

Visiting Speaker Series 2017-18 Term 2

"I didn't think we'd be like them'; Or, Wong Kar Wai, Hongkonger"

Jason S. POLLEY

Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literature,
Hong Kong Baptist University

7 Mar 2018 (Wednesday)

4:30 – 6:00pm

Room 1118, 11/F,

Yasumoto International Academic Park



ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Jason S Polley is associate professor of English at Hong Kong Baptist University. He received his PhD in English from McGill, Montreal, in 2007. His research interests include post-WWII graphic forms, literary journalism, Anglo-Indian fiction, Hong Kong Studies, and poststructuralism. He has published on women in Banville, slum ideology in District 9, race in The Greenlanders, official narratives in Watchmen, and “everyday justice” in Smiley, Franzen, and DeLillo. He has two creative nonfiction books: Refrain and Cemetery Miss You. He is co-editor of the forthcoming volume Cultural Conflict in Hong Kong: Angles on a Coherent Imaginary (Palgrave 2018). His current work includes separate articles on spatiality and alterity in Vikram Seth’s A Suitable Boy, paratextuality and reliability in Mark Z Danielewski’s House of Leaves, and diegesis and digression in David Foster Wallace’s Oblivion.

ABOUT THE TALK

Polley views Hong Kong through population demographics, critical theory, vernacular criticism, the media, and autobiography. These intersect in Wong Kar Wai’s 60s trilogy—Days of Being Wild (1990), In the Mood for Love (2000), and 2046 (2004)—which provides a discursive entry to a discussion of what the fractious identity marker “Hongkonger” speaks to 20 years after the 1997 handover, thereby building new knowledge about the culture war now defining Hong Kong. Wong’s films prize nostalgia, discontinuity, ambiguity, and deferral. Polley adopts a similar destabilizing approach by making a virtue of fragments, margins, and counter-narratives. Wong’s Hong Kong is not the global one of fast finance and free-markets. Polley’s Hong Kong, when reviewed through Wong’s lens, is assembled through competing paratexts. The guiding impetus is self-reflexive and culturally interrogative. The chapter constructs a new critical Hong Kong reality, one concerned with intersections that resist any facile local-outsider dichotomy.



Free Admission

The seminar is conducted in English

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