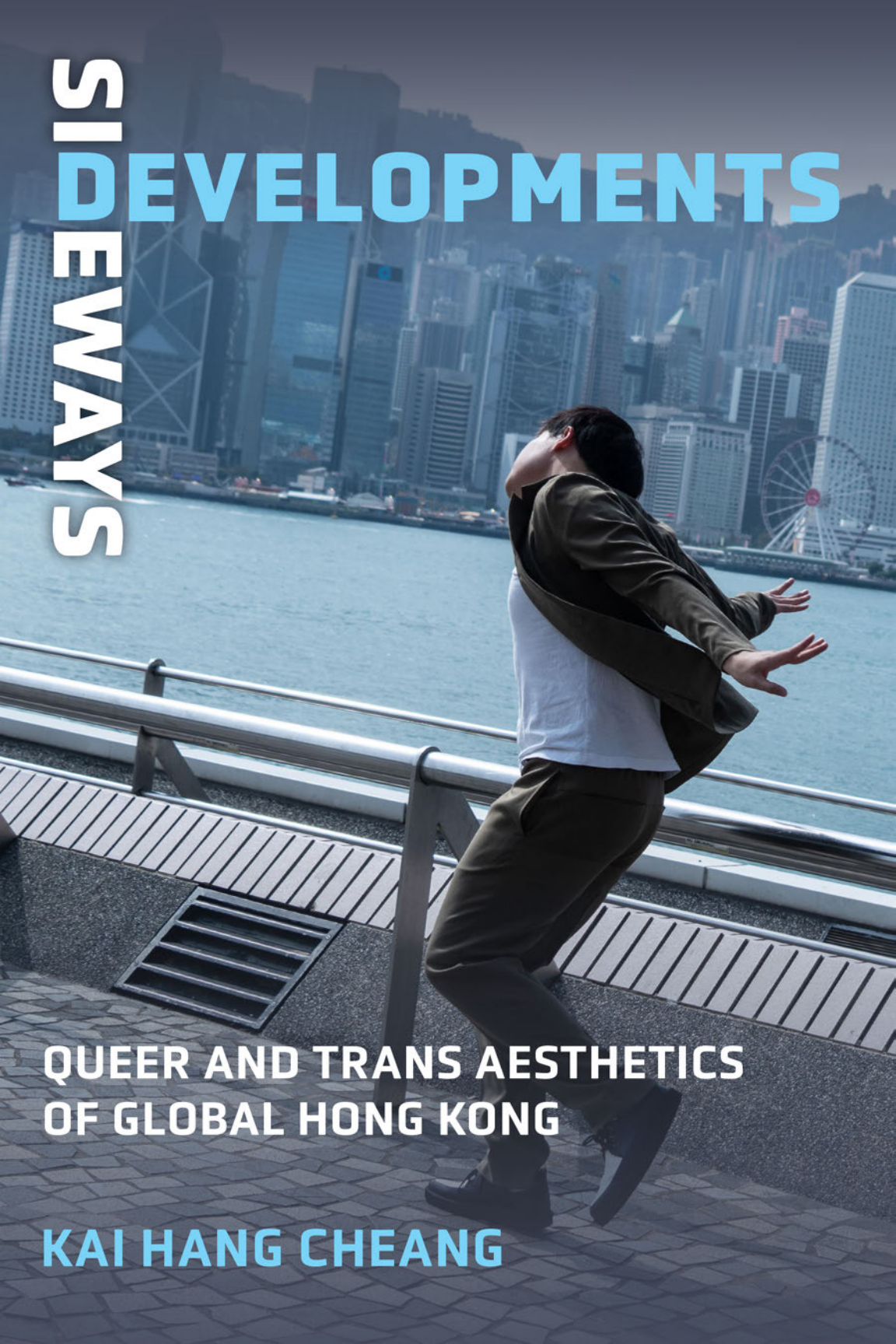
SIDEWAYS DEVELOPMENTS



QUEER AND TRANS AESTHETICS OF GLOBAL HONG KONG

KAI HANG CHEANG

SIDEWAYS DEVELOPMENTS

The Global Queer Asias series provides an interdisciplinary platform for conceptual, archival, and ethnographic research that pushes academic discussions of Asia in new directions. The series publishes groundbreaking books from both established academics and rising scholars with innovative rubrics, frameworks, and agendas. Works in this series should engage with inclusively defined "queer" issues, that is, the social and cultural dynamics of gender and sexual diversity. Though situated in geographic sites typically associated with the label "Asia," this series pushes for comparative and global perspectives and calls for rigorous attention to themes, approaches, and social-cultural patterns that either emerge from cross-border movements or transcend regional and national boundaries. Studies in which diaspora and migration experiences come to the fore are especially welcome, as is research that brings critical race/ethnic theory, disability studies, and other intersectional approaches to bear on inter-regional studies outside the modern West.

Queer Chimerica
A Speculative Auto/Ethnography of the Cool Child
Shana Leodar Ye

Queer Throughlines
Spaces of Queer Activism in South Korea and the Korean Diaspora
Ju Hui Judy Han

Sideways Developments: Queer and Trans Aesthetics of Global Hong Kong
Kai Hang Cheang

Sideways Developments

Queer and Trans Aesthetics of Global Hong Kong

Kai Hang Cheang

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS
Ann Arbor

For questions or permissions, please contact um.press.perms@umich.edu

Published in the United States of America by the
University of Michigan Press
First published July 2026

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data has been applied for.

ISBN 978-0-472-07812-7 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-0-472-05812-9 (paper : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-0-472-90591-1 (open access ebook)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.398/mpub.12877800

The University of Michigan Press's open access publishing program is made possible thanks to additional funding from the University of Michigan Office of the Provost and the generous support of contributing libraries.

The authorized representative in the EU for product safety and compliance is Easy Access System Europe, Mustamäe tee 50, 10621 Tallinn, Estonia, gpsr.requests@easproject.com

Cover Image: "P.S. It's an Emergency — Dancer" (2019–20). Image courtesy of W.Y. Kwan.

To my family

And you will always know what time it is in Hong Kong, for you love someone who lives there. And love will simply have no choice but to go into battle with space and time, and, furthermore, to win.

James Baldwin, "Nothing Personal"

Contents

Digital materials related to this title can be found on the Fulcrum platform via the following citable URL: https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12877800

List of Illustrations

Preface

Hong Kong has always existed for me as a presence defined by absence. Born and raised in Macau, my relationship with the neighboring city was mediated through the silhouettes of men who departed: my maternal grandfather, who crossed borders to sell groceries as a hawker in 粉嶺 (Fanling), a settlement in the New Territories across Shenzhen, and my paternal great-grandfather, who built a second family there, leaving rifts that would echo through generations.

As a child, I inhabited a state of perpetual waiting. My grandmother, who brought me up, would emotionally orient toward Hong Kong, anticipating my grandfather's rare returns with practical gifts like a manager's suit I might someday grow into. Gifts from him always puzzled me, but it made sense after knowing him as a man whose refugee experience during the famine of the Great Leap Forward had instilled in him unyielding practicality. Only decades later would I learn these family secrets, these stories of hunger and separation deemed too heavy for me to bear.

My paternal grandfather carried different absences—a frail body ravaged by tuberculosis and a quiet disposition born from the epic fallout with his father, who remade his life across the water. He died when I was young, taking his stories with him, leaving me to piece together the fragments of family genealogy.

The silence surrounding Hong Kong's pull on my family made its promise all the more enigmatic. I return to Hong Kong often, but my academic journey to Hong Kong studies did not start until 2014, when I was checking in on my HK family about their future and the past of our ancestors, asking about their sense of belonging. This lifetime question was eventually formalized in a term paper for an independent study on postcolonial HK. Border crossers and absent figures, in fact, figure prominently not only in my family's history in Hong Kong but also in the broader patterns of migration, which have been unprecedentedly high in recent years. In revising that term paper, which eventually became my first publication on HK, I used features of myself, like queerness and diaspora, as a framework to explore related issues. What began as a side project came into focus and gave me focus: it carried me through graduate school, the job market, and beyond. As I built on that term paper and its chapters, they simultane-

ously shaped me, leading me back to Hong Kong over and through unexpected pathways. In many ways, my conceptualization of sideways developments on the ensuing pages mirrors the city and my relationship with it, which both don't progress linearly but move laterally, figuring and refiguring.

Acknowledgments

This project, perhaps reflecting its eventual sideways form, began as a side pursuit during graduate school. Its development has been a source of much-needed companionship. As it was not a dissertation, I am especially grateful to the colleagues who offered their insights and collaboration: Alvin Wong, Sharon Yam, and Siufung Law.

I am indebted to every opportunity that advanced this project, especially during academic years when research and writing time were scarce. Special thanks go to my department chairs at Portland State—Lisa Weasel, Sri Craven, Sally McWilliams, and Miriam Abelson—for your strategic guidance, which was crucial to my development as a junior scholar. I truly appreciate the candid discussions about what it means to be a dedicated teacher-scholar with a sustainable career.

This project evolved into "me-search," and the book grew as I explored my family's diasporic history in Hong Kong, its theoretical complexity deepening with each geopolitical shift. Yet, calling it purely "me-search" (à la trans studies scholar Eliza Steinbock) doesn't do justice to the artists whose work I analyze. Their representatives, galleries, and museums have been incredibly generous in granting me access to artworks, with some never before critically examined.

Through this process, I have built a community around the archive essential to this book. My colleague in the School of Social Work, Sid Jordan, might refer to this methodology as "community-building research." This global network includes, in Hong Kong, WY Kwan, Kaitlin Chan of Empty Gallery, Ulanda Blair, and Vianna Chan of M+, Shan Shan Lu from Special Collections and Archives at the Hong Kong Baptist University, as well as Mimi Brown at Spring Workshop; in Taiwan, 子容 from 大田出版; in Europe, Christopher Eperjesi from Project Native Informant; and in the US, Ka-Man Tse and the Portland State University library.

Archiving the arts and literature of global Hong Kong is only half of the book; my analysis would not have been possible without the wonderful mentors I had in graduate school who had taught me so much: Weihsin Gui, Stephen Hong Sohn, Traise Yamamoto, David Lloyd, Jodi Kim, Carole-Anne Tyler,

the late George Haggerty, Sherryl Vint, Nalo Hopkinson, and Jennifer Doyle. At Portland State, I am grateful for support from colleagues like Betty Izumi, Marie Lo, and Alma Trinidad of Pacific Islander and Asian American Studies; Molly Benitez, Manjusha Gupte, Eddy Alvarez, and the aforementioned chairs of WGSS. I also thank Maude Hines of Black Studies, Cristina Herrera of Latinx and Chicanx Studies, and Kali Simmons of Indigenous Nations Studies for their camaraderie. Beyond PSU, I thank Kavita Daiya, Charlie Zhang, Cindy Wu, Shumei Shih, and Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, whose interest in my work has become a continual source of sustenance when working on this project gets intellectually and emotionally hard.

The time of writing this project has been supported by a research grant from the Center for Ideas and Society at UC Riverside, a faculty development grant by Portland State University, and portions of an Affirming Multivocal Humanities grant by the Mellon Foundation. Start-up funds from the CLAS Dean's Office, the Provost's Office, and the President's Office were instrumental to my completion, presentation, and publication of this project. Various stages of this project's development have benefited from feedback by Leslie Kern, Craig Willse, Jessica Easto, and Clare Counihan. Sections of this book's introduction originally appeared in 2021 in the article "Queering 'The Children's Movement': A Sideways Look at Political Infantilization in the (Post-)2014 Global Imaginary of Hong Kong Protesters" in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*; I thank Duke University Press for permitting me to reprint portions of the article here.

Last but not least, I am deeply grateful to my partner, Andrew Harnish, who has been with me since this project's conception. As my peripatetic life took me across the Pacific, I am fortunate to have found the Macau Association for Gender-Diversity Community and Hong Kong's Quarks—both have grounded me in the type of LGBTQ+ peer support that I lacked growing up. Eternally, I am indebted to my family in Macau and Hong Kong. To them, I dedicate this book.

Introduction

Ah Po and Ah Suen's Brood

Let me begin with how it ends. When I started my research on the 2014 Umbrella Movement (UM) in Hong Kong, which became my 2021 *GLQ* article that eventually evolved into this book, I closed with an analysis of Michael Tsang's "Po Suen," an anglophone short story that first appeared in a 2017 issue of *Wasafiri: International Contemporary Writing*. Bringing us back to everyday queer life during the UM, Tsang's failed coming-out narrative doubles as a protest story. The story begins with the student protester Ah Po (啊寶) who, after much nagging from his boyfriend, Ah Suen (啊旋), finally decides to bring him home to his mother for dinner at his "tong lau," or tenement apartment (46). Because Ah Suen can also be a girl's name, Ah Po's mother is surprised that Ah Suen is not a girl the moment he steps inside. Her reaction to Ah Suen derails the night for Ah Po: he finds himself tongue-tied, struggling to explain to his mother his boyfriend's role in his life. At dinner, Ah Po's mother quizzes her son, trying to learn more about Ah Suen's identity. After finding out that he is a student at "Kong U," or the University of Hong Kong, an elite institution in the city, she goes straight to nagging Ah Po—an apprentice in a non-prestigious cooking school—expressing skepticism about his life choices. She is especially critical of his time spent with the protesters in the Mong Kok tents, doubting why he could put himself in such danger. As she puts it, "I am just worried about a child's safety as every parent would be . . . Besides, if something happened to you, who would let me *po suen*?" (48; 抱孫, Cantonese vernacular for having a grandchild). By the end of the dinner, Ah Po's mother, who appears to have missed all signs of sexual chemistry between Ah Suen and her son, insists on treating him as her son's friend, telling Ah Suen at the end of the night to "keep an eye on" her son, begging him to teach Ah Po to be more like him.

Stunned by the failures of the meal and amused by how 抱孫 (Po5 Suen1), which is what his mother wants, sounds similar to 普選 (Po2 Suen2), universal suffrage that the queer couple fights for, the two hurry away as if they have

found new meanings in what they do. Ah Po returns to their tent in Mong Kok, quietly thinking to himself as if talking to his mother: "Rest assured, Ah Suen and I will not be having kids, but we're fighting for *po suen* too, only a different one, for everybody's grandkids" (48).

The two are ultimately confronted by the police and made to clean out their tents. Amid the chaos, Ah Suen is beaten in the head by a police baton and needs urgent assistance. In a way heeding his mother's words, the obedient Ah Po becomes the caretaker, cleansing Ah Suen's wound only to find out that there is another injury in his neck. At first, Ah Po plans to return to the front line with a healed Ah Suen, thinking that "bruises" are "kind of like standing in solidarity with those who fight on your behalf" (50). But he pauses after discovering Ah Suen's second wound. He thinks better of it: "Call me a coward. I admit it. It is his cheek and neck this time, but maybe it's the head next time. Who knows. So if tomorrow's gonna be another resistance, at least I want to live this moment with him." The two are then shown "side by side," stepping away "from the frenzy afar" (50).

Those are the parting words of the story and my 2021 analysis in *GLQ*, which read the couple's movement out of the camps as a placeholder for an unknown queer future. When I came to this conclusion, I was unsatisfied with the story's ending because it ended unheroically. I expected that "Po Suen," the shorthand for fighting for "everybody's grandkids," would be inaugurated by trailblazing efforts and herculean actions.

My feelings about this ending changed as politics unfolded in Hong Kong and around the world. I came to appreciate Tsang's subtlety, as it made me realize that the queer future of Hong Kong in the current Chinese century may look a great deal like Ah Po and Ah Suen's possibly impossible future. To imagine—and perhaps to bring about—such a future, we must first take a strategic step sideways away from the movement so as not to get hurt.

Appreciation of subtlety is not always in me. I was reminded of what it means and how it looks when I stumbled upon WY Kwan's photograph *P.S. It's an Emergency—Dancer*, whose cropped image graces the cover of this book. *Dancer* came to me unexpectedly: I was introduced to it, after its 2021 debut in a WMA Space exhibition, by *Unruly Visions*' curator Ka-Man Tse, who sat next to me on a panel at the 2022 National Women's Studies Association annual conference in Minneapolis. Featuring the next generation of queer and trans artists in Hong Kong, the show collectively speculates the (im)possibility of a Hong Kong queer utopia. I found Kwan's *Dancer* most compelling because it is weird: in the original photograph, the image's immediate focus is not at the center but shared by two dancers jumping in mid-air without a care. The photo's oddity made me ponder that chimeric concept of queer utopia as what exists between possibility

and impossibility. Kwan's image presents three young people at the waterfront facing Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor. We cannot see their faces, but we know from subtle cues that they have different identities: the boy wearing a black suit and jumping with airplane hands is a local Hong Kong Chinese boy, the same one featured in the other pictures of the same series. The skin tone of the girl, who wears a crop top and hops with hands raised to the sky, reveals that she is part of the Southeast Asian community, most of whom are domestic workers in the city. Despite their identitarian differences, the two appear to be dancing to the same tune that the third person, the Southeast Asian girl taking pictures of Victoria Harbor, cannot hear. This extradiegetic tune that only the select few can hear jolts the two out of the here and now, and their bodies lean into the rhythm by turning their faces to the side, away from the camera. Their physical disposition suggests that this sideways tune takes them out of Hong Kong's otherwise linear temporality, which characterizes the neoliberalism that undergirds the city, as symbolized by the tall skyscrapers in the background, with the International Financial Center—that beacon of global capitalism—emerging from the city, bringing in money from international firms.

According to Kwan, she took this picture after Hong Kong's former Chief Executive Carrie Lam invoked a colonial-era law, the Emergency Resolutions Ordinance (ERO), to impose her 2019 mask ban. The 1922 ERO was introduced to colonial Hong Kong to combat seamen strikes, but it was rarely used during the colonial era. It was, however, cited during the 1956 riots (an escalating fight between the pro-Chinese Communist Party and pro-Kuomintang camps in the city) and the 1967 large-scale working-class anticolonial protest. Lam revived this British colonial law in 2019, five years after the Umbrella Movement, when Hong Kong was again embroiled in city-wide protest. The ordinance gave Lam temporary legal grounds to issue a ban on masks in the middle of COVID and the anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement (or anti-ELAB Movement) to discourage student protesters from participating in demonstrations bringing their demands to the street. Without face coverings, students would be less anonymous. Lam's mask ban, later ruled unconstitutional by the Hong Kong High Court, brought a citational weight to the present which dragged post-Handover Hong Kong backward; it reminded us of how the colonial past can still haunt and shape Hong Kong's post-Handover politics.

