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In the Event of Women:
Teaching East to East, South to South
by Prof. Tani Barlow

27 Nov — 8 Dec 2017

4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

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Course Overview

Tani Barlow's book, In the Event of Women, is a historical and philosophical work about the discovery of women's physiological truth under conditions of Chinese colonial modernity and its aftermath. To be published by Duke University Press, the book has six chapters. The chapters will form the basis of ex cathedra lectures and course discussion, particularly discussions structured around specific images. The images include physiological drawings and commercial ephemera, political cartoons, photographs and film clips.

Each meeting commences with a discussion of one or several visuals. Each image will help us to focus and think about "East to East, South to South" knowledge and the event of women. Lecture and discussion circle around the questions "how did this image get to this place?" and "what does this image mean historically and philosophically?" While the book has a thesis and we investigate the book's universalizing claims, each class meeting raises general questions including the following: Is Chinese colonial modernity a "real" colonialism? How did the publication of anatomical drawings of human reproductive organs in 1851 make their way into Chinese social theories about humanity and women's contribution to society? Why did Chinese intellectuals spend so much time worrying about "society"? What is the difference between Chinese Marxist and mainstream Chinese popular theories about society? In relation to the natural sciences, eugenic science and what are matriarchal theories so important? What does it mean to "commodify" women?

Primary Objectives

1. Familiarize the participants with the history of Chinese conditions for thinking and content of thought regarding women understood physiologically.
2. To show why popular images in popular commercial media are philosophically significant. To examine how the media builds ideas into particularly graphic images. Historians can develop skills to read both the image and the sociology in order to understand the everyday life of ordinary people.
3. To pose the question of how Chinese colonial modernity and Indian colonialism have or do not have common foundations or implications.
4. To share and perhaps even to expand what we mean by "a feminist project."
5. To make the case that universal knowledge is possible from anywhere and is and never was contingent on geographical information. In other words, the fact that the event of women can be historically verified as occurring in Treaty Port China suggests that location is not the primary determination of truthfulness.

Tani Barlow is currently the T.T. and W. F. Chao Professor at the Department of History, Rice University, Houston, TX USA.

Prof. Barlow began her career teaching Chinese and Japanese history at the University of Missouri, Columbia. In time she moved to a similar position at San Francisco State University and from there she moved to teach Women's Studies and History at the University of Washington. Over the last years she is with the History Department at Rice University.

The long line that connects all of her research interests is developing a method of writing history that can explain how the woman figure is both universal and singular at the same time. An intellectual historian, her publications have focused on the period of the Chinese treaty ports, mid-19th century to mid-20th century and have focused on the subject of women in Chinese feminism, (Barlow, 2004) and in the recent decade, the material subject of the biological and physiological woman in Chinese modern history. This line of investigation led her to a series of publications about modern advertising and to the Modern Girl projects in the United States and Japan. Her current project reflects and summarizes her findings and earlier conclusions in the short book In the Event of Women, which she is proposing to teach as a visiting scholar. Her subsequent book project continues her long preoccupation with the Chinese tradition of sociology and is tentatively called Living in Society.

Prof. Barlow is the founding senior editor of positions: asia critique, the inaugural director of the Chao Center for Asian Studies, 2008-2013 and the recipient of several large grants in the humanities including Critical Asian Studies (Rockefeller Foundation) and The Ephemera Project (Luce Foundation). She is working with her collaborators on the Chinese Commercial Advertising Archive (CCAA), a soon to be launched online archive for research into advertising in new Chinese media until 1937.

Prof. Barlow's books include, The Modern Girl Around the World (Duke University Press, 2008); The Modern Girl, Colonial Modernity, and East Asia (Iwanami Shoten, in press [in Japanese]); The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism (Duke University Press, 2004); Inter/National Feminism and China (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Press, 2003 [in Japanese]); New Asian Marxisms (Duke University Press, 2002); Cinema and Desire: The Cultural Politics of Feminist Marxist Dai Jinhua (Verso, 2002); Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia (Duke University Press, 1997); Gender Politics in Modern China: Writing and Feminism (Duke University Press, 1994); and I Myself Am a Woman: Selected Writings of Ding Ling (Beacon, 1999)

THE QUESTION OF WOMEN IN CHINESE FEMINISM

Tani E. Barlow

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Schedule

(Includes lectures and tutorials)

- 27 Nov 2017: Thinking about China, Basic Events & Why not to be Terrified
- 28 Nov 2017: Corporate Imperialism, Japanese Empire and Chinese Colonial Modernity
- 29 Nov 2017: Women in Public Space and the Rise of Physiological Truth
- 30 Nov 2017: Women in Marxist Sociology and Theories of Matriarchy
- 1 Dec 2017: What is the “Event of Women”
- 2 Dec 2017: What is “Vernacular Sociology” and why do people live in society?
- 4 Dec 2017: The New Psychology of Women and Interiority
- 5 Dec 2017: What does it Mean to Commodify Women?
- 7 Dec 2017: Politics of Women in Cultural Revolution Politics: Struggle over the National Dress
- 8 Dec 2017: General Discussion, In the Event of Women

The sessions will be organized on the basis of readings, images from late 19th century commercial pictorials and one silent movie. The readings will be brief but could be unfamiliar. We will thoroughly discuss all readings and screenings in the course. Short readings and lectures on basic political chronologies in 19th and 20th century Chinese politics will be provided.

Readings for the sessions will be made available to the registered participants in early November

Who can Attend?

Students at all levels (Bachelors/ Masters/ M. Phil/ Ph.D.)
Faculty from academic institutions
Professionals/researchers in Media/research institutions

Fees

MA and MPhil Students of JNU: Free
PhD Students and Faculty of JNU: INR 1000
Students from other recognized educational institutions: INR 1000
Faculty/professionals from other recognized educational institutions: INR 2000
Participants from abroad: US \$500
The above fee includes all instructional materials for tutorials and assignments.

For Registration

<http://www.gian.iitkgp.ac.in/GREGN/index> or visit www.jnu.ac.in/GIAN/
Total number of seats available is 60
Registration will be done on first- come-first-served basis