Disillusioned by life in America, Lao She returned home leaving behind a number of English translations. The Chinese originals eventually disappeared, leaving these English translations as the earliest source texts, which were retranslated into Chinese in the 1980s. One of these works was The Drum Singers which he had translated with Macanese American translator Helena Kuo in 1946 and was retranslated back into Chinese by Ma Xiaomi in 1980. In the absence of a definitive translation, the period between 1946-2013 has seen a struggle to define the text between the two translators and later compilers. While Kuo seems to have reoriented The Drum Singers towards a depiction of female empowerment, Ma added and deleted portions to her Chinese retranslation to shape the text into something that she felt was more like Lao She. This talk will focus not only on the process of translation but how gender and gendered language depiction female sexuality and desire becomes the focus of the conflict between Ma and Kuo in their struggle to define the text.

27 November, 12p.m. to 1p.m.  
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