The queer photographer Kwan's faceless aesthetic harkens back to that period. In the face of counterinsurgency, Kwan's models register their dissent with panache: their sideways movement allows them self-expression while avoiding imminent trouble in public. Metaphorically speaking, these sideways gestures evoke an alternative timeline that orients the dancers and the onlookers away from the political depression of the here and now and toward a differ-

ent future, where the local Chinese boy and the Southeast Asian girls are free to dance in synchronicity. In a sense, the dancers' sideways moves recall the sideways movements of Ah Po and Ah Suen as they walk away from the Mong Kok occupation site. At a time when an emergency was declared to ban face-covering at the advent of COVID, perhaps minor acts of dancing to a clandestine tune and tilting to the side with a stranger are the best that minorities like queers and domestic workers can do to register difference in unison. Using *Dancer* to reread "Po Suen," the gay couple's decision to retreat from the violence at the protest's frontline could be seen as a strategic pivot toward a non-aligning queer politic in observance of an environment of increasing state control and discipline.

Of course, perspectives on past resistance and its future differ among members of the LGBTQ+ community in Hong Kong; but still, how Tsang and Kwan remember and translate these actions demonstrates what queer theorist Lauren Berlant would call "lateral agency" (100). A relation whose enactment can interrupt the reproduction of everyday life in times of crisis or in experiences that result in "self-abeyance" and "floating sideways" (116), lateral agency creates—however temporarily—a "sense of well-being that spreads out for a moment" before once again submitting to capitalist time and its linear "projection to a future" (117). Queer couple Ah Po and Ah Suen's pivot to the side implies a collective choice for survival in the interregnum, while queer photographer Kwan's dancers, whose moves swerve to the side, constitute the dancers' and the photographer's "shared suspension of a historical field where the 'now' is always present, always elsewhere, tipped sideways" (86).

For some trans people, the fantasy of such lateral agency means conjuring future co-conspirators for themselves and community advocacy. One example is the pseudonymous Ah Wing, a trans woman activist. For her, imagining a sideways future was the only way to stay present in the face of political impasse which stripped her of her autonomy in 2014, during which Hong Kong people lay horizontal across main traffic arteries for seventy-nine days, demanding universal suffrage without Beijing preselecting candidates. In the chapter "Trans/ Body/ Resistance" of *Rebel Girls* (抗命女聲), a nonfiction short story collection woven with the editor Kit Ling's interviews with women protesters in 2014 Hong Kong, Ah Wing talks about how, despite countries like the United Kingdom having a more progressive framework, like the Gender Recognition Act, she would still stay in Hong Kong. As she says with determination: "我會守護自己的地方, 我希望跨性別的後來者能活得好一點。" (159; I will protect this space. I hope that trans people who come after me can lead a better life).

Ah Wing makes this decision as she witnesses the imminent foreclosure of the protest camps while remaining in Mong Kok as a backup. When asked why she opts not to be on the front line, she says she has heard from a friend that the

police only rely on a trans person's sex marker on their ID when making arrests and conducting body checks. Given that it still says "male" on her ID card, Ah Wing prefers to hang back because she thinks that it could be dysphoric for her to be ransacked by policemen and potentially held with other men in sex-segregated detention centers (154). As the campsite around her clears, Ah Wing says she will become more active in making her voice heard in future public consultation meetings about trans matters, particularly at a time when queer and trans advocacy across the Hong Kong and mainland China border has come under increasing scrutiny. Ultimately, she tells Kit Ling that she is thankful for her supportive boss, who she does not take for granted, especially after having interviewed with many transphobic companies before landing her job. Tired of being spoken for, she vows to fight for a better future for the next generation of trans people.

Quarks, an emerging trans youth group, is perhaps what Ah Wing had in mind in 2014. Allegedly begun as a WhatsApp group in 2019 and 2020, when quarantine rules were at their peak, the organization brought trans youth together to offer each other support online, including initiating public dialogues on Zoom to educate the public during COVID. The information Quarks shared later became a wealth of textual and visual resources for young people considering gender transition, including links to how to change sex markers on Hong Kong identification cards and how to talk about trans identity with parents; all are now available through the Quarks' Linktree and Facebook pages. The Quarks logo is three animated characters wearing cute pink-and-blue astronaut suits, symbolizing a common feeling among trans people of being in outer space during everyday life in predominately cisgender heteronormative Hong Kong. From the design of the logo to the trans-for-trans (t4t) resources shared on its social media platform, Quarks—like my previous three examples—enacts a lateral agency to hold time and make space for the trans community. The cisgender heteronormativity of Hong Kong is not the only thing that Quarks works to hold in abeyance; it also holds its members. As the group imagines and practices trans survival as a collective unit, they grow side by side with each other within a supportive ecology.

I begin with these four cases because they are the literary and visual pieces that have expanded how I think about queer utopia in the Hong Kong context since 2021 and eventually formed the basis of this book. These pieces, too, represent the four coordinates referenced by my subsequent chapters of study, namely queer literature (Tsang), queer visual culture (Kwan), trans literature (Ah Wing), and trans visual culture (Quarks). More importantly, the story un/enfolding in the foreground and/or behind each of these cultural productions embodies the narrative form of sideways development at the heart of this project. Characteriz-

ing these sideways stories and spectacles are queer and trans individuals' pivot to the side of the historical present of capitalism, which remains the underlying structure in the current rise of the Chinese century. Ah Po, Ah Suen, Ah Wing, Kwan's models, and the trans youth all make decisions conceded to the moment. Stepping aside from the heat of the social movement, dancing to it, accepting that Hong Kong is where they belong, or initiating public conversations: they all make concessions that later become the grounds for establishing new modalities of knowing, being, and relating with their surroundings. As the rest of this book will show, there are also cases where Hong Kongers give up on the here and now, leaving Hong Kong or, worse still, falling out of life altogether, submitting themselves to incarceration and even death. For them, things go sideways in the literal sense: Their lives either grow beside the city they once called home or go completely awry.

The majority of postcolonial projects in Hong Kong Studies typically begin with preconceived notions of essentialized Hong Kong identity forms, most notably hybridity (see, for example, Kwok-bun Chan's edited collection, *Hybrid Hong Kong*). In contrast, I begin with literary and visual stories that shore up the project's keyword *sideways developments*. Starting the conversation differently for the studies of post-Handover Hong Kong, I account for the processes of becoming and doing in addition to being. *Sideways* is an adverb or adjective that describes an orientation. I chose it because I am drawn to how Sara Ahmed, in *Queer Phenomenology*, describes orientation as having always already been queer—as in "sexual orientation"—and philosophical. For instance, the field of phenomenology always "makes orientation central in the very argument that consciousness is always directed toward an object and its emphasis on the lived experience of inhabiting a body" (Ahmed 1). By putting the two concepts together via the vocabulary of orientation, Ahmed says, "phenomenology can offer a resource for queer studies insofar as [phenomenology] emphasizes the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness or what is ready-to-hand, and the role of repeated and habitual actions in shaping bodies and worlds" (1). Taking Ahmed's lead, the types of sideways movements that I have illustrated so far all point to a queer orientation or a point of departure from where forms of development begin.

As defined by the traditional scholarship of post-WWII development studies and "Third World" independence, *development* refers to the encompassing concept of bringing about social, economic, and political changes to a population, especially a group of people or nation from the Global South. As postcolonial studies scholar Arturo Escobar in *Encountering Development* has noted, politicians and policymakers who proselytized developmental progress are primarily from or educated in the Global North. Globalization of development under

Western leadership—he feared—could be the new type of colonialism where the West dominates the rest of the world—yet again—in the name of progress. Without leaving development behind while recognizing its problematic beginnings in development studies, I use *development* in the book to center the experiences of those who are multiply marginalized in the current Chinese century, namely the queer and trans communities in Hong Kong and abroad. Conceptualizing developments expansively as various types of growth, expansion, and formation, this project examines how Hong Kongers and their descendants assert lateral agency and even bring about what Karen Barad, another queer phenomenologist, calls "intra-active engagement" in a world where queer and trans autonomy appears to be gripped firmly one minute only to become elusive the next.

Like Ahmed's "politics of turning" (201) and Berlant's lateral agency, Barad's theory of intra-action is an ethics: since humans are co-constituted because of and through the process of advance, we have the responsibility and accountability "for the entanglement we help enact" (282). Barad teaches me that the more individualistic idea of agency, which comes from the Enlightenment genealogy foundational to the rhetoric of progress as championed by development policymakers and programmers from the Global North, is only one of many factors that can account for how our world came to be the way it is. Per Barad, "We humans don't make [the universe] so, but through our advances, we participate in bringing forth the world in its specificity, including ourselves" (353). This process, which goes by the name of intra-action, is a result and a condition for the "generation of new temporalities" and "new possibilities" (383).

Rooted in queer phenomenology, sideways developments—as such—refer to the myriad lateral unfolding and enfolding of and between people, actions, materials, systems, and effects as Hong Kongers and their descendants continue to matter as catalysts and products of a changing world, from a British colony in 1841 to a Chinese Special Administrative Region in 1997 to an increasingly diasporic culture since the recent exodus of Hong Kongers accelerated in 2020. As I first conceptualized it, sideways developments encompassed young protesters sleeping in tents, lying flat, and blockading the busy streets of Central and Causeway Bay for genuine universal suffrage in 2014 and for the repeal of the anti-extradition bill in 2019. Although both of these objectives have been taken off the table—with the former infinitely deferred and the bill killed—I am interested in how the repetitive intention and action of reaching—leaning to the side, moving to the side, extending to what is close, aiming for a queer utopia—take on lives of their own and, consequently, have made an impact on the bodies, sensoria, psyches, imaginations, and the literary and material worlds that Hong Kong people and their descendants build. Conversely, I am interested in what

systems, feelings, and other happenings induce these sideways movements on the street and, subsequently, move onto the page and the screen.

From Ah Po and Ah Suen's sidestep in Tsang's short story to the faceless dancers' jump to the side in Kwan's photograph, from three cute astronauts wearing trans colors sitting side-by-side in Quarks' logo to the trans woman Ah Wing who re-enchants herself to life by imagining building a more trans-inclusive workplace alongside the next generation of community members in the late Kit Ling's UM ethnography, the sideways form is what remains as an aesthetic phenomenon, despite the literary and visual pieces' differences in genre and their date of publication. The fact that these queer and trans stories and spectacles show up after the 2014 and 2019 movements furthermore suggests that these perpetual sideways movements reach for an object or, more broadly speaking, a horizon, leaving an indelible mark on how post-Handover LGBTQ+ Hong Kongers and diasporic community members imagine change now and the future. Their heterogeneous shapes also help to clarify that queer and trans Hong Kong authors and artists don't prescribe sideways developments with the same destination or end point; rather, they universally imagine it as a perduring commitment to survival and transformation.

The sideways form isn't entirely new in the Hong Kong context but has not yet been discussed in terms of queerness and transness. In fact, it is always already part of the city's *shi* or essence. In his 2018 discussion of Ping-Kwan Leung's short story "Hong Kong 1957"; Leonard Chan's edited volume *Compendium of Hong Kong Literature* (1919 to 1949); and the "James Wong Project," which collects and commemorates songs from the '50s and '60s by the Cantopop godfather 黃霑 (James Wong Jim); Chu Yiu-Wai argues that concepts like "root and route," which are often used to describe diasporic communities, are conservative, "keeping us in our place" (76). Translating David Wang's Chinese *shi* to English, Chu glosses it as "position," as "disposition, propensity, or momentum," an alternative to describe cultural productions that are "uniquely Hong Kong" in essence (77). Nebulous in nature, *shi* is a force that coalesces into a being, which also implies a type of becoming. As Chu further refines it, "*shi* always implies a kind of sentiment and gesture—be the back and forth, tight or loose," "pointing toward a force before or in the midst of the effect and even a series of incessant changes" (77). What Chu encapsulated as the *shi* of twentieth-century Hong Kong culture finds its twenty-first century iterations in queer and trans literature and visual culture as sideways orientations and un/enfoldment when expressive cultures on the streets, like political protests and pride parades, become increasingly impossible.

These sideways scenes and spectacles from the page, screen, and stage hold implications for imagining and adopting queer- and trans-affirming intersec-

tional ethics, identities, and world-building praxis for the Chinese century. *Sideways Developments* theorizes these by gleaning from Hong Kong literature and visual culture, juxtaposing them against current LGBTQ+ politics in the city and the Cold War politics of the Chinese century, all with an eye for insights into collective survival and coalition building. In the remainder of this introduction, I preview the scope and scale of this project, its rationale, and more context for the methodologies and keywords; I then lay out a road map for the sideways course of this book.

Queer and Trans Community in Hong Kong and China

The queer and trans community in Hong Kong has made much surprising progress since the Handover, especially in contrast with how the UM and the anti-ELAB movements dwindled and are remembered by the global media as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government's violations of human rights. The Hong Kong High Court has handed significant legal victories to queer and trans plaintiffs in the recent decade of political unrests, which is worth noting for a city that only decriminalized homosexual acts in 1991, almost a quarter century after the UK. These decisions include *W v. Registrar of Marriages* (2013), which granted trans people the right to marry an opposite-sex partner; *Leung Chun Kwong v. Secretary for the Civil Service* (2019), which ruled that a same-sex spouse of a civil servant is entitled to receive spousal benefits and can jointly file income tax with them; *Q and Henry Edward Tse v. Commissioner of Registration* (2023), which allowed trans people to change the sex marker on their identification card without going through "full" gender-affirming surgery (what is known in the vernacular as bottom and top surgeries); *Ng Hon Lam Edgar v. Secretary for Justice* (2023), which won gay and lesbian couples the right to apply for subsidized housing like straight couples; and *NF v. R* (2023), which granted parental status to a lesbian couple who were married in South Africa and received IVF treatment there. More recently, in the latter half of 2024, a robust slate of LGBTQ+ events have achieved visibility: the Pink Dot Hong Kong, an LGBTQ+ carnival inspired by its originator in Singapore; the Gay Pride Parade; and the Hong Kong Gay Film Festival. By enumerating these, my goal is not to exceptionalize queer and trans Hong Kong. What Mark Edward Lewis and Hsieh Mei-Yu have said in the context of exceptionalizing China is right: to treat it as an exception is to say that the country "by definition can speak only to and of itself" (46). The same is true here. To de-exceptionalize post-Handover LGBTQ+ Hong Kong progress, I argue, requires a national and international contextualization of the region, which is what *Sideways Developments*' close readings do.

Indeed, the difference between how the LGBTQ+ community in Hong Kong

fares in comparison to China's makes it apparent that Hong Kong's rapid queer and trans legal progress has been decided by national stakeholders to be the city's differentiating factor. In China, there is a ban on not only "sissy men" on national television but also on safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people (for example, the Beijing LGBT Center is now closed), and the longest-running Gay Pride in the country, in Shanghai, was discontinued in 2020. A nationally contextualized reading of the exceptional status of Hong Kong LGBTQ+ legal progress arrives at a conclusion that exposes the role that queer and trans Hong Kong plays for global China: upholding the region as the shining example of "One Country, Two Systems," which has promised the city fifty years of high autonomy after the Handover. An international contextualization brings this analysis one step further, to what Laura Doyle calls an inter-imperial critique: LGBTQ+ legal progress in Hong Kong, which the SAR and China enjoy, is a colonial product made possible by British law, which comes with an exploitative Western-led capitalist system that is now practiced by China as an experiment for its economic liberalization in the twenty-first century. Approaching queer and trans Hong Kong globally like so—including national and international contextualization—allows us to consider Hong Kong as a place where East meets West and to think about the East and the West relationally. This juxtaposition, in turn, permits us to use queer and trans Hong Kong as an entryway to examine more critically the world systems past and present that make the LGBTQ+ community what it is in the city and the diaspora. *Sideways Developments*' international textual archive calls for more global analyses.

A Global Approach to Queer and Trans Hong Kong

Sideways Developments takes a global approach to queer and trans Hong Kong literature and visual culture by looking at the city not only as a backdrop, that proverbial entrepôt through which concentric cycles of imperial histories and policies travel, but also a hub, where Hong Kong LGBTQ+ activists and artists travel out and their overseas counterparts travel in. LGBTQ+ individuals in Hong Kong (including the real-life people and fictional characters this book studies) are motivated by the political and economic climate of the global moment. For example, in a time of heightened COVID-inspired xenophobia and a just-commencing trade war between the two global powers, lesbian singer Denise Ho testified in 2019 at the United States' Congressional-Executive Commission on China in Washington, DC, and inadvertently helped "China hawks" like Senator Marco Rubio pass the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019. Against this global backdrop, in which a new Cold War that finds its instantiations in trade wars, my textual interpretation does what Kuan-Hsing

Chen would call "Asia as Method" (xii). Centering "de-imperialization" and "de-Cold War" in the Chinese century, my mapping and reading of Hong Kong literature and visual culture looks for lessons of collective survival and world-building. Training my attention on (1) how Hong Kong queer and transgender subjects were taken up by the US-led international neoliberal order as a token of human rights violations to discredit China's rising and, in turn, (2) how queer and trans activists, artists, and their fictional doppelgängers from Hong Kong and the diaspora respond to divisiveness, my global approach to queer and trans Hong Kong takes into account (3) how LGBTQ+ community members work with, on, and against systems to create greater visibility for the community and greater life chances for all. For instance, Hong Kong co-hosted with Guadalajara, Mexico, the Gay Games in 2023, which the organizers proudly claimed had brought HK$200 million (US$25.5 million) to the local economy. Although the organizers appeased the city's neoliberal thinking by showcasing financial gains, the local queer and trans community needed the positive publicity to garner more resources. The development of Hong Kong queer and trans people's community and culture in the city, the region, and even the world rests on its contradictory attachment to capitalism. This paradox will become clearer in chapter 4 and the coda, where I discuss how the Hong Kong government's investment in trans-inclusive medicine made trans youth in Hong Kong *and* Macau viable.

