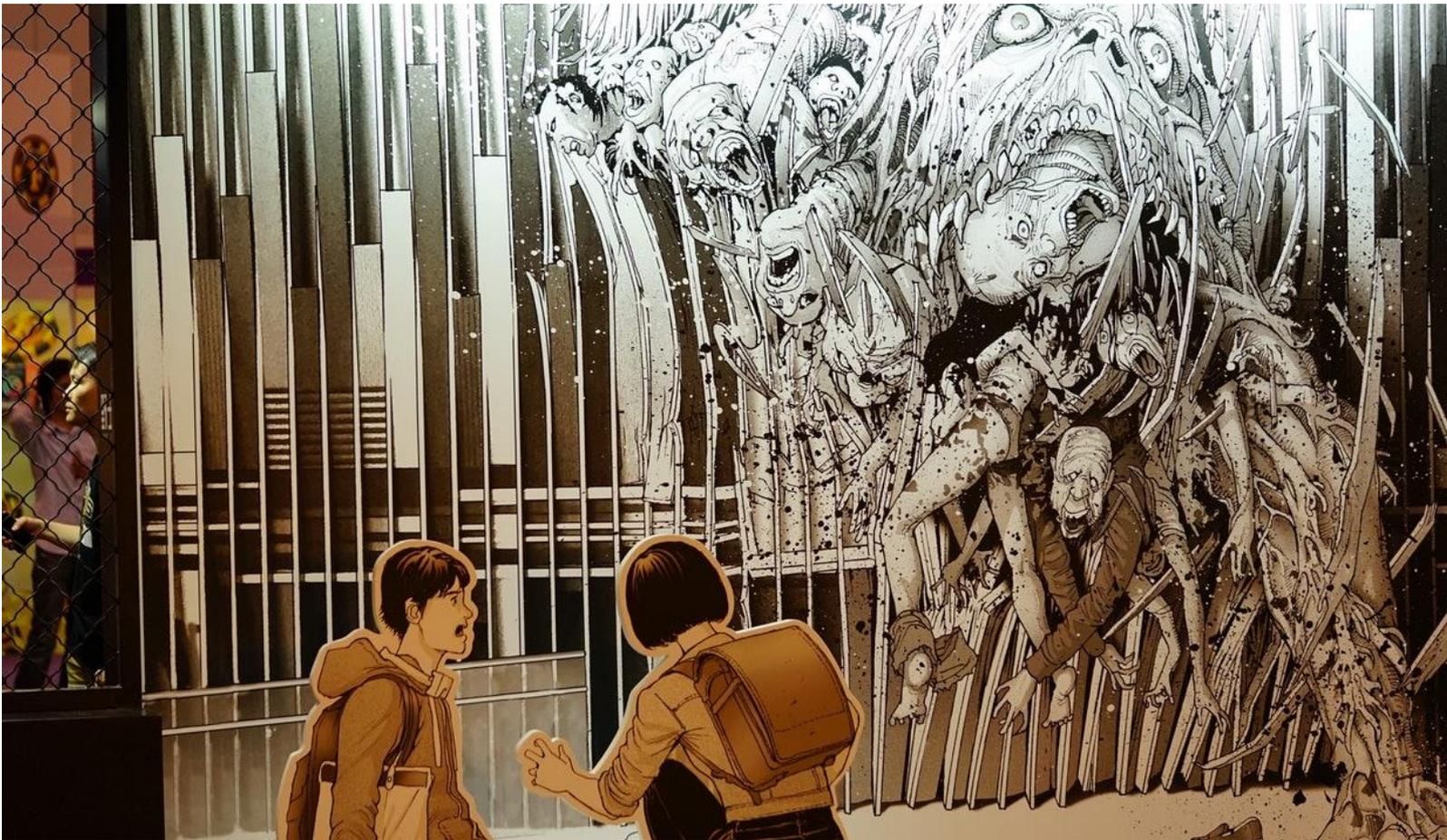


Outbreak City

Undead and Online in Hong Kong Popular Fiction



Dr Heather Inwood

(FAMES, University of Cambridge)

2pm, 16 November (Thursday), 2023 (in-person only)

Room LG18, Faculty of Law, Sidgwick Site

China Research Seminar Series

Abstract

Zombies are a longstanding trope within Hong Kong cinema and popular culture, typically taking the form of reanimated corpses that hop around on two legs and originate in traditional Chinese supernatural fiction. In this talk I turn to a more recent outbreak of zombie-themed transmedia narratives (屍故) that appeared in the 2010s, placing them in the context of Hong Kong's Localist movement and the growing popularity of internet forums as a space to read and write popular fiction. In series such as *Ferocious Harbour* (凶港), *Hong Kong Infected* (香港感染), and *Let's Fight Zombies Tonight* (今晚打喪屍), the undead embody tensions between order and anarchy, bravery and capitulation, self-governance and governance by others, concepts that hold specific socio-political resonance for Hong Kong during these years. Paying particular attention to the possibility of the zombie-as-chronotope, I examine the balance of utopian and dystopian elements in these narratives and reflect upon the status of outbreak culture in post-Covid Hong Kong.

Speaker



Dr Heather Inwood is Associate Professor of modern Chinese literature and culture in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and a Fellow of Trinity Hall. She received her PhD in modern Chinese literature from SOAS in 2008, then went on to teach at The Ohio State University and the University of Manchester before coming to Cambridge in 2016. Her articles on contemporary Chinese poetry, popular fiction, film, and digital media have been published in various academic journals and she has also written a Chinese-language blog and columns for Chinese newspapers. She is the author of *Verse Going Viral: China's New Media Scenes* (University of Washington Press, 2014), and is currently working on a book on Chinese internet fiction. For the past five years she has also served as co-editor of the *British Journal of Chinese Studies*.