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Realist Sublimity of the Marginal:

A Brief History of Hong Kong Literary Magazines

A serious and continually recognized intention to represent reality, termed as “realist sublimity,” occasionally looms out of the genealogy of Hong Kong print culture, which has drawn scarce academic attention by far. It is performativity-ridden to form subjectivity and a powerful inertia of reflexivity. As a historically succeeded drive of literary creation towards a generally admired reflection of the shared real (not necessarily in the form of “realism”), realist sublimity has been long sustaining the aura of remembrance that connects Chinese intellectuals to an imagined community of creative ideals, especially during political vicissitudes.

The sublimity of factual representation requires historical investigation upon its contradictive nature: powerful as a morally recognized weapon (as Chinese leftist writers adopted to actualize and validate the Communist regime from the late 1910s to the late 1940s) but fragile as an easily side-streamed and censored ideology. While literarily recording the real in “late-capitalist” Hong Kong (which prefers visual, meaningless, and ahistorical products in Fredric Jameson’s [1989] sense) is encountering imbricated pressure from a tailor-made national security law, this presentation sets out to suggest that the spiritual existence of realist sublimity is supporting the strength of a local print culture to afford responses to parochial dynamics. From foregrounding the newspapers in the early colonial era, such as Chinese Serial (1853-1856), Chinese Mail (1871-1946), Universal Circulating Herald (1874-1947), Waisan Daily (1879-1909), and Yut Post (1885-1889) to interpreting the foreword of the first issue of *Fleurs des Lettres* (2006-), it illuminates the history of Hong Kong literary magazines.

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