A global approach to queer and trans Hong Kong, as such, acknowledges the material reality of the global condition in which it is embedded for what it is. *Sideways Developments* opts for a global Asian method, bypassing the contested term *postcolonial*. In truth, global Hong Kong is far from being postcolonial, especially given the ongoing settler colonialization of North America, where many of the artists I study have ended up. Additionally, according to some, post-Handover Hong Kong is "between two colonizers" (Chow, "Between Colonizers" 151); others, like Lee and Poon, go so far as to say that Hong Kong is not genuinely postcolonial because China recolonized Hong Kong. On the other hand, some pundits criticize the UK as a neocolonizer of Hong Kong because of its continuous influence over the former crown colony via the law, while others argue that the United States holds imperial influence, as it infiltrates the economy and academy of the city (Duara; Vukovich).

It is beyond the scope of this introduction to adjudicate this debate, but I will say for now that the artists and activists from the city and the diaspora present a range of views, and each of them—like everything in our capitalist world—is rife with contradiction. What is important to note at the outset of this project, though, is how this contestation is perhaps an indictment of the limitation of the anglophone discourse of the postcolonial, especially at a time when—as Michael O'Sullivan, another scholar in Hong Kong, puts it—"the Sinophone,"

"the Sino-centric," and "the Anglophone" are vying for the "hearts and minds of its subject" (238).

Along a slightly different vein, Gayatri Spivak intimated thirty years ago that the term *postcolonial* takes the guise of the "production of neocolonial knowledge" (1) and, more fundamentally, as Aimé Césaire has put it in *Discourse on Colonialism*, "postcolonial" is not immediately "anticapitalist" (44). Cheryl Naruse's *Becoming Global Asia* further showcases postcolonial theory's inadequacy in bringing about analysis and social change in her examination of how the Singapore government and diasporic Singaporeans leverage capital gains by advertising its postcolonial status. A similar case can be made about Hong Kong. The Beijing-backed Hong Kong Tourism Board recently branded Hong Kong as Asia's "World City" on their landing page. At the same time, a recent document titled "Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" released on the government website titled Bay Area refers to Hong Kong as "an international maritime centre" and "a modern and comprehensive transport system" that is central to "the Greater Bay Area" which "plays an important role in the Belt and Road Initiative" (Greater Bay Area 2). Inspired by the free-market capitalism promised by the Basic Law (partly a British legacy), the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the SAR's Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau set Hong Kong apart from other Chinese cities, presenting it as a model of global socioeconomic development.

To better disentangle the inter-imperial present, where old and new empires compete and collide in the Hong Kong global frontier, *Sideways Developments* takes up O'Sullivan's challenge to assemble a multilingual cultural archive for a cross-cultural inquiry. For this project, I take an "inter-Asian referencing" approach to piecing together a global imaginary of Hong Kong where experiences in the city and its diasporas are "translocally relevant" as well as "reciprocal" (Iwabuchi 44). I map and analyze a global archive of LGBTQ+ literature and visual culture by Hong Kong people and persons of Hong Kong descent. Specifically, my analysis hopes to disentangle inter-imperialism with queer and trans scholarship (particularly with intersectional ones) in mind. I aim to generate a culturally responsive examination that can better amplify heterogeneous LGBTQ+ voices in Hong Kong and its diaspora.

As the next section explains, my analytical effort is intersectional, which means that it is mindful of class, gender, racial, sexual, and ability differences; of the difference they make in the lives and life worlds of queer and trans artists and their characters and of how they take initiatives, exercise collaborative influence, and bring intra-action as they engage in and get wrapped up with their surroundings that are all tied to what Jasbir Puar would call the global assemblage of political and socioeconomic powers. To access their ethics and tactics, I build

and apply an intersectional formalism as an interpretative model to a global Hong Kong LGBTQ+ literature and art archive—all to examine how queer and trans differences are coded on the narrative and aesthetic level, especially when explicit expressions of minoritarian resistance become increasingly impossible in cisgender hetero(homo)normative spaces and times. Intersectional formalism tracks how the materiality of Hong Kong(ers)' sexuality, gender, ethnicity, and indigeneity are tied to local and global capitalisms, which are encoded in sideways stories and spectacles as linear forms of personal, gender, regional, national, and human developments. For the cluster of queer and trans authors and artists I study, literature and visual culture are the spaces in which they work out, against, and through the temporality of linearity that is synecdochic of heteronormative developmental regimes. Their narrative and aesthetic interventions have a formal logic that signals sideways ethics and tactics for survival and change *vis-à-vis* the harms inflicted by disciplinary institutions and control societies on bodies marked by multiple differences. Intersectional formalism encapsulates that sideways *shi*—be it taking the forms of subtle fellow feelings to more-than-human entanglements—to appreciate forms of agency, lateral agency, and intra-action in and of (global) Hong Kong, which might have eluded readings of resistance in the West undergirded by an anthropocentric and liberal definition of individual subjectivity.

Becoming Intersectional in Global Hong Kong

To put it differently, *Sideways Developments* takes an intersectional formalist approach to global Hong Kong: it extrapolates from sideways stories and scenes a set of ethics, tactics, and knowledge that can make transnational, queer, and material changes that matter globally. According to Rana Jaleel and Evren Savcı, transnational queer materialism is "an inquiry into the formation of queer approaches to political economy as part of a broader question of how the reproduction of the terms of freedom and justice, particularly sexual ones, are produced, reproduced, and thwarted" (6). However, they claim that their historiographic analysis of the trans-Atlantic world won't stop where US-centric and nation-based ethnic studies habitually stops: the reduction of racialized subjects into racial suffering (such as Black suffering after chattel slavery). Rather, it engages with "*how* queer/trans as an analytic and field" in the West "is able to be reproduced . . . interrupt[ing] the material conditions, infrastructures, feelings, and concepts that make queer/trans subjects, objects, relations possible" (6, original emphasis). Implied here is the authors' object of critique: multicultural (neo)liberalism. This system—in the name of making progressive headway—includes peoples who were formerly excluded from the polity; as it does so, it

valorizes women, black, brown, Indigenous, queer, and trans bodies. Simultaneously and unfortunately taking place in this process is the homogenization and abstraction of sexual/gender/racial bodies into exchangeable commodities. As an arm of global capitalism, multiculturalism takes various forms in the different systems that Hong Kong(ers) is/are part of. Like Jaleel and Savcı's transnational queer materialism, I look inside and outside of institutional locations, including the political economies of identity politics and global geopolitics, as I consider how the formation of queer and trans personhoods is made by interpellating forces (like the law and academy) and how Hong Kong (diasporic) subjects answer these calls and/or push back against them.

Though these interpellating forces are meant to turn bodies into subjects, their effects can be felt differently depending on one's social and geographical locations. Following Petrus Liu, who has long talked about queer theory's global application, I use theories of gender and sexuality to read characters' development in narratives, performers' bodily disposition and physical orientation on stage and screen, as well as placement of textual/interpersonal relations on the page, as a metaphor and a method for examining the intersectional differences that queer and trans global Hong Kong make. "Turn[ing] to [non-European sexual subjects] as differently situated knowledge producers in the history of the uneven accumulation of capital" ("Queer" 162), Petrus Liu argues that China's belated arrival at the capitalist system does not preclude queer theory's application in China (*Specter*). If anything, due to queer theory's original definition as in inquiry into alterity, China provides new ground for pushing the envelope of a field that takes its center of theorization in the West: by putting queer theory and the Global South into conversation, we can understand how the Global North's capitalist development depends on the exploitation of labor and resources from the Global South, and theories of gender and sexuality, especially queer theory, can help with locating its alternatives. Without fetishizing the supplementary role that an abstract notion of China can play in the advancement of queer studies, *Sideways Developments* takes social movements as touchstones, homing in on stories and scenes of Hong Kongers who embody intersectional differences in China's Special Administrative Regions as well as in the UK, US, and Canada, to unpack how their plight and resistance are connected to the larger capitalist milieu of the world.

By putting equal emphasis on who an intersectional Hong Kong person can be and how cultural producers connect him/her/them to an assemblage of global forces and ideologies in their fictional and visual narratives, *Sideways Developments* practices an intersectional formalism to 1) track formalist modes of resistance and alterities to the chrononormative plots that seek to reincorporate queer and trans subjects who are going through transitions, including gender

and life transitions, into linear developmental capitalism and 2) to make the case that Hong Kong studies, (as well as its topics), hold some universal lessons for us all in the Chinese Century. My book tracks the signals and tactics of Hong Kong queer and trans differences not (only) as political contradictions and refusals but as a *shi*—a transitive force—that makes formal and logical differentials to existing cultural conventions and expectations. I practice new formalism—à la Caroline Levine—as a study of literature and sociology, examining how aesthetic forms and social forms of *global* scales interact with each other without simplifying complex art into mere politics while actively situating the subject of Hong Kong in an international assemblage. My intersectional formalism puts new formalism's astute attention to the interactions between social and literary forms, like world systems for the former and identity and collectivity for the latter, to use; it analyzes the inner workings and affordances of the formations of forms. With an eye on the transformative *shi* as a characteristic of Hong Kong culture, subsequent chapters stage new formalist conversations by analyzing how systemic forms (like nationalism and its attendant forms) are adopted and revised by LGBTQ+ cultural producers from the community and the diaspora for critical identity articulations. To be sure, my intersectional formalist approach offers a new method to speculate and examine how social systems and identities work in tension with and rub off on each other.

The "intersectionality" of my intersectional formalism comes from Jasbir Puar's version of the concept. Critiquing Euro-American feminism's acontextual, ahistorical adoption of "travels of intersectional theorizing" (55), Puar sees "intersectionality" as a "viable corrective to epistemological [and other] violence[s]" in places beyond the Black community in the US, should these concerns around subject positioning be addressed (55). Responding to this concern in "I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess," Puar theorizes what she calls "becoming-intersectional in assemblage theory" (49). She retains Crenshaw's focus on multiply marginalized identities as the irreducible difference and position from which transformative politics should issue, but Puar's women of color moves on a "grid"—with a "positioning" that "does not precede movement but rather . . . is induced by it" (50). Central to Puar's theorization of becoming-intersectionality is the operative of the assemblage, which she deploys as a metaphor to supplement Crenshaw, encapsulating the material and immaterial forces at work before and after the infamous accident in the intersection, thereby adding an extra dimension of time to the spatial concept of intersectionality. By situating it in assemblage theory, Puar reveals how intersectionality is a back-formation of multiply marginalized identities by institutions that hope to perform redress and transform it to a way of becoming.

Heeding Puar's call, this project practices an intersectionality that respects

the activist beginning of the term without forgetting about global Hong Kong's specific contexts and surroundings. The intersectionality in my intersectional formalism reframes Hong Kong queerness and transness from fixed references to living parts of an intra-action between past, present, and future iterations of global capitalism; the British, North American, and Chinese iterations of which produce, reproduce, and thwart Hong Kong's gendered, sexual, class, and ethnic differences. As my analyses track Hong Kong queerness's and trans-ness's local and global, personal and social enfoldment or unfoldment, I extrapolate from them sideways orientations, trajectories, and developments that resemble a Deleuzian line of flight riddling the assemblage. My book practices this intersectional formalist analysis as an augmentation of "Global Asias as a method" to study queer and trans global Hong Kong. In the rest of this section, I show the textual linkages that allow for the combination of the two to demonstrate (via Puar's becoming-intersectional in assemblage theory) the critical compatibility and supplementarity between Crenshaw's intersectionality and Naruse and Chen Kuan-Hsing's separate articulations of global Asias as a method for the studies of queer and trans global Hong Kong.

Queer and feminist ethnographers like Petula Ho and Lucetta Kam have pointed out the misogyny and homophobia at the front line of Hong Kong resistance, with protesters who were able to wield brute force—what Ho calls "valiant masculinity"—as idealized revolutionary subjects. Valiant masculinity, as some Hong Kong college students and professors have pointed out, is exclusionary, missing an opportunity to imagine a genuinely equal Hong Kong and a just world that are inclusive of women, immigrants, and queer and trans people. Epistemological linkages between global Marxism and local queer politics in post-Handover Hong Kong are most frequent during the movements in publications and speeches. For example, in a 2015 article, "距離真平等還有多遠" (How Far Are We from True Equality), in a Lingnan University student publication, the pseudonymous author, Louis, is a member of Q Action, the campus LGBTQ+ club, and takes to task phrases like "守過旺角的才算真男人" (a man is only truly a man if he had stayed behind and defend Mong Kok) and "忠義之師 無敵旺角" (Loyal Teacher, Undefeatable Mong Kok) appearing on flyers and banners online and at the protest front line. Louis faults the language for its idealization of a valiant masculinity, and then he moves on to reflect on how conservative heteronormativity pervades both the camps of the "blue ribbons" (pro-establishment) and "yellow ribbons" (pro-democracy). Citing Gayle Rubin's famed charmed circle, Louis explains how sexual conservativism works in movement spaces and circles, putting good sex at the center and bad sex at the peripheries of a circle. Sexual conservativism, he says, idealizes the revolutionary subject as valiant and masculine and demands that a subject practice

proverbial good sex acts to avoid scandals. He contextualizes the case in the following (my translation):

> As seen in the Hong Kong movement, the normative protesters are those who practice sex that falls within the section of good sex in the charmed circle. The idealized protester is preferably a Christian, having a pristine image. If you are young, you better be a student. If you are grown up, you better be a university graduate. Regardless, this ideal protester should be married and heterosexual so that they will not fall victim to scandals of homosexuality and promiscuity. For instance, Chan Wan, an activist and famous author of the Hong Kong city-state book series, had said in public that he gave up visiting brothels because he was afraid of being stigmatized. (33)

Ultimately, Louis expresses wariness of how movement spaces have become mainstream, subsequently pushing aside and further marginalizing already marginalized minorities trying to find their footing through the movement. Louis refers to groups of minorities collectively with the construction「性／別」(literally, sexual/ difference), a creative revision of sex "性別" (without the slash) which includes "種族、階級、身體" (or people with race, class, and bodily differences) as well as those who are different because of their 性向 (sexual orientation) or because they are 跨性別 (transgender). Louis's argument holds a budding Hong Kong Marxism—like that which characterizes Petrus Liu's transnational queer Marxism and Crenshaw's intersectionality. Though Louis does not name it, his citation of Rubin suggests as much. Louis's Marxist invocation is even more compelling when we recall that Rubin wrote "The Traffic in Women" in response to Friedrich Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, as she appreciates it for the recognition of the role that gender plays in the division of labor and the society's eventual undervaluation of domestic work all the while faulting it due to its insufficient explanation on the way sexual difference is that which gives rise to social systems like gender hierarchy. The intersectional Hong Kong Marxism to which Louis gestures, by way of alluding to Engels via citing Rubin, opens a second way to understand what the global sociality of queer and trans Hong Kong means in this project: it is an offshoot development of global Marxism.

In September 2019, Hong Kong University professor Alvin Wong delivered the speech, "Thinking Hong Kong's Freedom in Multiplicity," in a moment when the anti-ELAB movement was unfolding. On the occasion of "Keeping Our Voices Free," Wong extensively cited Audre Lorde, a textual link connecting global Marxism to the Hong Kong context. Wong picks up where Louis leaves off: he demands that the movement bring about actual minority-oriented trans-

formations, using the word *intersectionality* and Lorde's insistence that "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives. Malcolm knew this. Martin Luther King, Jr. knew this. Our struggles are particular, but we are not alone" (par. 1). Instead of reading Wong's citation as anachronistic, I argue that we can productively engage it as a chance to reframe social changes in post-Handover Hong Kong: they are not single-axis issues but decidedly local, intersectional, Marxist, and epistemologically global from the bottom up. Wong's reference to Lorde creates a citational link that connects the post-Handover struggle for multiplicity in Hong Kong to the intersectional fight faced by Black women in the United States, as articulated by the Combahee River Collective (CRC).

According to global Marxist scholar Colleen Lye, the CRC's identity politics represents the American left's translation of Mao's concept of contradiction, which Mao posits as essential to historical development. Contradictory forces like criticism and self-criticism can be productively yoked as a set of tools for dialectical processes that will lead to the socialist transformation of the capitalist world order. Building on this theoretical foundation, the CRC encountered Maoism through French works circulating in academic circles and translated Mao's dialectical materialism into praxis. The CRC applied Mao's broader framework of contradiction to Black women's everyday lives, arguing that these experiences instantiated the "dual aspects of particularity and totality" (qtd. in Lye, "Identity Politics" 702). Living in white supremacist America as Black feminists and lesbians, CRC members experienced a synthesis of oppressions, including "racial, sexual, heterosexual and class" ones (qtd. in Lye 702). Given the combined quantity of their oppression, CRC members hold that their politics—a significant instantiation of Third World politics during the 1960s and 1970s—had to be first and foremost informed by Black women's "identity" instead of "someone else's" (Lye 708). Given their multiplicity, their specific politics should also be a basis for building a universal coalition for collective liberation (i.e., women's liberation). As the CRC Statement declares: "Eliminating racism in the white women's movement is, by definition, work for white women to do, but we will continue to speak to and demand accountability in this issue" (qtd. in Wong par. 30).

