, disruption, displacement, and violence to reveal the haunting legacy of an anachronistic Cold War that never quite ended.

Ogden, Mitchell. University of Wisconsin, Stout. *Coffee Tables, Nyabs, and Lazy Hmong Women: A Figurative History of the Feminine in the Hmong American Literary Movement.* This paper intends to accomplish two intellectual purposes. First, it compiles a historical narrative of the role of several Hmong women in establishing and sustaining the Hmong American literary movement over the past twenty years. Second, it undertakes an examination and interpretation of some of the female literary characters that creative writers have constructed throughout the two decades of this burgeoning literary movement. As a “figurative history”—focusing on historical figures as well as literary characters—this paper makes an interdisciplinary contribution to a collection of scholarship about Hmong women by simultaneously engaging the historical and the imaginative as complementary narratives for contemporary Hmong women’s studies. It does the important—and overdue—work of documenting some of the key historical happenings that gave rise to a literary community while complicating and nuancing that narrative through a sophisticated critique and interpretation of the imagined and fictive characters that populate the corpus of Hmong American literature. Methodologically, the tension and tangle of the biographical with the literary assures that the analysis is not complicit with constrained views of literary studies that endorse the historical over the symbolic or vice versa. The result will be a rich study that moves fluidly between the activities of Hmong women as they built a creative and expressivist niche in the Hmong American community and the imagined and fictive world that both fueled and frustrated.

Pfeifer, Mark. State University of New York Institute of Technology. *Hmong Population and Demographic Trends in the 2010 Census and 2010 American Community Survey.*

Utilizing 2010 data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey, this article discusses shifting Hmong population trends at the national, regional, metropolitan and census tract level. The article also assesses contemporary Hmong demographics across the U.S. including age distribution, gender distribution, disability status, health insurance coverage and naturalization and foreign-born status. Policy implications of the population and demographic trends presented in the article are discussed.

Rau, Krista. Brigham Young University. *Where do the Spirits Reside?: Hmong Sacred Places Now and Then.*

Traditional Hmong rituals are characterized by idiosyncratic shamanist practices and animist beliefs. They worship the bevy of spirits that dwell in the natural world and that influence and intervene in their lives. This necessitates certain sacred or auspicious places that are inseparably connected with spirits and that serve as meeting points between the mortal and spiritual realms. In contrast to these shamanic practices, researchers have documented various Hmong millenarian groups over the past century. These groups customarily attempt to redefine traditional practices through the guidance of a prophetic leader in the hope of a more unified, structured, and legitimate future for all Hmong. With this redefinition comes an altered, and yet familiar, view of sacred and spiritual places. My research focuses on this redefined view of sacred space and how it compares to co-occurring traditional views. I also investigate how the Hmong utilize, interact, and understand place through the context of their spiritual lives. Using traditional anthropological methods, I comparatively examine Hmong traditional and modern conceptions of place through the shamanic and messianic traditions from both the past and the present. I determine that Hmong spiritual places provide an essential lens through which they understand and interact with the physical and spiritual world.

Reber, April. Brigham Young University. *This is like dying while still being alive”: How the Hmong Engage in Street-level Politics.*

Sociologist Saskia Sassen argues that individuals increasingly participate in “street-level” politics within the dominant state political authority. These “informal” and “not-yet-formalized” politics allow disadvantaged and minoritized groups to develop alternate claim-making strategies. Minoritized groups initiate these changes to cultivate their political power. While she applies this theory to large U.S. communities such as Los Angeles, Chicago and New York City, I show through ethnographic fieldwork how subaltern Hmong living in northern Thailand are political actors utilizing informal politics to assert political legitimacy. These informal, “street-level” politics and low-level political actors are emerging to change and develop new relationships with neighboring ethnic groups and the larger Thai state despite the context of ethnogeographic hierarchy (with Hmong at the bottom) and ecological politics based on this hierarchy. I focus on a specific case study known as the lychee tree incident. In 2000, Thai government officials and Thai farmers colluded to destroy several Hmong lychee orchards. Initially, the government refused to acknowledge the event and

ignored Hmong claims to legitimacy. However, affected Hmong mobilized demonstrations, worked with sympathetic NGOs, and utilized social media. Eventually, the Thai government minimally compensated Hmong for the destroyed trees. Despite minimal compensation, by forcing the Thai government to recognize the event, Hmong developed a degree of political legitimacy. While still minoritized and disadvantaged, Hmong engage in street-level political processes and develop strategies to cultivate and protect their political legitimacy.

