

RGC Reference	LU301-HSS-13
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The Research Grants Council of Hong Kong
Prestigious Fellowship Scheme under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel
Completion Report

(for completed projects only)

Part A: Project and Award Holder

1. Project Title

Unmasking: A Critical Study

2. Award Holder and Academic Department/Unit Involved

Name/Post	Unit/Department/Institution	Contact Information
BAEHR Peter W Chair Professor of Social Theory	Department of Sociology and Social Policy / Lingnan University	pbaehr@ln.edu.hk

Part B: The Report

5. Workplan

5.1 Workplan as per original application

1. Trips to Chicago, Stanford, Amsterdam
2. Delivering papers, attending conferences
3. Benefiting from scholarly companionship abroad

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5.3 Realisation of the workplan

(maximum 2 pages; please state how and to what extent the work as stated in the workplan has been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

I am extremely grateful to the RGC for this marvelous research opportunity. I took full advantage of it, despite the caveat that follows.

My research plan was impeded by a medical emergency that cropped up in August 2014, just as I was heading to the American Sociological Association in San Francisco, to give a paper there (on another topic, not related to the current research): I became partially blind in the left eye. Returning to Hong Kong in September, the problem was diagnosed as plaque that had sheared off a bicuspid heart valve, circulated around the brain, and lodged close to the retina. In November and December, tests revealed that I required open-heart surgery; this was conducted in February 2015 at Hong Kong's Queen Mary Hospital.

The trip to Amsterdam was abandoned. The trip to Chicago took place. And the trip to Stanford was perfectly possible except that my per diem was utterly inadequate for the stay. Even modest hotel prices were double what I could afford on the grant. I switched location and went to study in the main social sciences archive library at the University of British Columbia (Irving K. Barber Library), Vancouver. Despite the heart condition, I did manage to achieve many of the project's objectives, particularly as regards writing and dissemination of the research (see next section).

6.3 Realisation of the dissemination plan

(maximum 2 pages; please state how and to what extent the output as stated in the dissemination plan has been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

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Task 1: I delivered three talks all specifically devoted to the research on unmasking: the first to the Bard Center in Berlin; the second to Memorial University in St. John's Newfoundland; the third to Boston University. I have kept the posters for two of these and am happy to send them to RGC if requested to do so.

Task 2: The following articles were submitted, are now published, or are in the process of completion (the pdfs of 1-4 appear separately in an email that accompanies this Report:

1. "The Informers: Hannah Arendt's Appraisal of Whittaker Chambers and the Ex-Communists," *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 1 (1) 2014: 35-66. **R.** See the Acknowledgment to RGC on p. 59. Almost all of this paper was written before the research leave. It (the paper) began life as a speech delivered in Copenhagen in May 2013. However, I re-worked parts of it in January-early February 2014 (following referees' reports) while I was officially on research leave under the Fellowship's auspices. The proofs arrived in April. (Informing is an unmasking practice. In the paper, through an historical example, I ask if, when, and under what conditions informing is warranted.)
2. "One to Avoid, One to Engage: Unmasking and Conflict Pluralism as European Heritages," *HA: The Journal of the Hannah Arendt Center* 3 (October) 2015: 107-120. See the Acknowledgment to RGC on p. 117.
3. "Stalinism in Retrospect: Hannah Arendt" *History and Theory* 54 (3) 2015a: 353-366. **R.** See the Acknowledgment to RGC on p. 356.
4. "Movement, Formation, Maintenance: Totalitarian Variations in the Soviet Union," in *Totalitarian Societies and Democratic Transition* (ed. Tomasso Piffer). Budapest/New York: Central European University Press. Forthcoming, 2016. See the Acknowledgment to RGC on p. 1.

Note on articles 3 and 4 above. These touch, inter alia, on the Stalinist project of exposure and confession during the Moscow Trials of 1936-1937.

Unmasking of "enemies of the people" was central to Bolshevik rhetoric. I examine them more focally in no. 5 below and in Task 3

5. "Unmasking," *Cambridge Companion to Social Theory*, ed. Peter Kivisto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (commissioned in June 2015; in progress). This 8000 word entry is due by September 2016. I will send a copy of the proofs to the RCG when I receive them. Unlike the previous articles that have a heavy component of Hannah Arendt – she was among the foremost critics of unmasking – this entry is a synoptic piece, tracing the peregrinations of unmasking since the French Revolution.

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Task 3: "Introduction" to a proposed book on *Unmasking: Social Theory and the Politics of Exposure*. (I will use this Introduction to write the book proposal). The Introduction is attached for perusal. Like 5, under Task 2, this shows the scope of the project that RGC funded and that the book will encompass.

Task 4: The website was never completed; I ran out of time to do this properly.

7. **Other impact** (e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, knowledge transfer, etc.)

None as yet.