Heritage: Ownership and Audiences

What is heritage to us?
What is heritage to us?

Who does heritage belong to? Who is heritage meant for?

• Does it belong to those who attend heritage seminars?

• Does it belong in heritage areas?

• What about in academia?
Limitations of heritage?

• Who’s interested?

• Who is the audience of heritage?
  – Old people?
  – Heritage enthusiasts?
  – National day?

Recent approaches to heritage
Recent approaches to heritage

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- myQueenstown
Recent approaches to heritage

- myQueenstown

- Tiong Bahru – cafes, youthful appeal.
- myQueenstown – consciously grassroots.
- Heritage as “from the people”
- Does this solve our problems of reach and/or authenticity?
Core issues

- Who is going to these things?
- Who is the audience of heritage?
  - How does the audience exist?
- Consideration of wider appeal?
- How is it relevant to society, today?

What is the point of heritage, then?
1. Experiential value

- Visual/cultural/aesthetic vs. academic
- How willing are we to accept the arts as a medium?
- The general texture of experience: Tiong Bahru, Bukit Brown.

1. Heritage vs History

- Academia as simulations
- The intangible aspect of sensory experience.
- Tiong Bahru as more than just experience, but as life.
  - Tiong Bahru as a model (hopefully)
2. Heritage as myth-making

• Myths – something that has come to feel natural to us: through a process of naturalization

• Myth-making in Singapore – CMIO model, progress model, economic model
  – New paths for the Singapore story – a more varied model.

“A greater semiotic system”

• Signifiers formed through systems, infusing things with meaning.

  • Cultural codes
2. Heritage as myth-making

- Creation of an identity.
- National identity – beyond what we have come to perceive as national.
- What is a national identity?

Myth-making in progress
Definitions

• Rupert Emerson - a single people, traditionally fixed on a well-defined territory, speaking the same language and preferably a language all its own, possessing a distinctive culture, and shaped to a common mould by many generations of shared historical experience.

• Ben Anderson – “imagined communities”

Our Perceptions
Our Perceptions

Our Perceptions
2. Heritage as myth-making

- Unconscious heritage (as opposed to active, conscious heritage)

3. Heritage as Struggle

- Struggle for meaning in society

- Hegemony not achieved through totalitarianism; no single “Singapore Story”

- Process of negotiated hegemony—formed through agreement.
3. Heritage as Struggle

Diminishing Memories

see things beyond your soul...
directed by

Diminishing Men

see things beyond your soul...
So what is heritage?

• Heritage is how we perceive ourselves.

• How we exist, even, in a modern Singapore.

• The day-to-day of life in today’s world, created by and based on an idea of history; lived, diffused ideas, intangible but present.

Thank you!