Schein, Louisa. Rutgers University.

Va-Megn Thoj, Independent filmmaker

Hmong Shifting Paradigms: Shamans, Herbs and MDs and the Conundrum of 'Cultural Competency. Given the nationwide prominence in cultural competency training of the influential book *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, the case of the Hmong is especially pertinent, especially in the Twin Cities where health care is struggling to attend to this population. We contend that learning about the cultures of minorities and new immigrants can, ironically, fuel racist arguments about their differences. What are the stakes for Hmong Americans? In the post-9/11 era where cultural typing is becoming ever more damaging to immigrants unfairly implicated in terror, we show how ideas about others' cultures can emphasize their foreignness, their lack of entitlement to full membership in American society. Our project, directed by a Hmong filmmaker, shifts the balance in representation. *Shamans, Herbs and MDs* is an intimate documentary portrait of Hmong health and healing that tells the stories of several individuals who are health seekers, as well as a range of practitioners, both Hmong and non-Hmong, who provide services as medical doctors, traditional healers and other health care professionals such as hospital interpreters. Video vignettes explore voyages overseas to pursue nonwestern health care, the futures of integrative medicine, and what can be learned about actual disparity reduction from listening to Hmong medical consumers and providers. Through clips, analytical discussion of racialization, and consideration of media activism strategies, we ask: What lies beyond "cultural competency"? And how are Hmong Americans shifting the paradigm by challenging the terms by which they have been confined?

Justin Schell, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. *Unified Worldwide?: Researching*

Hmong Hip-Hop and Poetry In and Through New Media. From a church basement in St. Paul to a makeshift bamboo recording studio in the mountains of Northern Thailand, Hmong poets and hip-hop artists craft words and music to reach audiences of the Hmong Diaspora spread throughout the world following the Vietnam War. Whereas decades previously the main form of diasporic communication was through cassettes, these artists now use YouTube and other forms of new media to spread their messages. Poets and hip-hop artists from places like Minnesota, California, France, Thailand, China, and Australia seek to unify Hmong viewers, to bring them together for reasons as diverse as ethnic pride, social justice, and religious evangelism, if only online in the space of Facebook posts and YouTube comments. Such calls for unity, however, reveal the sharp divisions within Hmong audiences, along the lines of race, gender, generation, religion, and tradition. In this paper, I examine these online discourses around a number of pieces of such media and their reception, which are a result of my ongoing work with Hmong poets and

hip-hop artists over the past four years. I had a hand in creating all of these pieces, not only in shooting and editing, but also collaborating with artists on the visual style of a video. In this way, I am at once creator, facilitator, distributor, and researcher in a digital ethnomusicology project that contributes new "nodes" to the digital diasporic media network of the Hmong Diaspora as I seek to greater understand the uneven dynamics of that network itself.

Sedgwick, Jolysa. Brigham Young University. *A Shift in Priorities: The Motivations behind Hmong Urban Migration in Northern Thailand.* Traditionally the Hmong in Thailand have made their living through subsistence farming and poppy cultivation. This arrangement had placed familial ties and religious influences at the center of Hmong cultural identity. Today, however, increased globalization has also meant a shift in cultural identity and priorities for the rising Hmong generation. This change is clearly seen in Nan Province where the decision to migrate or relocate to urban centers (such as Chiang Mai) for work is frequent. In the past, cultural identity and life decisions were heavily tied to kinship and religious influences. However, with the onset of globalization, the Thai State and current popular culture are becoming increasingly important to Hmong cultural identity and are becoming increasingly higher priorities in the lives of the Hmong who leave their childhood villages to pursue economic advancement and other activities in urban centers. In order to investigate this cultural shift, I conducted an ethnographic field study among Hmong living in a rural village in Nan Province and among Hmong in Chiang Mai. Using ethnographic field methods, I collected and analyzed the stories of those who decided or are in the process of deciding to relocate to Chiang Mai. In this paper, I present findings that support a shift in cultural priorities for those participating in urban migration and how that shift is influenced by increased global technology and connectivity. I explain that this shift is integral to understanding what the future will hold for the minority Hmong population in Thailand.