Wong's speech enables us to envision a queer Marxist genealogy in which Mao's theory of contradiction makes a boomerang return home, traveling through French and American intellectual circles. It becomes noticeable when Wong evokes Audre Lorde, a member of the CRC whose words are central to Lye's and Puar's understanding of intersectionality—a citation that creates an unexpected linkage between Hong Kong studies, feminism of color, and global Marxism. This connection re-contextualizes Hong Kong in the academic discourse of intersectionality, positioning queer and trans Hong Kongers' experi-

ence as emblematic of the "intersectional person" (Lye 704). Referencing the five demands Hong Kongers made to the government in 2019, Wong issues an additional five demands. Notable among these is the reiteration of "represent[ing]" queer people in public and protest spaces (par. 4). For Wong, gay Hong Kongers stand at Crenshaw's intersection: they can be hurt in 2019 Hong Kong for a myriad of reasons, from mainstream society's homophobia, as exemplified by the "MTR's [Mass Transit Railway] decision to remove the Cathy Pacific ad featuring gay male tourists," to their queerphobic exclusion from the front lines of resistance that "make visible only cartoons and photographs of a young man kissing his girlfriend in masks" (par. 4). Addressing these interlocking oppressions is—as Wong's list further enumerates—only the first step in bringing about "a more expansive notion of belonging" inclusive of "LGBTQ people, [e]thnic and racial minorities, and all women," a "transformative politics" that can evolve from an oppositional politic against the government to an actual visionary politic, as well as a "togetherness" bounded by "differences" rather than sameness (par. 4). In Wong's formulation, the oppression that queer people face makes them an "intersectional person," whose injuries indict a whole host of systems of oppression, including homophobia; femme-phobia, caused by misogyny that also plagues trans people and women; and xenophobia—which can mean both fear of Southeast domestic helpers in Hong Kong and fear of homosexuality as a Western "import."

Wong is neither a passive victim of his conditions nor a naive accomplice to the hypocrisy of (neo) colonialism. In his speech delivered on September 21, half a year after the anti-ELAB movement started and right before the mass quarantine policy rolled out in early 2020, Wong offered both systematic criticism and self-reflective acknowledgment of his privilege as a college professor. Through heightened feelings and impassioned words, he appealed to a public audience for social change in this off-campus encounter. Wong marks differentials to his surrounding cisgender heteronormative systems by strategically appearing at the right place and time. In the most Foucauldian fashion, COVID-19 has become that plague in *Discipline and Punish* that allowed control to penetrate "even the most minor details of everyday life through the mediation of the complete hierarchy that assured the capillary function of power" (198). No longer hypothetical and more technologically advanced as a modern state, the HKSAR government has practiced extreme measures, like a twenty-one-day quarantine requirement for travelers and the use of apps for contact tracing, that make clear Hong Kong is a society of what Puar calls "discipline and control" (10). Due to its commitment to "One Country, Two System," the city does not hide its disciplinary tendency, but it rarely shows its control except in exceptional cases. Wong's speech made us aware of these discursive and not-so-discursive pow-

ers at work: "Since the debate on the extradition law began in 2019, I started sensing anxiety within myself. I am an academic; writing in an environment that fosters free expression of ideas, including ones that might be critical of the PRC, makes possible the kind of freedom I value" (par. 1). He goes on to say that although the university has restrictions, it also grants faculty and students protections. But he is not complacent: as a feminist who practices feminisms of color and queer theory, like those of Lorde, Wong is cognizant that the university is a site of privilege. Collaborating with the Hong Kong and German chapters of Poets, Essayists, Novelists (PEN) International, Wong asks the crowd to do more: to pivot from its "overtly masculine tactics" to "include women, intellectuals" and queers, even if it might "slow down" the frontline (par. 5). This ask broadens Wong's intersectionality from an "identity" (Puar 59) into part of an ongoing intersectional "event" that holds universal implications. According to Puar (by way of Massumi), an event is a result of the "conversion of the materiality of the body into an event" (60). As a queer man, Wong must constantly navigate around and travel to the side of the "hardcore and heteronormative masculinity" that structures not only the protest frontline but also the city in general. Across time, Wong comes to embody what Elizabeth Freeman calls the "body's micro-temporalities" (qtd in Halberstam, *Trans* 85), carrying with him a sideways movement that "spreads sideways and backward—more than a simple thrust toward height and forward time" (Stockton 4).

From the event that he speaks of—the Hong Kong protests—to the event that he speaks at—the PEN event at Kafnu hotel—Wong brings his sidesways temporality to bear on otherwise heteronormative and linear arrangements of capitalist space and time. Even after the event, Wong's sideways intervention lives on: his discourse pulls the present backward as his 2019 speech moved to the digital form, residing in the virtual repository of *Hong Kong Protesting*, continuing to advocate for queer rights, trans rights, and immigrant rights. As a result, Wong (and his speech) becomes intersectional on a grid comprised of a "disciplinary rule" and an "entire assemblage at the disposal of the modern state" (Naruse 22). Just as *assemblage* signifies a structuring order that coopts and controls differences, Wong—as another global Asian studies scholar of the assemblage, Chen Kuan-Hsing, says—has located the "cracks and leaks" "existing in the community's subtle encounters with the state," which "construct[ed] a relatively autonomous space for the assemblage of desire operating at the communal level" ("Introduction" 38). Wong found in the PEN event and the *Hong Kong Protesting* project the space-times of these "creaks and leaks" that open up to a line of flight, a sideways un/enfolding that allows for intersectional ethics and epistemology to—briefly and discursively—take shape.

As their words continue to live on virtually, Louis's and Wong's writings

have become intersectional in the *longue durée* of Hong Kong's historiography of protests. This historiographical contextualization constitutes the basis of the interpretive method that I put to use in the rest of this book: a queer and feminist formalism that acknowledges gender and sexuality as central categories of literary analysis, putting aesthetic developments (like the genre migrations of Louis's and Wong's pieces) in conversation with geopolitical meanings. With intersectional formalism, *Sideways Developments* studies queer and trans artists' and activists' sideways stories and scenes when the human and more-than bodies of Hong Kong and their micro-temporalities are folded onto the ongoing event of capitalism, extrapolating insights into their navigations of the chrononormativity of the Chinese century.

Chrononormativity with Chinese Characteristics

The "Chinese century" is a neologism that emerged in 2000, invented in the United States to describe China's rise as a global power. In this imagination, China's rise was catapulted by a series of post-socialist decisions that the country made, from Ding's opening of the nation's economy in 1978 to joining the World Trade Organization in 2001 to the kickoff of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013. Some see the twenty-first century as decidedly Chinese, with China replacing the United States the same way the US replaced the British in the twentieth century. Others argue that China's rise is a return to its eighteenth-century glory at the apogee of the Qing Dynasty (Blussé). Still others proclaim that the Chinese century is already over, in 2023, because of the country's dropping population (Yi Fuxian). This project understands the Chinese century as open-ended, with continuing competition and collaboration between empires and nation-states. Set against the temporal backdrop of China's linear development undergirded by capitalism, communism, and Confucianism, the arrow points to an uncertain twenty-first century: there will be shared aspirations for collectivity just as there will be inter-imperial contentions for power. This temporal structure, otherwise mostly invisible, is actually becoming more culturally prominent in global media and academia if we look closely through the lens of queer theory. After queer theorist Elizabeth Freeman, I call it chrononormativity with Chinese characteristics.

Just as nation-states turn space into places for the separation, regulation, and containment of bodies, institutions (like a nation or an empire) can also deploy time as an apparatus to manipulate and synchronize citizens' routines to serve the operations of dominant systems. In *Time Binds*, Freeman calls this enforced, disciplining deployment of time "chrononormativity" (3). Under neoliberalism, dominant governmental and corporate cultures organize the life schedules of

their citizens and subjects to maximize their economic productivity. Though Freeman's analysis of queer and neoliberal temporal forms centers on Western cases, her theory has implications for the analysis of Hong Kong, given the city-state's enmeshment in globalization. One of her most direct acknowledgments of the cultural portability of her notion of chrononormativity comes in her examination of "the advent of wage work" (3). This now-globalized phenomenon "entail[s] a violent re-temporalization of bodies once tuned to the seasonal rhythms of agricultural labor" (3).

In Hong Kong, the shift toward wage work occurred during the rehabilitation period after World War II, when industrialization took off in the city and factory work became the way of life for working-class people and their descendants. This development affected not only the organization of Hong Kong people's public lives, including how many hours and when they worked, but also their private lives, such as when to have sex and rear children. For Freeman, who embraces an antichrononormativity rooted in erotic freedom, certain forms of maneuvering time, such as "withholding, delaying, surprising, pausing and knowing when to stop," are strategies individuals can use to extract themselves from the grip of chrononormativity (35). Not only can these practices produce bodily and sexual freedom, but they can also challenge the grinding pace of productivity and contest the dominance of subjects by neoliberal corporations and governments—the sort of dominance that both Western businesses and pro-Beijing institutions have sought to exert over Hong Kong. The neoliberalism promulgated by China goes beyond the liberalizing, fast-paced economic agenda that has long defined Hong Kong's economy. Neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics combines portions of market freedom and liberalizing ideologies with Chinese history and the party's plans.

As the journalist Robert Lawrence Kuhn notes in the *New York Times*, the contemporary Chinese Dream is a set of achievements the party leadership wishes China to accomplish, including "China becoming a moderately well-off society by about 2020 [2021 was the hundredth anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party], and a fully developed nation by 2049," the hundredth anniversary of the People's Republic of China. Hong Kong plays a central role in achieving these milestones. Already open to traffic on 1 July, 2018, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge brings the economies of mainland China and the SARs closer than ever, an infrastructural project part of a vast economic complex consolidating the economies of nine major urban centers in Guangdong Province, Hong Kong, and Macau. This economic integration is devised to redistribute economic opportunities (from the SARs to Guangdong Province) and land resources (from the province that has plenty to the SARs), all in the hope of elevating the average quality of life of Chinese people, including those inside Hong Kong and Macau, and in turn boosting their economic productivity.

China's national plan for realizing the Chinese Dream takes on an international dimension in the transcontinental Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). A global infrastructural development campaign carried out by Beijing, the BRI promises to link Asia, Europe, and Africa by developing new ports, roads, railroad tracks, energy plants, and digital equipment to connect the continents like the old Silk Road of trade did. Some scholars like Seth Schindler, Nicholas Jepson, and Wenxing Cui already saw the BRI as a possible alternative to decades-old US-led developmental projects worldwide that became popular in the wake of World War II and the Cold War. Supporters of the BRI saw it as an anticolonial option made for the South by the South—all to bypass the United States. The future of the BRI is yet to be seen, but what is already apparent is that the project is a rare scenario in which post-socialist China comes into contact with identitarian differences. China's engagement with neoliberal diversity, noticeable in the two examples that I soon discuss, attempts to be inclusive of racial differences (including whiteness and Blackness), but cisgender heteronormativity remains prevalent in the nation's treatment of gender and sexuality.

Consider the 2018 presentation by economics professor Justin Yifu Lin and his team at the China Agricultural University. Lin is of note because he was an advisor for President Xi in 2020 when Xi drew up the fourteenth five-year plan for 2021 to 2025. Lin's imagination of time vis-à-vis race, gender, and sexuality are prevalent in his explanation of a South-South developmental model, which he calls "Joint Learning and Co-Transformation" (qtd in Cheng and Liu 11). Generally speaking, the model looks like a revision of Walt W. Rostow's five stages of development, a continuum of five steps toward modernization. In Rostow's model, these five stages track the progression of an economy as it transforms from a traditional society to one equipped with preconditions to take off. Rostow's post-takeoff economy matures and eventually enters "an age of high mass consumption" (qtd in Cheng and Liu 11).

Similarly, Lin's model of "Southern Climbers" of "the mountain of structural transformation" presents a continuum, with African countries marked as "an exporter of resources" and China marked as a step ahead of them as a "light and labor-intensive manufacturing and construction." The subsequent goalposts define economies by their "capital-intensive products," "knowledge-intensive services," and "established industrial countries." Catching up with the United States (a decidedly post-WWII version, I should add) is the last step.

To distinguish his co-transformation model from Rostow's five stages of growth, Lin's presentation contextualizes China's modernizing project with the fourth-century BC idiom 愚公移山 (the foolish man moves mountains). First appearing in 列子 (Liezi), the idiom comes from a tale about a Henan man committed to removing two mountains that blocked the pathways behind his house. To blaze new trails, he ordered his sons to bust these mountains asunder, a task

that many of his neighbors saw as impossible, leading them to give the man the moniker "the foolish man." The plot thickens when deities take pity on the man and his offspring and remove the mountains for them. By evoking an idiom that is among socialist China's favorites—Chairman Mao Zedong himself cited it in a 1945 speech—Lin maps a Chinese-led modernizing global project onto a story about hard work. But it is not just anybody's hard work, as shown by the image of the idiom that the artist Xu Beihong drew in 1940 and Lin cited in his slides. The men's work, virility, and reproduction will bring the Southern climbers over the mountains of structural transformation, as suggested by the overrepresentation of barely clad and muscle-bound men wielding hammers and laboring away to move mountains. The two women in the image are caretakers of male children. If queer theorist Lee Edelman in *No Future* taught us that "the future is kid stuff" in the American century (1), then the future of the Chinese century will remain powered by men's production and reproduction. Not only does this supposed South-to-South co-transformation model look like Rostow's, but it—by inheritance—does not make space for different orientations and trajectories of growth. Most tellingly, it simply makes no space for gender and sexual differences; meanwhile, it works out racial differences through the imagination of developmental distance—which, according to them, can be overcome with hard work.

All climbers (despite phenotypical and geographical differences) are on this track because they (presumably) want to assimilate into an industrial country like the post-WWII United States. Combined with its visuals, Lin's model of Southern modernization exemplifies a Chinese version of what Freeman would call chrononormativity. Despite the few cultural customizations, the model advocates a timetable of work and rest to maximize production and reproduction. Chrononormativity with Chinese characteristics appears repeatedly in the Chinese century in global media, like the music video "The Belt and Road Is How" made by the state-owned channel New China TV. A diverse cast of children, including all races, sings about the possibility of co-prosperity in a future that will bring about the cargo ships and trains of the project. Like Lin's presentation, this tune predicts that infrastructure and reproductive futurity (as symbolized by the children) will power the Chinese century.

The future of this chrononormative development remains uncertain, mainly because many participating countries in the initiative have run into debt (Green). In limbo, too, is the economy of China's global frontier, Hong Kong. Though retail sales in the city rose by 5.6 percent by October 2023 (Reuters), Hong Kong's property index plummeted by 13.2 percent in the first quarter of 2024 (Global Property Guide). Perhaps uncertainty is a feature of the interregnum, a sign of Hong Kong's transition not only from British to Chinese sovereignty by

2047 but also to global capitalism. *Sideways Developments* takes the now of the twenty-first century as—I have been calling it—an interregnum. Following Mingwei Huang's *Reconfiguring Racial Capitalism: South Africa in the Chinese Century*, I take a "palimpsest" approach to the world's "inter-imperial presence" to unpack how new empires do not only take over the old ones but how old empires create conditions for new systems of domination (3, 9). As postcolonial scholar Ann Stoler says, empires "fold back on themselves, and in that refolding, reveal new surfaces and new places" (26). In the case of the new Chinese empire, chrononormativity is its imperial form after its US and British precursor, as we see in Lin's borrowing of Rostow's five stages of developmental thinking. In the music video "The Belt and Road Is How," the future of the Chinese century remains to be thought in chrononormative terms, particularly as symbolized by the white children who take up half of the choir cast as well as the images of trains (Prasad) and cargo ships (Campling and Colás), noted transportation that helps facilitate the spread of old European colonialism and temporalities.

The cultural texts I study demonstrate awareness of the simultaneity and (a) synchronicity of chrononormativity of different imperial stripes. With them, I map out the expansive temporal landscape of the Chinese century and beyond, as *Sideways Developments* locates loopholes, and contradictions for ethical survival and collaboration. Chrononormativities with and without Chinese characteristics overlap. For instance, they live in texts written by diasporic authors. Hegemonic chrononormativity takes after one another in cases where liberal British capitalism set up a framework for neoliberal Hong Kong in the Chinese century. Chrononormativity with Chinese characteristics, too, runs in tandem with hegemonic temporalities (like settler colonialism in North America), coexisting with and reinforcing them. As the global Hong Kong texts that open this introduction show, the bright side of uncertainty is that there is no guarantee that the future will be the same as the past. Dwelling on that possibility, LGBTQ+ artists and characters in sideways developmental narratives preserve queer and trans pasts and access speculative futures to imagine better contingencies.

Sideways Developments

Sideways as a critical term made one of its earliest appearances in Hong Kong studies when Professor Timothy Weiss wrote a book chapter called "Hong Kong and David TK Wong's Hong Kong Stories." There, Weiss uses the term *sideways* to describe his translational approach to understanding Hong Kong in Hong Kong literature as an expat: his relationship with the city is, in his words, "sideways" (83), mediated by translation. My definition of *sideways* as a queer orientation, as defined by Sara Ahmed, builds on and departs from Weiss's by queering

it. As translation mediates Hong Kong stories for Weiss, the texts I study are sideways because they are mediated, too—not by translation but by the lens of queer and trans artists and characters. What is more, they are sideways in the sense of queer theorist Kathryn Bond Stockton's characterization of the recursive occurrence of sideways growth in twentieth- and twenty-first-century American culture, where children (particularly children of color) lose their innocence because their childhoods are stolen by capitalism, racism, police violence, and different forms of oppression. For Stockton, the nonlinear pathway of growth is these children's *only* way to grow, a lateral growth that, in turn, challenges heteronormative ways of production and reproduction. Other queer studies scholars build on Stockton's "sideways" as a method of thinking; for Tyler Bradway and E. L. McCallum, it is a discursive manner to "turn around a question in unexpected ways" (3). Taking these together, I use *sideways* as an operative to turn around the "question of Hong Kong" in unexpected ways: I use the adverb/adjective to categorize a global range of post-2014 queer and trans literature and visual culture as developmental narratives that portray the life courses of the oppressed, in which their nonlinear movement, growth, and evolution are results of being oppressed. These non-linear narratives can also end up in sideways outcomes or lead us to surprising new ways of being and collective growing, development that is adaptive and committed to a queer and trans Hong Kong ethics that is LGBTQ+-affirming, anticolonial, anti-ableist, pro-environment, and—in a nutshell—intersectional in a global sense.

Still, why developmental thinking? The discourse surrounding development is a contested one, especially in feminist studies. Dina M. Siddiqi, in her "development" entry in *Keywords for Gender and Sexuality Studies*, makes a similar case, pointing out how, often, in the name of development, the West treats "outside politics and culture or tradition as an obstacle to individual women's national economic prosperity" (63). To decolonize this Western-centric developmental mindset, Siddiqi comes up with an "alternative vision of development" that will "stand in for the aspiration to a better future—if not for themselves, then for their children" (64). However, her vision excludes queer and trans people who do not participate in normative family-making, like Ah Po and Ah Suen, who vowed to fight for everyone's grandkids. What about their better future and that of their kin members? *Sideways Developments* speculates on the past, present, and future of Ah Po's and Ah Suen's possible impossibility by mapping out narratives of development and dispersal.

