

Orientální ústav AV ČR ve spolupráci s Mezinárodním sinologickým centrem CCK
při UK
si Vás dovolují pozvat na
přednášku:

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RETROTAIWAN: Cultural Vintage and National Imaginary in Contemporary Sinophone Cinema



Místo: Místnost 429, Filmová věda, FF UK (Nám. Jana Palacha 2)
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This project aims to develop a theory on a contemporary important trend in Chinese and Taiwanese cinemas. One of the tendencies that seem the more important during the first ten years of the new millennium is the recuperation of vintage imaginary, the very immediate past that is both very close and has already disappeared. Many theoreticians have worked trying to pin down the characteristics of the contemporary, hyper-connected fast-consumption world: immediacy of resources vs. nostalgia of the time passed, resurgence of the mythological vs. rapid consumption and relative devaluation of products, myths and idols. This work takes into consideration in a comparative perspective Mainland and Taiwan films, trying to situate them both in a global sphere as well as in a panasian perspective.

Some tentative, preliminary interpretations of the recurrence of the retro-imaginary



are related to notions of anxiety of assimilation in a globalized reality and a political retrospective gaze in search of an (imaginary?) definition of cultural (if not political) identity. The generation of fathers, the immediate past, the already gone but still lingering... can create the illusion of a precise, definable (chauvinist?) national reality and specificity in contrast with the blurring of capitalist frenzy that seems to make all pillars melt away, producing recurrent amnesia and erasing of historical memories and consciousness. “Retro-imaginary” stands in between the virtually infinite archive at disposition of anyone and its fast consumption; between the possibility of collecting images, sounds and videos related to recent history and the recurrent alarm about the end of ideology and values that supposedly structured the last era, questioning the interface between the deep legacies of father and the hyper-connected Internet globalized surface. The frame of “retro-imaginary” is helpful to create a nostalgia for something disappeared that can retrospectively sound more alluring (or, simply, “real”) than the virtual capitalistic world we are immersed in. The “Vintage-mania” tells of an anxiety towards a fast-changing world where the all-disposable, all-immediate can both enrich (immensity of database, access to immaterial resources) but also impoverish the contemporary imaginary and the ideological drive (lack of ideals, desegregation of myths). Here I will question the role of memory in the complex political situation of China and Taiwan, in a political and psychological way. I would argue that, in different ways, vintage mania has a specific meaning in the Chinese-speaking world. The objects, songs, colors of the past tell a story of specificity, of localism, of originality, of distance *vis-à-vis* the menacing yet embraced global village. The songs of the rebel youth in *Platform*, if already largely influenced by the West (via Hong Kong), are yet performed and consumed in a semi-clandestine way that is specific to the 70s social and political reality of provincial China. The alleys and triad world of the 80s described in *Monga* tell a very specific Taiwanese story of Japanese influence and local culture and flavor (*Taike*). The posters on the wall of the protagonist of, say, *Shanghai Dreams* and *ORZ Boys* evocate and trigger different, specific, unique and original feelings within the Chinese (for the first) and Taiwanese (for the second) public.

This work’s aim is to find correspondences but also to underline differences, both in a cross-strait perspective and according to the director’s poetics and aesthetics. The book – through close readings of sequences, interviews and theoretical discussion – pins down ethics and imaginary proper to single directors in order to recognize, define and defend the richness and variety of the film world of China and Taiwan, in a logic of resistance to mutual and global assimilation as well as in the perspective of the more and more frequent co-productions and cross-strait distribution.

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