Shi, Tian. Guilin Jinzhong Mountain Tourism Academy. *Internet, Ethnic Movement, and Hmong Diaspora.* Since 1970s, more than five hundred billion Hmong people as refugees spread all over the world. Along with support of UNHCR, some of them went to America, France, Canada, Australia, and other western countries. Based on participated observation, I had collected some data about the communication between Chinese and overseas Hmong from an online Miao forum/BBS in China. My research is trying to find out does internet attack ethnic identity and how. My conclusion is that, Internet connects Hmong from different places in the world and pushes their ethnic movement in the Hmong BBS. Through online conversations, Chinese and American Hmong get a sense that they belong to the same ethnic group and maintain different nationality.

Smalkoski, Kari. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. *Performing Masculinities: The Impact of Cultural Practices, Violence, and (de)segregation on Hmong Male Youth.* This paper examines pressing questions about newly arrived Hmong male immigrant youth from Wat

Tham Krabok that explores: 1) How spaces are created by Hmong males in the form of cultural practices such as urban neighborhood league soccer to resist and respond to abject racializations and violence while providing empowering forms of agency and peer support; 2) The ways in which a school choice program that busses Hmong youth into a predominately white suburban school district has had different implications and outcomes for Hmong males than their female counterparts resulting in a variety of unintended consequences; and 3) The impact that physical violence has on Hmong males as it continues in their urban neighborhoods and has migrated to spaces in the suburban schools they attend. My paper demonstrates how Hmong male youths' negotiation of masculinity, race, and violence intersect with their relationships with family and shape their future choices. Finally, I offer my observations and findings from a fieldwork trip to Thailand in 2012 which included travel to Wat Tham Krabok and stay in a Hmong village in Northern Thailand. I share insights that have provided a baseline that maps the evolution of older and newer generations of Hmong to Thailand that have informed my work in distinct ways and have given me a deeper understanding of newly arrived Hmong immigrant male youth and their families.

Spencer, Belinda Ramirez. Brigham Young University. *Cultural Revision through Religion: A Messianic Hmong Approach in Northern Thailand.* The Hmong are a stateless hill tribe ethnic group originating from southern China but now residing in various countries around the world, including the Southeast Asian massif regions of Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. Although the Hmong are traditionally a shamanistic people, many messianic religious groups have surfaced within the Hmong diaspora. A prophetic leader, criticisms of traditional Hmong practices, a divine orthography, and a hopeful vision of the future in which there exists a country for the Hmong often characterize these groups. My research on this subject is based on ethnographic fieldwork in Nan Province, Thailand among the *Kev Cai Raug Xaiv*, a Hmong messianic religious group. In this paper, I describe the *Kev Cai*'s great visions for the future in which the Hmong are no longer a poor Southeast Asian hill tribe minority, but are rather powerful global leaders. However, in the *Kev Cai* cosmology, many current setbacks prohibit these goals from being achieved. In fact, large overhauls are necessary for those visions to become reality—including changes in traditional Hmong religious practices and well-established cultural norms. I outline this ethnographic case for discontinuity and cultural revision through religion, which the *Kev Cai* perceive as the *only* way for the Hmong to achieve the independence and sovereignty so long withheld from them. I also detail the tension that exists between the *Kev Cai* and non-messianic Hmong, who disagree as to how a future sovereign Hmong nation is to be obtained.

Thao, Kevin. University of Wisconsin, Madison. *The Prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in a Wisconsin Hmong Patient Population.* Wisconsin's largest Asian population, the Hmong, may be at high risk for type 2 diabetes, however there are few population-based studies

investigating the prevalence of diabetes in this population. This study compared the prevalence of diabetes in the Hmong subpopulation of the University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine ambulatory care population to non-Hispanic white patients.

Methods: This study utilized data from the University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine/Public Health Information Network data Exchange pilot study (PHINEX). The proportion of Hmong patients diagnosed with diabetes was compared with the prevalence of diabetes in non-Hispanic white patients. Stepwise multivariate logistic regression was used to control for the differences in age, sex, BMI, and health insurance between the two populations.

Results: The total prevalence of diabetes in the Hmong patient population was 6.71% compared to 4.82% in the non-Hispanic white patient population ($P=0.03$). The prevalence of diabetes in Hmong adult patients was 11.58% compared to 5.97% in white adult patients ($P<0.001$).