Even still, development has a bad reputation in queer studies. It often calls to mind a Western-centric social Darwinism that takes straight males as the epitome of the human form, while queers and people of color are "throwbacks to an earlier stage of human development or as children who refuse to grow up" (Love

6). At a time when queer studies have made strides toward depathologization, developmental thinking remains problematic. As Neville Hoad says in "Arrested Development or the Queerness of Savages: Resisting Evolutionary Narratives of Difference," queer theory as a field privileges gay men in the West as more advanced than other queer and trans identities in the rest of the world, mapping them onto a developmental chart where progress is measured by activism and specific liberal benchmarks, like gay marriage. Per Hoad, genuine decolonization of queer discourse comes with queer ethics, rather than a presumed Western universal subjectivity for queer and trans people in the world. That means, as he puts it, being critical of—rather than abandoning—the tools we use to make progress and mount subjectivity.

Taking Hoad's suggestion, I am interested in recuperating development while remaining critical of the studies of gender and sexuality in global Hong Kong to imagine a better life and future for Hong Kong LGBTQ+ people and their global allies. In that way, my new formalist thinking of sideways development is in and of itself an evolvement: an unfoldment that begins as queer and trans subjects pivoting away from normative capitalist growth pathways in the city (as exemplified in the introduction and chapter 1) and the world (as seen in chapters 2 and 3); it furthermore conceptualizes how queer and trans developments have taken on new shapes akin to an evolutionary force, branching sideways into non-chrononormative (chapter 4), wandering (chapter 5), and lateral (coda) aesthetics and politics. In a sense, my theorizing of sideways development is similar to work done by Andrew F. Jones, in *Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture*. From there, I take development as "a narrative form" (5). Jones's book tracks how early twentieth-century Chinese culture and literature responded to social Darwinism—a concept imported to China from Britain in 1893 by Yan Fu, who later translated Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* into Chinese. The *fin-de-siècle* was a critical time for China, as it realized it had to catch up with the West, especially after European powers invaded the country with superior navies. When foreign concepts like biology and evolution simultaneously arrived in China, authors reconfigured the shock of having encountered differences to the need to catch up in development tales (i.e., Liang Qichao's "Ode to Young China"). These twentieth-century tales and the twenty-first-century cultures they gave rise to often regurgitate cisgender heteronormative tropes from the West—even with their Chinese characteristics. For instance, such cisgender and heteronormative developmental thinking recently reared its ugly head in Hong Kong politician Junius Ho Kwan-you's 2023 press conference condemning the upcoming Gay Games. He said that the legalization of same-sex marriage will lead to foreign interference and sports are just a disguise of Western values; as he asserts and was quoted by the online

news channel 集誌社 (The Collective), "繼續推行將會最後係 Die，即係死硬" (The continued promotion of it will lead to death, a dead end). Ho's chrononormative thinking deems queers as figures of death and actually calls to mind—not a particular Chinese philosophy—the homophobic rhetoric of degeneration by Herbert Spencer and other social Darwinists. Aware of this overlap between Chinese and Western homophobias, my theorization of development as a narrative form is decidedly an antidote. The book centers on nonlinear unfoldment and enfoldment of personal, social, and regional being and becoming that challenge the normative chronology of the nation and the etiology of biological definitions of gender and the human. It offers sideways developments as a liminal time-space located at the global intersection of Hong Kongers and their descendants' queer and trans politics and locations. Rather than a singular narrative, the myriad iterations of sideways development that unfold across these chapters are intentionally diverse and open-ended to make accommodations for shifts and differences, just as activists and artists and their literary and artistic objects make adjustments to continue to survive and thrive in this evolving world. Organically reflecting such a global dynamic is *Sideways Developments*' anti-transcendent model of transformation. As Muñoz (by way of Ernst Bloch) has it, hope and utopia do not come from outside the system but from within our everyday reality, not in the "spatial/temporal coordinates of straight time" (31). Taking constant recommitment and reimagination, especially when writing and producing arts while facing the threats of (right-wing) authoritarianism and neoliberalism at various locations, the Hong Kong (diasporic) texts this book discusses demonstrate their authors' and artists' "educated hope" (Muñoz 3) as they take on reason, mining contingencies in the logos/logics of their art forms; as they re-arrange the narrative conventions and the space/time coordinates of straight history, showing the vital creativity of the *shi* that is unique to Hong Kong. These works broadly fall into the genres of Hong Kong Cantophone literature, global anglophone fiction, poetry, autobiographical film, and other visual cultures. Reading these sideways stories and spectacles plumbs the depth of scholarship of each genre, showing how they hold a privileged and sideways epistemological vantage point to return to the problem of Hong Kong fresh.

Organization of the Book

This book consists of two parts, lying side by side. Instead of a pure chronology, the parts are of a reciprocal nature, with one part conferring meaning on the other, depending on which half is read first. This book stays true to the non-chrononormative content in its form. It can be read progressively or vice versa. The first part consists of genre-specific analyses of post-2014 queer Sinophone, anglophone, poetic, and performative cultural texts. Here, I put sideways devel-

opment in its historiographical and speculative contexts to create a reimagined timeline of an LGBTQ+ coalition for social change. The second part, including the coda, focuses exclusively on transgender autobiographical films, moving images, and other visual and virtual materials. By sequencing the book in this way, I hope to show how the sideways development that I trace as a queer theoretical concept in Part I finds trans material purchase in Part II, where I demonstrate how transgender and nonbinary artists repurpose nonlinear narratives and other lateral aesthetics to critique the linear, binary, unilateral, and anthropocentric imaginations of state-sponsored transnormativity.

Alternatively, to read the book beginning with Part II would be to submerge in the project's transtopian essence. If transphobia has detrimental effects on cisgender queer bodies, just as the advancement of the rights of cisgender queer bodies leads to the better protection of trans bodies in the Sinospheric world—as Howard Chiang of *Transtopia in the Sinophone Pacific* argued with the tragic death of Yeh Yung-chih, which led to the Gender Equity Education Act in Taiwan (12)—then this book gives specificity to his sweeping claim concerning the actual legal history of LGBTQ+ Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, trans legal victories have established precedents for lawyers and judges to argue for pro-queer (and sometimes anti-queer) causes. Approaching the book from this side throws into relief the historical reality that queer laws in Hong Kong are connected to trans laws. This connection spans from the 2013 case *W v. Registrar of Marriages,* which granted the trans plaintiff the right of matrimony, to the 2023 case *Sham Tsz Kit v. Secretary for Justice,* where the Court of Final Appeal ordered the HKSAR government to establish an alternative framework for legal recognition of same-sex partnerships, a decision that ultimately sparked controversy throughout city. I will briefly discuss this latter case, as it serves as a flashpoint for understanding the connection between queer and trans rights in the city.

In seeking recognition of same-sex marriage, Sham mounted three complaints: 1) that as a Hong Kong citizen, he has a constitutional right to marriage under Article 25 of the Basic Law and Article 22 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights (the former safeguarding HK citizens' equal rights and the latter protecting them against discrimination); 2) that the absence of any alternative frameworks acknowledging same-sex partnerships violates Article 14 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights (on privacy); and 3) that the government's non-recognition of his marriage to his same-sex partner in New York infringes Article 25 of the Basic Law and Article 22 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights. The Court of Final Appeal, citing Article 37, which defines marriage as heterosexual, dismissed complaints #1 and #3 immediately. Notably, the judges used the trans landmark case *W* v *Registrar of Marriages* against Sham, stating that its verdict "is consistent with the constitutional rights being limited to opposite-sex couples," as Miss W is a

post-op trans woman "treated as a woman for the relevant statutory provisions governing the capacity to marry" (44). The remaining claim—#2—was Sham's privacy claim, which followed the logic established by trans plaintiffs Q and Tse in the ID card case. The court took this claim seriously. According to the judges, absent an alternative framework, the government violates the gay plaintiff's privacy (which they understand as connected to personal dignity). Referencing *Q and Tse Henry Edward v Commissioner of Registration* as precedent, they write that "Privacy is a concept inherently linked to a person's dignity" and conclude, "accordingly, we hold that Bill of Rights 14 is engaged in the present case" (56). As a remedy, they cited a 2023 European Court of Human Rights case, *Fedotova and Others v. Russia*, recommending that the HKSAR government introduce a "legal alternative form of recognition to marriage" to "dispel[] any sense that [gays and lesbians] belong to an inferior class of persons whose relationship is undeserving of recognition" and avoid further "hindrance of, or [] interference with" the plaintiff's privacy rights (56). Released in July 2025, Hong Kong's alternative framework included establishing a registration system to recognize same-sex couples married overseas and grant them basic rights like making hospital visits and making medical decisions on behalf of their partners. This framework was subsequently vetoed by the legislature in September 2025, with its future now depending on the government's next steps.

This series of legal victories—despite being both liberating and limiting, as well as their ongoing challenges—is a testament to LGBTQ+ progress. And just like any progress made in liberal (and neoliberal) frameworks, they come with their affordances and problems. Yet the recent legislative veto reveals the contradiction facing queer and trans liberation in Hong Kong: while homophobic conservatism poses an immediate barrier to basic rights, the liberal rights-based framework—as noted earlier—itself remains grounded in colonial epistemologies that may constrain more radical possibilities for queer and trans freedom.

Based on these contradictory realities, where queer laws are by turns advanced or undermined because of trans precedents, and where the development of the LGBTQ+ community in Hong Kong and its diaspora depends on navigating legal systems that each contain their own sets of possibilities and exclusions, I imagine a coalitional logic that can offer a queer reframing of the political movements of the past decade. Critics have observed that notable movements in this period, such as the UM and the anti-ELAB movement, regurgitated ethnocentric and essentialized definitions of Hong Kongers as the exclusive bearers of rights (see Vicera). More fundamentally, rights-based discourse is a liberal idea, introduced to postcolonial cities like Hong Kong by the British to "manage social difference" (Lowe 9). Decentering that rights-based discourse which is not only colonial and androcentric as Wynter says (see McKittrick 2015) but also cis-normative (as I would add), *Sideways Developments* upholds that the

project of social change in Hong Kong and the diaspora—in all of their spectacular and quotidian forms—is part of a transtopian struggle that works with, through, and despite the law to advance the causes of gender, sexual, class, and ethnic differences.

This reading is borne out by the trans woman protester Ah Wing, mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, who insisted on continuing to fight for social change after the closures of the camps in Mong Kok by lobbying for better lives for the next generation of trans job seekers in a tough job market. This sentiment was echoed in a Zoom lecture cohosted by Quarks and the group Deaf Classroom (to whose aesthetic I will return in the coda), when some panelists said intersectional fights for trans and disabled people are not about fighting a singular antagonist anymore. Rather, they are about advocating for better chances of personal and community success. With each other, the trans activists depicted in Part II of this book are redirecting their commitment to social change from the UM and the anti-ELAB movement (both of which were accused of being transphobic, homophobic, and misogynistic) to a new and more expansive aim of continuous material redistribution in the city at a time when mass protests appear to be things of the past.

By proposing these two possible sequences for reading my book, I hope to suggest a queer and trans connection between the memory of resistance on the street and its post-memory, in which the inclusion and exclusion of LGBTQ+ people from political projects have inspired current queer and trans organizing. This way, contemporary LGBTQ+ organizing in Hong Kong gives past events new meanings and readings. This nonlinear approach to history depends on the speculative power of literature and culture. My intersectional and formalist readings are an extension of a Sisyphean and ongoing undertaking that refuses the neatly packed colonial developmental thinking that idealizes gay rights in the West and which habitually sets LGBTQ+ individuals in global Hong Kong and gay white men as two bookends.

Chapter 1 remaps the cisgender heteronormative timeline of Hong Kong's protest and activism, using the gay and lesbian literary historiography that I chart out in Part I. The typical chronology of Hong Kong protests begins with the charismatic leader So Sau Chong, a straight Chinese youth who became a monk later on in his life and was vocal in the fight against the fare increase of the Star Ferry in 1966. To tease out the queer beginnings of Hong Kong anticolonialism, I return to this site of pre-Handover protest in Hong Kong with the help of 盧麒之死 (The Death of Lo Kei), a historical novel by 黃碧雲 (Wong Bik-Wan). Wong's queer imagination of the 1960s rests in the plot of two student protesters, Lo Kei and the mixed-race Hong Konger of American and Chinese descent, Brian Raggensack. Following the lead of Chinese literary studies scholar Wayne Yeung, particularly his theorization of the Cantophone as "a Sinophone response

to decolonized cultural knowledge about geopolitically-conditioned but locally situated multitudes" (44), as well as postcolonial studies scholar Yogita Goyal's conceptualization of the postcolonial romance as a privileged genre to access the different rhythms that are attuned to utopian horizons, this chapter understands (failed) Cantophone queer love stories—like Lo's unrequited desire for Raggensack—as defined by a political desire for a more equitable societal order that is centered on intersectional differences. Wong does not stop at establishing Lo as a queer victim of multiple systems; she goes onto describe what comes before Lo's death, including suspicions about him being a communist spy, a sympathizer with Taiwanese republicanism, and an American spy, as well as what comes after it, including subsequent speculations of who and what caused the 1966 Star Ferry riots. Wong's queer reimagination of Lo frames him as an intersectional person and his death as a scene of intersectionality, comprised of feelings, systems, peoples, ideologies that are still unfolding. This scene sets up the backdrop of the subsequent analyses of the book.

The compulsion for intersectional difference propels queer characters to make way for sideways development. My reading of another failed queer love story in "拘捕" (Arrest) by 張婉雯 (Cheung Yuen Man) further exemplifies sideways development as a continued discontinuity, especially in the face of the constant allure of capitalist riches. My analysis traces the afterlife and material effects of past activists acting on unfulfilled queer desires after 1966. The result suggests the incompatibility between queer livelihoods and the type of capitalism central to linear developmental thinking.

In Hong Kong, queers' contradictory attachment to and repulsion from capitalism is further evidenced by lesbian characters in the post-UM, including in "月亮破裂" (Moon Split Asunder) by 余婉蘭 (Yu Yuen Lan) and "擠迫之城的戀愛方法" (Ways to Love in a Crowded City) by Wong Yi (黃怡). These lesbian characters' everyday survival (even during the anti-ELAB movement, which Yu compares to the apocalypse in the Qur'an, which is supposed to augur a new order) is tethered to the capitalist logic of abstraction and dispossession. For poor queers—historically and currently disenfranchised by the neoliberal oligarchy—access to housing is what can prevent them from falling out of life. I make this point by reading these lesbian love stories alongside the previously mentioned *Ng* case. As a whole, chapter 1 establishes that, contrary to the conviction that queer issues are white bourgeoise imports from the West, the pursuit of queer utopia is decolonial and Marxist.

While the first chapter shows the agential side of sideways developmental thinking as a path of queer resistance, chapter 2 gives it texture by exposing how LGBTQ+ lives can be thrown off course by chrononormative developmental thinking and projects that have no regard for queerness or queer subjects. To do so, chapter 2 extends the project's intersectional theorization of queer

developmental thinking by expanding the historiographical charting to include anglophone fiction. These revised coming-of-age narratives written in English include the Hong Kong American writer Jason Ng, the Asian Canadian writer Larissa Lai, and the Hong Kong British poet and novelist Kit Fan, who are part of the Hong Kong diaspora and witnessed past and present populations flowing in and out of the city. With these diasporic authors, this chapter imagines an expansive geography for global Hong Kong, one that moves from the Tin Hau Temple in Hong Kong to pre-Handover Diamond Hill, from London's Chinatown to a future Pacific Northwest where the renminbi is a widely circulated currency. In contrast with the nationalist imagination of straight growth typical of the genre, these sideways coming-of-age fictions become regional and diasporic narrations of decreation and creation toward environmental, anticolonial, and intersectional ends. Sideways development is everywhere in these narratives, from the ghost of a protester who comes back to haunt the living in Ng's "Ghost of Yulan Past" to the young people dispossessed and thrown off track, like Boss in Fan's *Diamond Hill*, who resorts to peddling drugs in Hong Kong and London with her childhood eventually robbed by global capitalists. Still others are displaced and immigrate from the city to elsewhere and end up embracing the status of being off course and finding new, if not queerer, ways of life for themselves and their offspring, as imagined in Lai's science fiction *The Tiger Flu*.

The third chapter dwells on the queer connotations of what it means to grow sideways by reading sidewaysness as a disposition or orientation into which people lean for support from others in real time or even across space times. This action and imitation of "leaning in" imagines and initiates a sociality that can reduce isolation and build solidarity. In this chapter, I exclusively focus on how a sideways aesthetic manifests in the poetry and performance of trans and nonbinary diasporic artists, namely Wu Tsang, Mary Jean Chan, and Grace Lau. The three of them have different relations with Hong Kong: Tsang has a Chinese father who left for the United States via Hong Kong and an artist residency in the city in the wake of the 2014 protests; Chan and Lau hail from Hong Kong. My theorization of sideways development in the work of these artists draws on evidence of the psychic and physical steps they take to feel near to their cis-normative and heteronormative home and homeland, despite actual historical and physical distance. My reading focuses on Tsang's poetic mistranslation, Chan's poetics of love, and Lau's gastric poetics, all to reconceptualize how the cultural contexts of sideways aesthetic have shifted since 2014 from the impulse to spread out in the street to a circumspective poetics with and through which poets and performers come to the epiphany that they are embedded in longer revolutionary histories that span across continents and centuries.

While Part I sketches out the different historiographical and theoretical meanings of sideways development—including its bodily disposition, aesthetic,

evidence of a psychic milestone, a sign of concession to chrononormativity, and a pivot to alternative pathways of growth—Part II applies this concept to the analysis of a population that is also going through an identity transition, namely the trans community.

