

Tzeming Mok

Contributed by Steven Young
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A Letter to
the Editor from Tzeming Mok

Summarizing,
in her inimitable voice, Brian O'Flaherty's columns:

This 'Kiwi View' guy sure does a good line in blathering, unfocused ramble... peppered with obvious admissions that he doesn't know what he's talking about most of the time, which is why he has to keep "asking questions". Reminds me of SJP in Sex and the City, and her vacuous "I couldn't help but wonder..." Because of that, I could barely figure out what he was saying: other than he is obviously *not* 'comfy in his own skin', because otherwise his skin wouldn't 'crawl' at the notion of 'contrition', he wouldn't lash out at respected academics like Margaret Mutu as 'angry ladies', and he wouldn't be in denial about the way cultural hegemony suppresses the public voice of whole communities of people.

So yet another 'reasonable kiwi' on the defensive. Is this meant to be representative of the "kiwi view"? How depressing. Because I had to trawl through so much blah blah blah, I thought I'd summarise his arguments. But on the whole, readers might not be familiar with what he actually said, so it might pay to do a recap:

"Why are these Chinese people complaining all the time? My life is great! Admittedly, I don't actually know anything about their lives, but if it's not like mine, it's probably their own fault, and definitely has nothing to do with where I fit into things. What's all this stuff about 'suppressed minority voices', there was free speech in this country last time I checked. Lah-lah-lah-lah! Boodle-boodle-boodle! Yep, I hear myself loud and clear. I don't know why they bother having a conference about this stuff, they all have different opinions, and none of it's about me. Yawn! Wasn't I meant to come out of this conference with an instruction booklet that summarises everything you need to know about Chinese people, so you never have to talk to any of them again? Isn't that what usually happens at conferences? Otherwise, what's the point of even having one of these things? Hey, and why are they talking about history all the time? History has nothing to do with me, and no one is responsible for anything that ever happened! At least, I don't think so, I was too lazy to pay attention to the actual description of events in this forgettable "past"-type place which isn't even here anymore. I don't even remember who I voted for in 1987, ha ha! And what's with the Maori stuff at this conference, what do Maori people have to do with Chinese New Zealanders? It's not like they're from the same place or anything. Far out, that Maori lady is making me nervous. She must not be comfortable in her own skin. Why can't everyone just get along? Surely all we have to say is "everyone

should just get along"? Isn't that the solution? Screw this 'thinking' and 'describing' stuff. The key to knowledge, or perhaps I should say, the key to making oneself seem knowledgeable (works for me!) is to keep asking questions. But not just any questions, like "Can or should we separate from the start of the discussion, the concept of multiculturalism as an organically formed social space and the concept of multiculturalism as state-sanctioned and state-implemented social policy?", but sarcastic questions that we've already decided the answer to, or sarcastic rhetorical questions which you don't even have to answer! Like "I couldn't help but wonder... was the angry Maori woman being oversensitive? Was the flaky Chinese lady talking about multiculturalism's existence even making any sense?" They're the best. Questions you don't have to answer! It's twice as easy as school, I never liked that place much - bloody Chinese kept beating me in maths and critical thinking."

Tzeming Mok

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