Compared with non-Hispanic whites, the odds ratio (95% CI's) for diabetes, adjusted for age, sex, BMI, and insurance was 1.72 (1.20-2.45) for Hmong patients. Conclusion: Despite being one of Wisconsin's newest immigrant populations, who came from an area of the world with low rates of diabetes, the adjusted risk of diabetes in this clinic sample of Hmong patients is 72% higher than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. The results support previous findings of significantly increased diabetes risk in the Hmong of Wisconsin.

Thao, Mai See. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. *We are People Born Tim Ub [afar]: Transcending Diabetes.* Contrary to biomedical narratives of self management and personal responsibility for diet and exercise, Hmong diabetics articulate illness narratives that exceed somatic understandings of disease and integrate notions of diaspora and transnationalism. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this paper will examine how the disease experiences of type 2 diabetes for diabetic Hmong elders animate the spectrality of the Homeland through the excessiveness of their disease, bodily differences, and feelings of liminality in the United States. Utilizing theories of melancholia, borderlands, and haunting this paper will explore: *i*) the embodiment of social loss, sentiments of displacement, and history in Hmong diabetic narratives *ii*) how the confluence of diabetes experiences is haunted by the Homeland *iii*) how disease experiences for diabetic Hmong elders open up new possibilities of reimagining the Homeland. The overarching goal of this paper is to critically resituate studies on diabetes and Hmong as also entangled in US-Hmong past relationships and Hmong transnational ties to the Homeland.

Thor, Violet. University of Wisconsin, Madison. *Father Yves Bertrais O.M.I.: The Good Shepard and Anthropologist.* Little is known about the life of Father Yves Bertrais O.M.I., beside the fact that he was one of the creators of the Hmong Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA) created in the early 1950s. This study provides a biography of Father Bertrais, specifically his life in Laos and his missionary work among the Hmong. Through interviews and biographies, a concise biography is constructed to better understand Father Bertrais' missionary in Laos and his life-long dedication to the Hmong. The biography of Father Bertrais provides an overview of his life, his evangelization efforts in Laos, and his extensive research and publication on Hmong

culture. This study is part of a growing body of research on Hmong studies, Hmong language, history, and culture; this study will contribute to future research on similar topics.

Vang, Crystal. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. *The Modernization of Paj Ntaub.* The goal of my research was to find out how Paj Ntaub in China has changed due to modernization. Paj Ntaub, also known as Flower Cloth, is embroidery of textiles done by Hmong women. Traditionally stitched by hand, these art works show status, the clan you belong to, and more recently, the stories of the Hmong people. The importance of my research is to educate those who are interested in the dying art and the traditions it holds, a lesson for both Hmong and non Hmong. By interviewing numerous Hmong villagers in Yunnan Province in Southwest China and observing their practices, I learned the art itself is slowly fading, and if Paj Ntaub is produced, it rarely is by hand. In addition machines are used to print Paj Ntaub textiles onto the fabric for mass production. A Paj Ntaub skirt could take up to three to six months to make by hand while a machine would print one in a matter of seconds or stitch one in an hour.

Vang, Ma. University of California, Riverside. *Anthology as a Refugee Archive: Re-Chronicling Hmong Histories in How Do I Begin?* In the last decade, the publication of several exciting literary works has contributed to the small but emerging field of Hmong American literature. A central dilemma driving these literary texts is the threat of a Hmong disappearance from history and culture when so much historical memory has primarily been transmitted through oral tradition. This paper will analyze the most recent text, *How Do I Begin?*, to position the literary anthology as an archive for Hmong American presence in history and culture. It explores both the *form* and *content* of the anthology to show the construction of a literary and historical narrative. I argue that the anthology re-chronicles Hmong histories both during the war and through their displacement and migration to the US in order to articulate Hmong history in the present. I show how they constitute refugee narratives that chart history by drawing together the everyday dilemmas of Hmong Americans as gender racial subjects and connecting these conflicts with the historical conditions of loss. Investigating the anthology's form in the positioning of the authors' stories in relation to each other reveals the piecing together of a different kind of record that is embedded in cultural politics and refuse official legibility. As such, creative literary expression has been one important tool in reconsidering the impact of war and Hmong refugee experiences from Hmong American perspectives. My analysis contributes to a larger archive-building project that seeks alternative sites of knowledge production when historical archival accounts cannot properly deal with US unofficial projects of war.