Chapter 4, the first chapter in Part II, tracks the sideways aesthetic of the trans-autobiographical films of Siufung Law, Kaspar Wan, and Beatrice Wong. I read them alongside the *W* case, which exclusively grants rights to trans people who have "completed" gender-affirming surgery to marry their opposite-sex partners. I understand the sideways aesthetic in these films to be both a resistance and surrender to the chrononormative development of the strand of trans politics in Hong Kong driven by the neoliberal values of diversity and inclusion. Drawing on trans and disabled theories of time, I particularly focus on how these filmmakers express differences in the face of globalizing transformative politics. I argue that their films take discursive forms and make demands that are sideways to the main plotline of a linear transition narrative. I read these "side narratives" as challenges posed to the reified and one-dimensional imagination of the trans subject, prying open linear identity developmental thinking from the narrative of unilateral assimilation to detours that are attentive to the needs and desires of trans people beyond surgery and the right to matrimony.

The fifth chapter tests the limits of the theorization of identity development in the wake of the victory of the *Tse* case in early 2023, wherein the Hong Kong government allowed case-by-case approvals of trans people's changing of their sex marker on their identity card even if they have not completed gender-affirming surgery. If we are at the trans tipping point now, when the courts are increasingly giving trans Hong Kong citizens equal rights, then this chapter asks after the future: What is queer about trans politics next? To speculate, I study three visual productions involving Hong Kong diasporic artists: Jes Fan's video art piece *Viscera*, Sonny Chan's television show *Alpha Maria*, and Sin Wai Kin's science fictional drag. All of these trans representations encourage us to envision a new brand of trans politics that has historically predicated itself on an essentialized body politic. By insisting on presenting the audience with images of trans people who fall apart to the point of death (as in Chan's role as a reincarnation of a dead man who now works as a foreign domestic helper), and even more slowly, to the point of molecular disintegration (as in Sin's edited drag videos), or not at all (as in Fan's piece), these artists ask us to envision a desubjectivization of a trans politics. These speculative and fantastical pieces, each with their varying levels of cognitive estrangement, prompt the audience to imagine the creation and disintegration of trans subjects and objects to expose the hierarchizing and exploitative systems that have made and marked trans people as wounded in the first place.

The coda desublimates the desubjectivized trans critique of global Hong Kong by putting it in local and regional contexts. In it, I study two trans youth collaborative projects. The first is a cluster of educational videos Quarks made with Deaf Classroom. The second is a slide deck created by a trans Macau youth to educate the members of queer counterpublics on his experience obtaining medical assistance in Hong Kong. Using these cases, I extend chapter 3's conceptualization of queer aesthetics and politics in the age of the Chinese century to speculate on the braided future of a Hong Kong transtopia, where the local trans community will continue to negotiate for better life conditions in the face of neoliberalism, as their progress has already shown some promise in enhancing the sideways flourishing of doubly minoritized trans individuals and groups that overlap with them. Altogether, I suggest modes of advocacy and strategic alliance not only to address the shortfalls of the lived experience of trans-ness and disability in Hong Kong but also to find partnerships with marginalized groups in other Chinese spaces, specifically Macau.

Part I

1: Queer Love in Twenty-First-Century Cantophone Fiction

Love is rarely acknowledged as a personal and political plot genre. This understanding becomes particularly evident when examining Cantophone queer love plots from Hong Kong, where the narrative structures—be they as the main or a side—serve as discursive vehicles for social commentary. This chapter reads Cantophone queer love plots as instantiations of sideways development expressing the struggles of various Hong Kong gays and lesbians around assimilating into the chrononormativity of the city. My formalist analysis centers on the libidinal desire of poor gays and lesbians that take failed and unconsummated shapes in Cantophone fiction. Of particular interest to this project is how these (failed) queer love stories contradict or poke fun at the impossibility for gays and lesbians to grow up in twentieth and twenty-first century Hong Kong. In these stories, the inconceivability and difficulty of the development of queer love reveals ongoing contradictions of Hong Kong's capitalist development, including its simultaneous valorization and marginalization of the LGBTQ+ community.

In *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*, Doris Sommer says that political consolidation and heterosexual passions depend on each other, especially those set against crises. In her study of nineteenth-century Latin America, romance narrates a nation's development alongside a couple's burgeoning love. From the meet-cute to the happily-ever-after, romantic plot points map onto the various milestones of a new social order's emergence. Sommer's point about the relationship between politics and romance also holds in Sinophone literature, particularly during revolutionary times, when personal desires are sometimes elided as cogs and other times upheld as lubrication to the machinery of the proletariat's revolution. According to literary and media studies scholar Wanning Sun, socialist writers reconciled the two by writing novels that recent scholars have characterized as the "revolution-plus-love" formula. Such examples include the highly canonized 紅岩 or *Red Crag*, in which protago-

nist Sister Jiang's romance with Xu Yunfeng unfolds against the backdrop of the Chinese civil war (1936–1949). By the end of the novel, the Communist inmates who overthrew their Kuomintang (KMT) enemies glorify Jiang and Xu, who had been persecuted by KMT, as an example for couples who decide to dedicate themselves to the Maoist cause. The couple's consummation here serves as the resolution to the country's internal conflict.

However, there are variations. Writing at the onset of the Chinese civil war were others like Eileen Chang, who moved from Shanghai to the crown colony to attend the University of Hong Kong. In 1943, she published *Love in a Fallen City*, about the taboo romance between divorcée Bai Liusu and a rich returnee from the UK Fan Liuyan, while the Japanese invade Hong Kong. Love in the novel is imagined as transcendent, outside the "revolutionary-plus-love" formula. Unlike Sister Jiang and Xu's romance, which becomes stronger posthumously because Chinese communism has gained ground, Fan and Bai's love only finds its footing after the city falls apart. As literary scholar Nicole Huang notes, the novel is Chang's "construction of an alternative narrative of war, one that contradicted the grand narratives of national salvation and revolution [which] dominated the wartime literary scene" (Huang xii). What love stories looked like and meant increasingly changed as communism consolidated on the mainland and the society eventually opened up to degrees of capitalism. In "Consumption Plus Love," media scholar Wanning Sun notes how twenty-first-century CCTV, the primary state-run television broadcaster in the country, disembedded love from revolutionary discourse to that of domestic comfort, serving as part of the nation-state's management of the public's dissent and promotion of a good life.

Often omitted in the global and national genealogy of love stories are the gay and lesbian romances at the country's periphery. As immortalized by the nationalist Sinophone love stories of the media and literature, heteronormative nuptial ties sublimate the polis to eros during war times and, more recently, promise coherence with the economy in the post-war era. Chang's depiction of Bai and Fan's transcendent love in war-torn Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation is a variation of that. But what about those of queer Hong Kongers? Following Huang's lead in interpreting Chang's love story as an unexpected framework to understand the global and national experiences of Hong Kong, this chapter pieces together and analyzes more Hong Kong love stories as an attempt to imagine alternative narratives of past ruptures, like wars, and, more recently, civil unrests.

The starting point of Hong Kong protest, according to Antony Dapiran's *City of Protest: A Recent History of Dissent in Hong Kong*, is the 1966 protest against the Star Ferry Company's fare increases, remembered as centered on the young man, So Sau-chung, who staged a hunger strike. In Dapiran's narrative, pro-

testing is single-axis, about defending Hong Kong "identity" with "freedoms of speech, expression, and assembly" (8), and he mutes important issues concerning class, sexual, and gender differences with an idealized image of a presumptively cisgender, heterosexual male activist defending attributes endowed by British subjecthood. To remap a decolonial and intersectional history of Hong Kong activism, my historiography shifts our focus to Wong Bik-wan's Lo Kei, who often appears with So in media footage. Taking Wong's Lo—a closeted gay man—as the starting point of Hong Kong's protest history prompts us to imagine the beginning of Hong Kong activism around freedom and LGBTQ+ rights differently.

The conventional history of Hong Kong's LGBTQ+ activism begins in 1991, following the controversial death of John MacLennan. A white Scottish police officer, he allegedly died by suicide in response to rumors that he was having sex with local boys. Some believed that the colonial police force killed MacLennan (who was shot not once but multiple times) as a cover-up to save the unit's reputation. Only after his alleged suicide did public pressure inspire legislative efforts to decriminalize homosexual acts, culminating in the enactment of the Crimes (Amendment) Bill in 1991. The bill decriminalized private sex acts between two consenting adults who are twenty years of age or older. Beginning the story of LGBTQ+ history and activism with Wong's historiography of Lo as a poor closeted gay man, this chapter establishes an intersectional protest history of Hong Kong that began in the '60s, but also a decolonial beginning for the queer and trans movement, moving away from the death of a white man. Reframing Hong Kong's narrative of dissent through queer and decolonial terms also opens new ways of connecting analyses of literary representations of marginalized identities with broader political contexts. Rather than viewing historical fictions as straightforward regional and national allegories, this chapter employs a more nuanced framework—the intersectional formalism I outline in the introduction—to recognize the ongoing interplay between form and content, minoritarian politics, and official history for the rest of the book's historiographical and speculative imaginations.

My intersectional formalist analysis is in keeping with recent postcolonial scholarship. In her 2020 *PMLA* piece "National Allegory and Beyond: Postcolonial Critique Now," Yogita Goyal reviews Fredric Jameson's infamous thesis in "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," a seminal article in which he studies as one of its primary texts Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman* whose oeuvre later influenced several of the Cantophone Hong Kong authors whose queer love plots I study below. Jameson argues for an interpretation of Third World literature as demonstrating "a one-to-one correspondence between the aesthetic text and the political destiny" of a country (Goyal 523). Instead of

entirely endorsing Jameson's interpretive methodology, Goyal asserts that critics should attend to ongoing postcolonial changes, suggesting the need for finer, genre-specific literary studies to trace dynamics between fiction's aesthetics and changing postcolonial politics. As Goyal demonstrates, postcolonial love plots offer "other historical rhymes," in which authors re-express "utopic longings" and recommit to "mediation on the Utopic community" during "historical conjunctures" marked by "endless crisis" (526). The sideways orientation of Cantophone queer love stories works as a criticism of the chrononormative model of development that China had "inherited" from "Western modernity" through "the filter of Soviet statism" since the mid-century (Pang 104). The 1950s saw the Sino-Soviet relationship turn sour. According to Hong Kong and China Studies scholar Pang Laikwan in "De-Sovietization and Internationalism," Mao was in a hurry to catch up and surpass the Soviet Union—as opposed to the UK or US as it was widely advertised in the wake of the Sino-Soviet split. He rolled out the First and Second Five-Year Plans, with the progressive production goals of the second even more unrealistic than the first—all to "demonstrate China's economic development model was superior to that of the Soviet Union" (102). Halted by this rush toward the linear growth model is the more radical imagination of a different future. The first step toward an alternative model of modernity—as Pang adds—is to "not to fall into the same teleology of development" (104). Taking Pang's lead, my close analysis of Cantophone love stories gestures toward an alternative "historical rhythm" (Goyal 526) within global China's age, potentially more inclusive of nonlinear personal and regional flourishing.

Since the advent of global capitalism, full adulthood is marked by achieving such milestones as getting married and purchasing property. But gays and lesbians in Hong Kong don't enjoy these luxuries due to legal and socioeconomic hurdles. Therefore, their rites of passage unfold differently, eventually bringing them into sideways relations with space and time. I will carve out these sideways differences and their alternative historical rhythms from (failed) queer love plots. Hong Kong Cantophone authors, including 黃怡 (Wong Yi), 余婉蘭 (Yu Yuen Lan), 黃碧雲 (Wong Bik-Wan), and 張婉雯 (Cheung Yuen Man), variously present queer characters resisting and compromising with the status quo. Wong's 2018 novel 盧麒之死 (The Death of Lo Kei) narrates the short life of forgotten activist Lo Kei: arrested during the 1966 Kowloon riots at nineteen, he died under suspicious circumstances at twenty. Cheung's 2020 short story, "拘捕" (Arrest), features Chu, a college professor, surrendering to the police to save a student reminiscent of his youthful crush. Wong Yi's 2021 short story "擠迫之城的戀愛方法" (Ways to Love in a Crowded City) and Yu's 2021 "月亮破裂" (Moon Split Asunder) show how Hong Kong's real estate markets make property ownership impossible for young lesbian characters.

These stories' unfolding and foreclosing by turns recall what queer theorist Jack Halberstam in the *Queer Art of Failure* has called "a queer kind of disruption in the logic of the normal" (75). Against the linearity of Chinese national historiography operating by "the logics of succession, progress, development and [other] tradition proper to hetero-familial development" (75) gay and lesbian failed and unconsummated love plots offer a "queer" imagination of time, one which disorients the time/space coordinates of chrononormativity with Chinese characteristics. These narratives feature gay and lesbian characters taking on personal growth queerly: some characters squander the proverbial good life—the reward of achieving straight adulthood—while others never have it due to queer resistance and activism. Their subsequent fates—arrest, survival, death—realistically capture life in contemporary Hong Kong, a city fraught with the contradictions of East-West, socialism-capitalism, and liberalism-illiberalism. These contradictions permeate queer characters' lives. Growing up with contradictions (beyond queerness) isn't easy, and unsurprisingly these characters encounter dead ends and detours. Situated across historical epochs, from the 1960s to the 2010s, the unfolding and/or foreclosed plots of the queer protagonists share the same destinies of dispossession and displacement by a (post)colonial (neo)liberal capitalist market that privileges heteronormativity and, more recently, white expat homonormativity.

This chapter looks to intimate Cantophone love stories for social meanings and geopolitical insights when globalization's effects are unevenly distributed—developing and developed countries combined by capitalism with intact power asymmetries. These global forces are always at work on the home front, as a local cohort of Cantophone women writers concerned with queerness show in their engagement with the cisgender-heteropatriarchy of capitalism, colonialism, protest, and national movements. (In the next chapter, I map how sideways imaginations continue in the transnational contexts as synecdoches of Hong Kongers' negotiation and compromise with an entire global assemblage of forces.) Following Wayne Yeung in "The Concept of the Cantophone," I define *Cantophone* as a "Sinophone response to decolonize cultural knowledge about such geopolitically-conditioned but locally-situated multitudes" (44). Cantophone writing remains rare in Chinese literature, which has historically privileged *wenyan* (Literary Sinitic), but these authors evoke Hong Kong idiom and vernacular spoken during or beyond protest periods. Their queer stories incorporate varying registers of Cantonese, their attention to class, gender, and sexual differences within the Cantophone expanding Yeung's "multitudes" to include other identity differences beyond linguistic ones.

The sideways life courses of Wong's Lo and Cheung's Chu, in addition to the sly maneuvers around displacement and dispossession by Wong Yi's and Yu's

lesbian couples, form an intersectional basis for examining Hong Kong queerness as a result of and response to the city being at the crossroad of development plans devised by global powers beyond the local. Sideways gay and lesbian love stories lay bare those plans' straight directives. The conspicuous silence of Lo Kei's homosexuality in the history of the 1960s and the reviews of Wong's new book demonstrate the sad reality that queerness is absent from mainstream imaginations and discussions of the development of the region, its protests, and its literature. It is no wonder that when gays and lesbians inhabit and agitate for change in the city, they have to navigate their surroundings differently, just as queer characters have to make pivots in the narrative space of Cantophone love story.

In the following pages, I take a gender-based approach to Cantophone love plot. I start with a discussion of Wong Bik-wan's and Cheung's fiction, which feature queer men as protagonists, and then proceed to those that feature queer women, including those of Wong Yi's and Yu's stories. The critiques the authors make with their characters' same-sex and political desires are often radical given the century the work is set in, but they may seem outdated now. For example, Wong's critique of the criminalization of homosexuality predates decriminalization in Hong Kong, and all the stories about queer people's housing issues have been officially resolved by the most recent LGBTQ+ landmark victories, the combined cases of *Nick Infringer v. The Hong Kong Housing Authority* (2023) and *Ng Hon Lam Edgar v. the Hong Kong Housing Authority* (2023). I examine fictions of Hong Kong's queer past and present to emphasize how the sideways historiography of Hong Kong's dissent is decidedly Sisyphean, reflecting how LGBTQ+ people have been a moving target of various systemic disenfranchisement from before the Handover. By highlighting the four different authors' (re) iterative stories of queer struggle with the status quo—be it the Western-led developmental model or the Chinese state's developmentalism—I suggest that Hong Kong Cantophone fiction's queerness symbolizes the community's insistence on survival and transformation.

Queerness in Wong Bik-Wan and Cheung Yuen Man's Protest Stories: The Unrealized Seduction of Anarchy

The Death of Lo Kei, the 2018 nonfiction novel by Wong Bik-Wan, localizes the global history of the sizzling sixties, when youth-led protesters showed their zeal to build a decolonized world through praxis. Many book reviewers applauded how Wong put Lo Kei's death front and center, making some contemporary critics like 蘇偉貞 (Su Weizhen) call the nonfiction novel an obituary to young activists from Hong Kong. The book's arrival two years after the Fish-

ball Revolution—to which *Death* refers—and one year before the anti-ELAB movement makes Su's comparison apt. Given its reference to current events, Wong's novel speaks directly to twenty-first-century Hong Kong politics, particularly to the Sinophone audience watching Hong Kong's political situation ahead of the 2047 expiration of "One Country, Two Systems." When re-telling this story, Wong shifts the historical focus, centering Lo, a peripheral historical figure forgotten mainly by the public, as *Death*'s titular character. I approach Wong's renarration of the '66 protests as what affect theorist Heather Love in *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* would call an "impossible" nonfiction fiction—with impossibility here naming both 21st century readers and the writer Wong's inability to reach Lo, who has been gone for half a century, and our longing to interpret him as queer as a compulsion that is "marked by the historical impossibility of same-sex desire" (21). Love's concept of "feeling backward" becomes especially relevant in postcolonial Hong Kong, where activists (LGBTQ+ ones and otherwise) are bonded over queer feelings (particularly negative affects). Lo's queerness, as such, does not only name homosexuality but also a historical method whereby Wong creates to connect the past to the present, characters to readers.

