Making and Recognizing Monuments in Hong Kong: A Realist-Discourse-Theoretic Approach

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This paper compares the differential processes whereby two sites in Hong Kong dating back over half a century ago achieved heritage status, namely, King Yin Lei and the Ho Tung Gardens. The comparison is made from what we call a realist-discourse-theoretic approach. This approach concerns the question as to why and how certain sites are able to achieve heritage status, while others fail. It argues that the concepts of construction concerning the role of non-epistemic factors in discursive contention are of merit, and can be reworked on a realist basis, but constructionism as a theory is flawed. In our empirical study, attention is given to the interplay between epistemic and discursive justifications, on the part of the state and civil society, in the making and recognition of these two old buildings, which are clearly of differential heritage values, as monuments.

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