Vang, Pa Der. St. Catherine University. *Generational Differences among Hmong Americans.* This paper examines generational differences among Hmong Americans in the areas of health behaviors and mental health. The immigrant paradox suggests that as immigrants acculturate to their host society, health behaviors begin to worsen. To explain this phenomenon, researchers have suggested that the outcomes of later generations of immigrants tend to parallel those of individuals who have lived in the U.S. over many generations; an effect of acculturation. This paper will examine this concept as it is related to Hmong. Using nonparametric analysis on SPSS 19, we analyzed data from 196 Hmong American respondents. Our results indicate the

following: Second generation Hmong reported higher rates of smoking and drinking behavior than first generation. Second generation Hmong reported higher rates of depressive symptoms. Second generation respondents report higher smoking and drinking behavior possibly because the context for young adults in American is accepting of drinking and smoking. Further study needs to be done to examine the higher rates of depressive symptoms among second generation Hmong. Although second generation immigrants continue to face the same oppression as their parents, they may not be prepared with the same coping mechanisms because they believe that they can make it in society just like any other American. Unfortunately they continue to face discrimination due to racism and the historical trauma of war related immigration. The implication for researcher and service provision to immigrants is to address the issues of acculturation stressors and bicultural stress on newer generations of immigrants.

Xiong, Choua. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire *Analysis of a Hmong Mythical Figure: Chi You (Txiv Yawg)*. During an intensive three weeks visit in Yunnan Province, China, I explored the story of the mythical king, Chi You (Txiv Yawg) mentioned in Hmong's history as the uprising Hmong king. In the 1990s, early Hmong scholars suggest that Hmong's king in China is the Chinese Miao's king, Chi You. While some Hmong American communities believe this story, some communities hesitate on the validity of the story. The oral tradition and beliefs behind Chi You's story was questioned within Hmong-Chinese communities to address Hmong American's critique of Chi You as the Hmong king. Using a qualitative approach, we visited 16 Hmong-Chinese communities in which 10 were interviewed in focus groups. Participants were questioned about their ancestors and historical stories on Chi You. The research compares the (Miao) Hmong-Chinese perspective and knowledge of this figure with Hmong-American's and Hmong scholars' analysis. Findings suggest that Chi You remains a myth and further in-depth field research is necessary to better understand Chi You's role in Hmong history.

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Health Disparities Research in the Hmong American Community: Implications for Practice and Policy. Since the first wave of their arrival to the U.S. over 30 years ago, the Hmong population has grown substantially. Although the focus on health disparities has led to improvements in recent decades in the health of the U.S. population as a whole, many non-white populations continue to lag behind. One such population is the Hmong. This article reviews medical studies since 1990 that focus on Hmong health issues and argues for long-term funding at the state and federal levels as well as immediate support to address the health needs of this significantly growing population. Furthermore, the authors argue that existing anecdotal reports and findings on the Hmong population require greater attention, further study, and a commitment to work for change.

Xiong, Yang Sao. University of Wisconsin, Madison. *Hmong Americans' Educational Attainment: Recent Changes and Remaining Challenges.* Using U.S. Census data from 1990 to 2010, this paper examines Hmong Americans' language use, English language ability, school attendance, high school dropout rate, and educational attainment. The data reveal significant improvements in Hmong Americans' English language ability, attendance at higher levels of education, and higher education completion. The data also show that there are differences between states, between males and females, and between age cohorts with respect to certain educational outcomes. Additionally, the gap between Hmong females and males in terms of high school dropouts and educational attainment has narrowed considerably. I discuss the implications of these findings and consider some of the persistent structural challenges that Hmong American students continue to face in K-12 public schools.

Yang, See. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire *Education and Gender Roles in the Daily Life of the Hmong of China.* For years the Hmong people have always been a patriarchal society, where men and women took on household chores, roles that were considered to be gender appropriate. Because of education and its influence in society today, gender roles in the Hmong community have changed. The purpose of this research was to examine the effect education had on household gender roles within the Hmong communities in Yunnan Province, China, with an emphasis on generational differences and educational experiences. Using ethnographic fieldwork, including both participant observations and interviews the research was conducted within three weeks of visiting 16 different Hmong – Chinese communities and interviewing 12 participants. Findings from China showed that educational attainment relies on family economic status for both males and females. However, because of gender roles, males are more likely than females to be encouraged to seek education regardless of their families' economic status. It also suggests that more research should be conducted in this area of study due to the lack of resources for the topic of education and its effect on gender roles for the Hmong in China.