Particularly for now, in a city where same-sex marriage remains illegal, Wong's impossible nonfiction fiction unsettles the longue-durée of heteronormativity in Hong Kong, in which the system not only undergirded the homophobic laws during the British era but also entrenched the lack of protection for gay and lesbian couples in the Hong Kong SAR. Wong's piece does so by creating a faux objective narrative with archival excerpts and then disrupting the heteronormative plot of a whodunit, replacing it with the side narrative of an unrealized queer love story where Lo's mysterious death does not call for a restoration of order (the type that displaces and demonizes queer peoples in the first place). Instead, Wong's work raises suspicion around the systems that prematurely pronounce his death as an unsuspicious suicide. As a result, *Death* puts a queer Marxist subject back into the history of Hong Kong's protests and evokes queer fellow feelings as one of the ongoing (im)material conditions of keeping the possibility for a queer utopian future open.

Before beginning my analysis of the queer undercurrent that grounds a Hong Kong intersectionality at a crucial global juncture that Colleen Lye (2014) and Christopher Connery (2007) have famously called the Global Sixties, or a revolutionary period that represents a political awakening of (formerly) colonized populations across the world, I will provide more local context in which Wong's book is set and a brief overview of her historiographical speculation of Lo's life and sexuality since it remains untranslated as of yet. The "天星小輪加價暴動," or the 1966 Star Ferry Riots, were one of the first protests in British Hong

Kong led by working-class people. The 1966 riots were public agitation against the British colonial government's agreement to raise the fare by fifty cents, just a bit more than 6 cents in USD. What appeared to be a trivial increase had a significant impact. Wong's protagonist Lo was remembered by mainstream society as a follower of So Sau-Chung, who was widely remembered as the "protest pioneer" by mainstream media such as the *South China Morning Post* (Cheung 2016). Following So's lead, Lo joined the hunger strike on the afternoon of April 4. Lo's involvement, along with other young people's, grew So's demonstration from a single-person hunger strike to a riot that spread to the rest of Kowloon. The riot was large enough to prompt then-governor David Trench to send the British army to squash the protesters' congregation and stop public obstruction.

During the protests, most of the Hong Kong public was sympathetic to So because many saw the fare increase as emblematic of the British colonizers' exploitation of the Chinese people. As Wong elaborates in *Death*, the fare increase was an extra burden on those in an increasingly competitive society already riven with "tensions and anxieties," including Lo, likely making only $130 to $250 per month (which is the equivalent of $16 to 32) as an apprentice in the trades (Carroll 75). *Death* goes beyond pure economic reasons: it traces the four-night-long protests' political tension to various forces, from Lo's and So's charismatic leadership and agitation to other factors beyond their control. The day the riot took place was a double public holiday—both Labor Day and the Ching Ming Festival (*Death* 10)—and the films screened at Kowloon theaters could have incited theatergoers to violence on the street (120). These films include action movies like Robert Vaughn and David McCallum's spy film *One Spy Too Many*, the Western movie *The Rare Breed*, as well as Hong Kong's very own crime film *Black Rose*, which features the two women Robin Hood characters played by Connie Chan and Nam Hung (120). The novel accounts for all factors, even zeroes in on the backdrop of Kowloon, like its built environment and relative human density. For instance, on the peninsula of Kowloon, a family of five would be allocated to a cramped apartment of 120 square meters (which, in the US, would mean a cramped 1292 square feet studio). Lo grew up in such an increasingly competitive and high-density environment, and participated in a protest against the system writ large for not doing enough for the people at a time of mounting uncertainty after WWII, when the city transformed from an economy of entrepôt trade to light manufacturing. Like many in this fast-paced capitalist city that encourages cultural amnesia, Lo has been forgotten in a culture that Ackbar Abbas (1997) famously compared to a "culture of disappearance."

Wong retrieved Lo from the dustbin of history. At the center of Wong's renarration is poor lumpenproletariat Lo, who does not seem to be able to hold

down a job. By the time of his first arrest, Lo was an unemployed youth who had recently lost his father in China in 1961 (28) and mother in Hong Kong in 1963 (26): he was previously employed in a "精美製衣廠" (117) (a boutique garment factory) but then was fired when his boss found out that he had gone to a demonstration against the Hong Kong governor. Since then, he had been indicted twice, just as the novel recounts. The first time was on April 22, 1966, at the North Kowloon Magistrates' Courts, which decided that Lo was not guilty of inciting to riot but of delivering a speech that undermines social security. For that, he was penalized with a fine of HKD 500 (approximately USD 64.5). The judges ordered him to be bound over for three years (31). And the second time on May 10, 1966, he was imprisoned for stealing a bike in Yulong until August 8 (67–71). Lo insisted that he was framed, tricked into doing so by Xia Tsai "蝦仔" (71), a mole who worked for the police. Xia told Lo he had a bike up for use, but he had misplaced the key, and it was locked. Acting out of impatience and convenience, Lo cut open the lock, at which point the police emerged from the background, detained, and eventually imprisoned him. Lo was finally released in September 1966. Shortly after this, he was found dead on March 22, 1967 (17).

Perhaps Lo's lack of familial support can explain his psychic and physical perambulations around town. During the protests, Lo reported renting a room for a monthly rent of HKD 50 or USD 6.45 with a work friend he met in a café. The room, as the book cites from an unnamed source, was "凌亂" chaotic: "內中僅有一張板床及幾張椅" in this poorly equipped room is a panel bed and a few chairs, which all showed that Lo was "經濟情況並非充裕" not financially well-off (26). Lo's poverty is further described by another citation that is attributed to his roommate Chan from an unspecified bilingual source: the robe on which Lo's body is hanging is a shirt that he "had before [he] meets [Lo], but [Lo] used to wear it after he came to live with [him]" (34). The roommate further adds that, as far as he knows, Lo does not own any clothes, "衣服都是該公司給他穿的" or anything he has in his closet is uniforms given to him by his employers.

Wong's extensive citation and attribution to sources, even though they are not always clear which one corresponds to the many that Wong referenced in the book's works cited page, indicates that she did levels of archival work in Hong Kong and London to track Lo's life story in old newspapers, historical evidence, and legal transcripts of court cases. Among them are Chinese and English excerpts from Hong Kong's High Court and UK's National Archives, which all help readers envision him from an objective distance, or at least through the textual performance of objectivity. Ventriloquizing objectivity—certainly—is the novel's incessant insertion of quotations into a sparse third-person narration of the distant and recent history of the city's protests. At

the same time, Wong's historiographical novel unsettles that record, and she deliberately classifies *Death* a "非虛構小說" (Wong Yu Hin; nonfiction novel). Instead of a strict biography of Lo, Wong tells of Lo's story through the literary framing of it as a mystery novel as well as the integration of queer speculation. Wong embeds her character within a whodunit framework with *two* mysteries that spin off from the twin foci of what/who caused Lo's death and who was the first to escalate the '66 protests into riots. But as queer authors of crime fiction and mystery like John Copenhaver of *Hall of Mirrors* says, the plot of the genres often evolve around restoring a type of justice or "mainstream morality" that ends up "feed[ing] some oppressive systems" (par. 4). When returning to a traditional moral code implies more of the same, the convention of truth seeking appears to be more of a "stagnation" (par. 4) than progress. Instead, for queer and other minoritarian authors like Copenhaver, they reinvent the wheel by writing stories that refuse to "return to where we were but to a new place of openness and acceptance" (par. 4). Wong does a version of that with *Lo*: the novel announces Lo's death early, not to pave the way for the restoration of colonial order, but to question it and juxtapose it next to the current postcolonial judicial system by comparing the former's treatment of young activists to the latter. In a similar manner, instead of making a case for or against Lo or So as the leaders of the protests, Wong's nonfiction mulls over all possible reasons that stoked the crowd's anger. Indeed, the aforementioned cultural and socioeconomic reasons are just as convincing or coincidental in accounting for the '66 Kowloon riots as asserting that Lo and/or So are the sole instigators of the protest.

Giving Wong's revisions of the heteronormative crime fiction and mystery a queer focus is her speculation of Lo and her same-sex fantasy around Lo and Raggensack, another figure who is centrally involved in the protests. Wong's queer speculation is demonstrably informed by the placement of materials in the archive that she documented visiting in her research, namely the *Elsie Tu Papers*, housed by the Special Collections and Archives at the Baptist University of Hong Kong's library (229). The *Papers* comprise clippings related to the 1966 protest and cases associated with the colonial government's treatment of homosexuality. Box 4 holds records under the title "Star Ferry Fare Increase & Kowloon Riots," and very close by, Box 7 contains documents relating to MacLennan's contested death, which is a case worth recounting here due to its relevance to the novel's plot.

As mentioned in the introduction, the Scottish inspector John MacLennan's alleged suicide in 1980 was remembered by many in the city as the case that kick-started LGBTQ+ progress, which culminated in the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1991. Very much like Lo's death in Wong's nonfiction, many

had a hard time believing in MacLennan's death as a result of suicide because of the five gunshots in his abdomen, which would be too much, essentially making it an overkill. Among the skeptics is the British legislator Elsie Tu, who was invested in advancing the causes of gay people and working-class people like So who was remembered as such a fan of her that he had worn a jacket hand-painted with "Hail Elsie" banners during the first day of the 66 protest (Cheung); Tu recalls that "[MacLennan] was potentially murdered in so far as he hadn't had a way out, he was pushed into killing himself" (Whitehead). Rumor is that the Special Branch under the Crime Department of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force had maintained a secret file keeping tabs on its gay employees at a time when homosexual acts between consenting adults were still crimes in the colony. MacLennan began to catch the Special Branch's attention after making a clumsy advance on a 17-year-old Hong Kong student from Glasgow who happened to be in Hong Kong that summer, who then reported him to a friend whose father was in the workforce. Since then, MacLennan had been consistently hounded. While researching Lo, information about MacLennan, which is so close to the box about the '66 riots, may have sparked Wong's imagination for the fictional element in *Death*. This physical proximity may have led to some narrative cross-pollination. *Death* builds on the historical record's archival adjacency to tell a love story between Lo and Raggensack, albeit one-sided.

In conventional histories, both Lo and Raggensack's friendship with fellow activist 呂鳳愛 (Loi Feng Ai) was often taken to be budding heterosexual love, but Wong queers this narrative, disrupting the historical record like a fan fiction writer might. Fantasizing a queer story for two straight-acting men, however, does not mean that Wong's narrative is baseless; instead, it is an informed speculation inspired by forms of proximity between Lo and Raggensack in verifiable pieces of evidence that have probably come up during research. The first widely circulated piece of the two is a photo taken by the *South China Morning Post* (which Wong cites), depicting a crowd of sign-raising young men during the 1966 protests. Standing next to each other toward the left of the image, Lo and Raggensack—dapperly dressed and groomed—stand out from the other hunger strikers, who appear rather rugged. Lo wears what appears to be a leather jacket and a pair of dark-frame glasses, Raggensack wears a turtleneck, and they both have hair styled with pomade (see Figure 1).

In the novel, Wong subtly hints at Lo's queerness through rumors told from the perspective of 李德義 (Lee Tak Yee), a twenty-one-year-old activist. While recalling how he was subject to interrogation by both Chinese and English police officers—which pressured Lee to acknowledge that it was Lo's incitement that drove him to participate in the riot in the first place—the deputy asks Lee whether he knows of Lo's homosexuality. In response, Lee claimed that he was

Fig. 1. Lo Kei and Brian Raggensack are standing side by side. Lo Kei wears black-rimmed glasses, while Raggensack, the only visibly mixed-race person in a turtleneck, is protesting against the Star Ferry fare increase. This scene was reported in the *South China Morning Post* on April 6, 1966. The news excerpt is from the *Elsie Tu Papers*, Box 35, Folder 4, at Hong Kong Baptist University. Courtesy of the Special and Archival Collections, HKBU.

not privy to that. Wong includes the following excerpts in brackets to create possible connections:

> 「聽到[西人]幫辦用污言穢語罵葉錫恩及貝納祺。當時幫辦很客氣問我有沒有聽到[且略] 與盧麒同性戀之事，我答，全部不清楚那些事」[一九五0年的《侵害人身罪條例》四十九條，任何人士觸犯可厭罪行，與人或動物肛交並被定罪，可被終身監禁。]. (184–185; per the stipulation from the 1950 version of *The Offenses Against the Person Ordinance*, any person who is convicted of the terrible crime of buggery, committed with mankind or with any animal, shall be guilty of a felony and shall be liable to imprisonment for life.)

This anti-homosexual law traces back to a 1533 English statute in which Henry VIII—who had broken with the Catholic Church—reiterated and criminal-

ized "sodomy" as a crime against the state instead of the church. *Death* implies that Lo's fear of criminalization—of being accused and tried as a "sodomite"—contributed to his suicide. In "Queer Death Studies: Death, Dying and Mourning from a Queerfeminist Perspective," Marietta Radomska and others have pointed out how a queer approach to the studies of death expands a witness's normative position from passive observer to potentially complicit. Queer studies offer us new vocabularies to understand queer death; among them are *responsibility* and *accountability* (86). Radomska encourages us to expand the analysis of necropower in conventional Death Studies to include discussions of ethics, all to better engage humankind with "questions of responsibility, accountability, and care for/in the (dying) more-than-human world." These insights exhort us to reinterpret Lo's suspicious death and expand our investment in the novel from merely solving the mystery of his death to figuring out what (im)material systems (in)directly leads to his death and whether ethics and justice can ever be achieved should an older order be restored: In short, reading *Death* this way is to shore up the additional ethical charge by questioning the institutions—here, the colonial police and *The Offenses Against the Person Ordinance*—for making Lo feel that he had nowhere to turn but death.

My queer reading so far has worked to pull *Death*'s queer love story from the background to the foreground. The following seven lines is the closest that the novel comes to making the implicit explicit: their unique significance is suggested by Wong's punctuation usage; they are not bracketed by traditional Chinese quotation marks as citations would be, but instead, what appears to be an internal monologue unattributed to anyone's consciousness is introduced on the page by dashes:

> —被甚麼或被誰,或根本沒有,被出賣。(Betrayed by what, why, and whom? Or maybe [I] have not been betrayed at all.)
> —認罪的, 不認罪的。道德上, 歷史上, 兩種人嗎? (Historically and ethically, are those who acknowledged fault that different from those who don't?)
> —還是性情。我喜歡盧景石的軟弱,因為可親。(Or is it temperament that makes a difference? I like Brian's vulnerability because it makes him approachable.)
> —因為就是我。生存下來, 因為軟弱與妥協。(I live on because of vulnerability and compromise.)
> —所以希望, 能夠愛。如果能夠, 起碼我盡人之所能。(So I hope to love the best way I can.)
> —我能愛你嗎? 有能力嗎? 有勇氣嗎? 可以抵抗恐懼與焦慮嗎? (Can I love you? Do I have the ability, the bravery to resist anxiety and worry?)
> —甚至如果, 被抗佢或遺棄。(Or even to resist the fear of being rejected or abandoned?) (162)

Printed on the page without attribution of a speaker, these lines are free-floating thoughts, and it is possible to read them as secrets in Lo's stream of consciousness, in the midst of what is essentially a legal record of authorities' cross-examination of youths like the aforementioned 李德義 (Lee Tak Yee) who were involved in the protests (161, 163), many of them admitting guilt trying to negotiate for a lighter sentence by claiming agitation under the influence of others. These thoughts—that are by stark contrast more determined in their commitment to what they believe, here, humanity and queer love—convey Lo's admiration for Raggensack because of his authenticity and honesty. Indeed, instead of blaming others for his actions, on the next page, Raggensack confessed that: "It was stupid of me to do what I have done" (163). Despite Raggensack's admission of guilt, however, Lo feels like the colonial police have insisted on pinning the root cause of the '66 riot on him—at least according to Lo's friend Chan whom Wong cites "香港政府將一切責任推到我身上" (the Hong Kong government has shifted all responsibility on my shoulder) after reading the *Kowloon Disturbances 1966: Report of Committee of Inquiry*, that was just published before his death (64).

Lo's status as an unemployed non-student made him different from other protesters—something that the novel quickly distinguishes him from other protesters. Student protesters, like Andrew Wong Wang Fat, the president of the University of Hong Kong Council, issued a public statement stating that the riots sadden them and criticize the use of violence (*Death* 132); similarly, the labor union would not meet with the young protesters of the '66 protests. The distinction between Lo as a lumpenproletariat who wasn't rich enough to be a student and a student protester or an employed laborer to be the proper Marxist subject of a worker in the labor union makes him the lowest of the rank in the society. This makes him an easy target for the state powers to treat as a scapegoat; meanwhile, his position makes his discontent and activism grassroots, unmitigated by any preconceived ideologies, organizations, or nations. This becomes even clearer when Wong cites information about the 11 May 1967 riots and calls it a leftist campaign that erupted in a confrontation between the police and workers in front of a factory producing artificial flowers in San Po Kong. By contrast, the '66 youth-led riot was not instigated by or aligned with any nation or parties (99). Lo's position as lumpenproletariat—rather than as the idealized working-class revolutionary subject of orthodox Marxism—creates what Hentyle Yapp in *Minor China* calls a "mode" or "condition" or a possible "methodology that inquires" into those who are excluded or missing from the imagination and the praxis of social change. In *Death*, Wong brings back what Yapp would call the forgotten from the dead: Lo is the anomalous lumpen who has gone missing. By doing so, Wong integrates sexuality into class revolution and anticolonialism as an addition or neglected cause for Hong Kong's protest culture.

Alongside Marxist alienation and Yappist anger, *Death* suggests another affect for revolutionary politics: Lo's queer love for Raggensack. As postcolonial studies scholars G. Arunima, Patricia Hayes, and Premesh Lalu argue in "Love & Revolution: An Introduction," a "truly revolutionary moment is like love; it is a crack in the world, in the usual running of things, in the dust that is layered all over to prevent anything New" (11). The lumpenproletariat's queer love for the mixed-race British citizen and activist Raggensack did not come to fruition in the '60s and eventually made *Death* a mystery novel with a plot of failed queer love story. Nonetheless, its failure behooves us to think of what else to imagine politics anew. Given that the protesters failed to inaugurate an inclusive future in 1966, the first step toward cracking the mundane or imagining the "new" is to acknowledge that social change—as Wong's queer story of Lo teaches us—has to take class and sexuality seriously for it to be genuinely "new"—to be epistemologically decolonial, different from the heteronormative status quo of colonialism and capitalism in the '60s.

