

Department of Asian American Studies presents / as part of its Critical Voices series

“Asian American Silicon Valley Narratives”

Dr. Christopher Fan

Commentary by Prof. Jim Lee (Asian American Studies) and Prof. Ted Martin (English)

This talk arises from a chapter in Fan’s current book project, *Principles of Selection: Asian American Fiction after 1965*, which examines Asian American cultural production after the demographic shifts of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. The chapter considers how “Silicon Valley” narratives—the name of a dominant ideology of late capitalism, as well as a geographical location and industry—rely on Asian American racial form in order to naturalize their economic and moral futurity. It argues that Silicon Valley’s promise of utopia via technology is underwritten by a mythology of realized multicultural utopia that is generated and reinforced by two main tropes: the multicultural ensemble cast and the racialized nerd genius. This presentation will flesh out these claims through readings of scenes from the 1984 film *Revenge of the Nerds* and HBO’s ongoing series *Silicon Valley*, as well as examples from literary fiction and mass-market discourse about Silicon Valley. It will then consider how post-1965 Asian American cultural politics are routed through the “autistic realism” of Tao Lin’s 2013 novel *Taipei*. As a work-in-progress, this talk is a first attempt at broadening the context of the book to talk about race and knowledge work in the post-Civil Rights/post-1964 era more generally, with Asian American racial form as paradigmatic of this broader story about the dialectic of race, class, and labor.

Christopher Fan is currently a UC Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow in English (UC Riverside) and will join UC Irvine’s Department of English as an Assistant Professor (Fall 2017). His work has appeared, or is forthcoming, in the *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *American Quarterly*, the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, *Post45*, and the *New Inquiry*. He is also a senior editor at *Hyphen* magazine, which he co-founded.

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

2:00 - 3:30 pm | HG 1341

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**Light refreshments provided. Please RSVP (required)
to robledj1@uci.edu by Thursday, May 11th**



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