

RPG Workshop

The re-emergence of Cultural Revolution imagery in post-2003 Hong Kong

Speaker: Dr. Natalie Siu-Lam Wong

Date: 27th October 2011 (Thursday)

Time: 5:00-6:30pm

Venue: Room #205, Main Building, HKU



ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the recurring of Cultural Revolution imagery in post-2003 Hong Kong popular culture. It argues that Cultural Revolution imagery is the sign of a set of accumulative tensions that has been created within the cultural differences between Hong Kong and mainland China since 1967, and, more significantly, of the changing political and social circumstances in post-2003 Hong Kong. The use of Cultural Revolution imagery in Hong Kong popular cultural products is considered marking cultural differences by producing the mainland Chinese cultural 'Other' from a Hong Kong perspective and contrasting it with the Hong Kong culture. This paper further argues that Cultural Revolution imagery in post-2003 Hong Kong popular cultural commodities and sites is a way of making a transnational articulation through which Hong Kong is positioning itself in the process of transition.

This paper uses the Derridean notion of 'erasure' to understand the Hong Kong use of Cultural Revolution imagery as a problematic in that it brings up the inherent ideological difference and conflicts between post-colonial (or re-colonial) Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China. This culture of the 'Other' (i.e. mainland Chinese revolutionary imagery) is brought to use and reformulated into a new context in contemporary Hong Kong. In this sense, in Derrida's terms, there is 'the necessity of returning to them, at least under erasure' so that certain relevant meanings of the past can be borrowed but at the same time the irrelevant (i.e. the outdated, historically specific information) can be acknowledged to reflect contradictions in transformation or changes.

SPEAKER: Natalie Wong is Research Assistant at Department of Comparative Literature. She received her MA in Visual and Cultural studies and her PhD on the subject of Chinese visual culture at University of Westminster, London. She has been involved in curating the exhibition *The Political Body: Posters from the People's Republic of China in the 1960s and 1970s* in London, the "Knowledge Transfer Museum Project" at the Tate Britain, and the competition entry for the *Tangshan Earthquake Memorial Park Ideas Design* in China. Her newspaper articles on art and culture such as "英國 Vital 國際行為藝術節 香港藝術家 Action!", "小心空隙-中西文化", "環球中國熱, 香港在哪裡?" have been published in *Hong Kong Wen Wei Po*. Among her research interests are Chinese propaganda art, Hong Kong identity and popular culture, and archival practices and museum culture.

Recommended reading: Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, pp.27-65.

Hosted by Department of Comparative Literature

For further information concerning this workshop, please contact Joseph Tang <wptang@hkucc.hku.hk>