To be decolonial, as Wong's narrative vision suggests, is to be critical and aware of the political economy. The queer lumpenproletarian Lo, by existing outside the preconceived systems, symbolizes a ground to theorize transformative activism, inclusive of class and sexual differences. In Wong's novel, Lo's death is preceded by him being spotted having a conversation with representatives from the US consulate, but he did not leave the country (80); relatedly, reports—as Wong cites again—came out after his death that Lo's 40-something-year-old roommate Chan was not a spy from Kuomintang of Taiwan (KMT) as rumored—whose members in Hong Kong had been agitating against those of the Chinese Communist Party (190). Contrary to the colonial police's framing, there was also no evidence showing that Lo received payment from Elliot Tu, the aforementioned British lawyer practicing in Hong Kong who was initially invited to serve on the Transport Advisory Committee and then dissented from the colonial government's approval of the Star Ferry Company's request to increase fares. All of the above corroborates that Lo undertook his activism independently, not due to ideological allegiance to another country.

Wong's persistence in negating collusion between Lo and major nations and political parties makes him a material critique of the homophobia inherent in the "organicity" of the city as a whole (Liu, *Queer Marxism in Two Chinas,* 8). According to Petrus Liu, abstract labor is the "social power that homogenizes individuals and places them into discrete identity groups and ineluctable classes" (80); it makes political groups (from student activists to labor unions), national ideologies (British colonialism and US imperialism), and categories of protected classes (from women to people with disability, as announced in Hong Kong in 1995) legible and exchangeable in market terms. By being out of all of them, Lo stands as a critique of the social power of the city's ruling class

for being capitalist and homophobic *tout court*. The British police force's initial persistent misunderstanding of him as a puppet of some larger force—as well as a criminal—and eventual conclusion as the novel cites from the *Kowloon Disturbances 1966* that "everything indicates that these riots were spontaneous and motivated by pure hooliganism unconnected with right wing or left wing politics" (*Death* 167) is Wong's criticism of the colonial government for its first impression misguided by the capitalist logic of abstract labor and the pathologization of male homosexuals as criminals.

Brian Raggensack may not have reciprocated Lo's queer love. Still, it indexes and exemplifies a new politic: a novel and nonhierarchical way of building relations between people resembling what queer theorists Lauren Berlant and Michael Hardt would call "love as a politics" (2011): a non-sovereign logic that acknowledges the fantasy of "self-ratifying control over a situation or space" (Berlant, 2017, 308). Thinking about love as a political logic that is not aligned with any national, ideological, or organizational affiliation makes Lo's queer love "a site for a collective-becoming-different" (Berlant and Hardt), an aspiration that can create new, decidedly lateral, forms of conditions for flourishing—all the while defying abstract labor's homogenizing power of commodification and making commodities and identities equivalent. Indeed, in Wong's literary imagination, Lo is irreplaceable in Hong Kong's history of protest because of his queer and lumpenproletariat subject position from which he issued his intersectional politics. Seen as a mode of relationality from this light without "the baggage of shared trauma" (Berlant and Hardt), the queer love that Lo holds for Raggensack is a self-enchantment that he conjures up for himself to anchor himself in what Berlant calls "the political." The political—or the relational—gives Lo a sense of belonging in a political climate where people tend to sever ties with him.

In resurrecting Lo's forgotten story, Wong, moreover, raises skepticism around the police's claim that he died of suicide. In the novel's telling, the circumstances of Lo's death are suspicious: Lo was sixty-six inches tall (approximately 5 feet and 6 inches), but he was found hanging from a bunkbed railing that was only fifty-five inches (or 4.583 feet) off the ground. There were also signs of struggle: indications that he had bitten his lower lip, urination, defecation, and bloody injuries on his feet, possibly from kicking the bunkbed. Why would Lo seem to struggle if he were tall enough to stand up and save himself? Mourners suspected foul play, that someone must have staged his suicide, just as he was framed for thievery. One police officer at the scene agreed. He speculated that "有人按着他" (Wong 18; someone was pushing him down), surmising that someone was probably holding him down, causing him to lose balance. Someone serious about killing himself, suggested the officer, would find a taller tree to ensure a quicker death and less struggle.

Because of how peaceful Lo looked when his corpse was discovered, the coroner's court labeled his death a suicide and did not consider other explanations, insisting that any signs of struggle were natural. Per the novel's citation of an unattributed source that reads like a crime scene report, Wong describes the photo of Lo's death like this: "屍體吊着,腳觸地, 雙膝跪" (15; Lo's feet were touching the floor, both knees kneeling). As far as his face goes, "盧麒的屍體照片, 還像一個孩子, 衣袖捋起, 褲子半脫, 雙眼緊閉, 沒有什麼表情, 並不痛苦。" (25; In the image, Lo looks like a child, with sleeves peeled up, pants half-lowered, and eyes closed—overall, he shows little to no expression as if he is not suffering). In the court's eyes, the case was settled, and Lo's actions could be attributed to mental illness like depression and anxiety—and perhaps, his untimely death was deserved, given the amount of trouble he caused the colonial government.

What remains in the aftermath of Lo's death are feelings that Wong relays to the reader: a profound sense of abjection in the wake of protest movements. Feelings like abjection, per Heather Love, is a "backward" "feeling" a historical approach that attunes her to the "queer historical experience of failed or impossible love" (30). Wong, by telling us the impossible story of Lo a queer activist who may or may not have died of suicide with or without same-sex love unconfessed, she is positioning contemporary readings in a position of negative affect that Love would call feeling backward. In feeling abjection, in particular, readers share a kind of historical sociality with Lo, the activist who died, with his literary character, and Wong, the author, despite the separation of history and geography. At a sarcastically-titled roundtable—在這自由民主的[殖民地]香港:《盧麒之死》四人談(三) (In this free and liberal Colonial Hong Kong: A Conversation on *The Death of Lo Kei*)—Cantophone literary critics like Li noted the "情感歷史" (affective history) of the book (Lu). Another participant, the disabled critic 盧勁馳 (Lo King Chi), further compared the experience of reading *Death* to listening to history, in that affect becomes that supplement to words when facts (such as the government documents surrounding Lo's death) can only get us so far.

Indeed, though Wong tries to maintain objectivity with her diligent use of quotation marks every time she cites archival documents, her rhetorical questions suggest subjective speculation, as in the following: "如果盧麒從來沒有出生, 時代還是一樣暴烈?" (197; would the sizzling '60s be as aggressive as they were in Hong Kong had Lo Kei not been born?). Readers can't know the answer to that question. However, Wong's story of Lo sets up a historical mood for alternative rhymes.

In orchestrating her sources, Wong finds resonance in what happened to Lo in 1966 and what happened to Leung Tin Kei, a prominent activist who emerged on the political stage during the Umbrella Movement, in 2014. In the

last chapter of *Death*, Wong jumps forward from colonial to postcolonial Hong Kong. There, she reflects on drawing Leung (see Figure 2). In her rendition, Leung isn't as quiet sitting on trial as he was in reality, but drawing him like that reminds her of "your [Lo's] hair": "他沒有我畫的那麼文靜, 但我畫的時候想起你的髮" (*Death* 220; he is not as quiet as I have drawn him but when I draw him, I thought of your hair). The resemblance that Wong finds between Leung and her characterization of Lo materializes the affective undercurrent connecting the two generations of Hong Kong activists, queerly facilitated, not by biology, but by imagination, speculation, and feeling. Though unmappable in the preexisting timeline of the orthodox communist movement, *Death* connects two protest movements, the '66 riots and the 2016 Fishball Revolution through their participants' queer semblances, with the aforementioned physical similarities being one of them.

Leung (like Lo) was a hot-headed young protester involved in the Hong Kong activist movement. Wong brings him up in section six that jumps forward in time to the Mong Kok civil unrest (also known as the Fishball Revolution), which took place on the second day of 2016's Lunar New Year between a few unlicensed street hawkers and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, which mushroomed into a conflict between the Hong Kong police and young activists, including Leung. The third-person narrator compares this event to So and Lo's demonstration against the Star Ferry Company, whose history the former five sections recount. Wong writes, "由一群九零後[一九九0年以後出生]年輕人[隨着時間; 如蘇守忠] 組成,『他們』『致力保護香港本土精神』" (221; like So, a group of young people born after the '90s led the pack of activists protecting the spirit of Hong Kong). Like the 1966 protests, the Fishball Revolution ended overnight, quelled by the police. The brevity of both movements makes the similarities between Lo and Leung clearer and more precise in the book: Wong's two fictional doppelgangers of the activists are bonded not by blood but by their innocence in the face of social power. Linking Lo to Leung, *Death* shows another type of queerness that goes beyond Lo's queer identity, anti-capitalist stance, and radical political praxis: this third type of queerness is the non-chrononormative temporality of Hong Kong's protest movement.

In Wong's writing, Leung has the same child-like innocence that characterizes Lo. Just as twenty-year-old Lo organized the ferry-riding working class from the ground up in 1966, Leung organized unlicensed hawkers in 2016. Before charging into the police blockade, Leung, acting like a tyrannical child, shouts: "我不想失敗, 我想贏" (221; I don't want to lose, I want to win). Leung is beside himself—at least the self that is expected to behave like a disciplined adult. In this way, Wong queers Leung by his innocent refusal of the status quo, as she did Lo.

Ultimately, by presenting the emergence and dissolution of the '66 protests

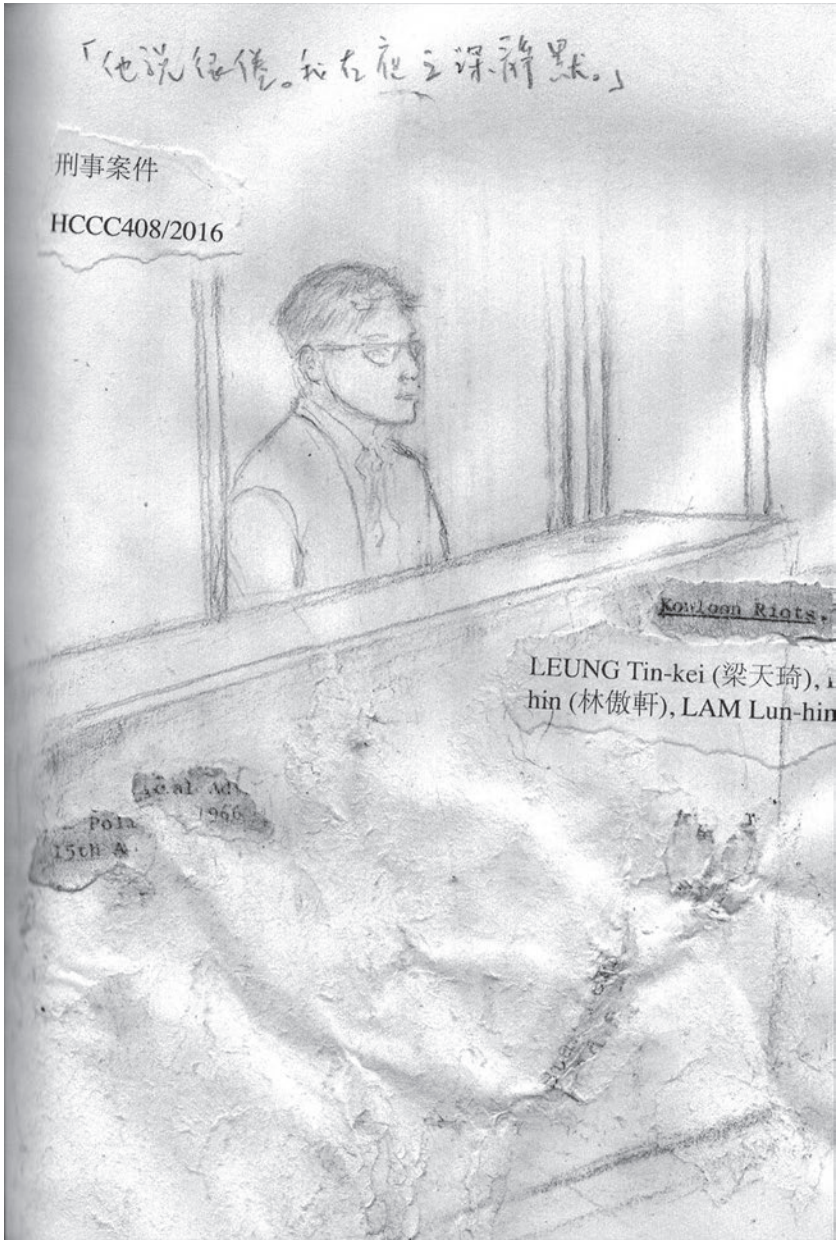


Fig. 2. A pencil sketch of Leung Tin-kei's trial in 2016, from *The Death of Lo Kei* (盧麒之死) by Wong Bik-Wan (黃碧雲, 2018). By blending visual elements of the 2016 Mong Kok civil unrest with subtle references to the 1966 protests, this water-washed collage offers a trans-historical representation of youth-led protests, serving as a synecdoche for the novel's central themes. Image courtesy of Wong Bik-Wan.

as started by Lo, So, and Raggensack, Wong's impossible non-fiction fiction pulls readers back to feel the depression and anxiety that characterizes the first instance of Hong Kong's local protests. With those feelings, Wong positions us to perceive the affective resonance between now and then. More specifically in the novel, Wong reimagines Lo as a queer lumpenproletarian and plots his history on a nonlinear timeline in which his story merges with the stories of similar activists, both his contemporaries (So and Raggensack) and those who come after him (Leung). Leung's child-like desire for a different future mirrors that of So and calls to mind Raggensack's principled authenticity, as well as Lo's grassroots leadership, for that matter. Their shared desire for a new or what José Muñoz would call a utopia queers all four of them as they sidestep the grip of abstract labor and thereby risk illegibility in society. Taking these sideways steps means they leave their lives up to the hands of law enforcement and historical archives, which relegate Lo and Leung to containment and death.

Lo's sideways life story, as reimagined by Wong, sets the primal scene of the queer temporality of Hong Kong activism. The second piece of queer fiction in focus is 張婉雯's (Cheung Yuen Man) short story "拘捕" (Arrest) which can be located in her collection 微塵記 (*Memories of Dust*). Set against the backdrop of protest, the protagonist 褚 (Chu), a college professor, is dragged off of his normative course of life by reverie from the past. In the following, I use my queer reading of Wong's Lo as a framework to examine how reminiscing about "impossible love" becomes a portal for Cheung's Chu to access a kind of alterity that he has forgone. Like Lo's love for Raggensack, Chu's love for his queer college crush 俞 (Yu) failed. Triggered unexpectedly on a protest site, Chu's memory of his failed queer love for Yu negatively impacts his once-stable life in the diegetic present of the story.

The diegetic and extra-diegetic timelines of "Arrest" would not have crossed had it not been for queerness, which Cheung captures in amorphous forms with lingering, sideways effects. While my previous section examined how Lo Kei's queer love in the 1960s represented a utopian possibility for social reorganization, here I analyze how this potential continues to disrupt the present. Chu thought that he had left his queer past behind, but it creeps back up during protests and interrupts his stable present life: first emerging as a haunting when his student 沈 (Sam), whom he encounters at the site of occupation, bears a disturbing resemblance to Yu. This recognition sends Chu's reverie further back in time, which furthermore brings forth multiple amorphous forms of queerness—including Chu's memory of Yu's faint scent of shampoo and his body. These sensorial intensities all rush back to the protagonist, hovering at the threshold of consciousness yet powerful enough to prompt action. As my analysis of *Lo*, before delving deeper into "Arrest," I will offer contextual infor-

mation about the story to foreground adulthood and un(adulthood), and how Chu's embodied response to these queer memories transforms his pedagogical relationship with Sam into an interruption rather than a regurgitation of educational norms.

"Arrest" comprises two layers. In the diegetic, Chu, a philosophy professor, considers a conscientious decision to become involved in the Occupy movement. Seeing that the semester has already gone smoothly, that his beloved *Cycas revoluta* is low maintenance, and his wife knows how to take care of herself better than he does, Chu concludes that it would not be a total loss if his involvement in the protest takes a turn for the worst. Before he leaves home, he writes the phone number of a college friend who is now a lawyer on his palm, just like his wife advised. At the occupation site, Chu unexpectedly runs into one of his philosophy students, Sam, from whom he gets a whiff of the smoky smell of tear-gas bombs (31). As Chu recalls, Sam is an average student who barely earned C+ because of poor attendance, which Sam admits to Chu is because he skipped class to sit at the movement. By the end of the story, this unassuming student warps Chu's life—not because of anything he does but because his face reminds Chu of Yu. What becomes clear by the end, too, is the reverse temporality of queer pedagogy: instead of making Sam a better student who obtains higher grades—supposedly making him a better adult—Chu becomes more like Sam. Chu undoes his adulthood as he submits himself to the police and asks Sam never to forget his initial passion for the movement.

The extra-diegetic layer appears as Chu's reverie about the intimacy Chu shared with Yu when they were undergraduates. Yu's queerness turned Chu's life sideways, making it irrecoverably different. The narrator presents the past's pull on the present in the first paragraph: "這個突如其來的發現, 讓褚的腦袋閃過一道空白; 待醒來時, 他已跨過一道光陰的溝壑, 回不去了。" (30; Chu's discovery of Yu and Sam's resemblance—particularly his "深刻的雙眼皮" or deep double eyelids that he only realizes up-close—comes as a blankness that knocks him out. When he wakes from it, Chu has passed the point of no return). Here, Cheung depicts queerness as something taking a vague, nebulous shape—a void which is only palpable after the protagonist wakes up from it and tallies the damages. Furthermore, the narrator compares his wondering mind tracing a queer past to an unleashed dog running straight up to sniff the smell of its owner or "如被囚日久而終於逃脫的狗,狂奔在來時路上, 追索着主人的氣味" (33; The long-caged dog eventually returned to his owner's side by following his scent).

Chu's memory of Yu, elicited by Sam, is impactful because Chu recalls how close he came to pursuing a path drastically different from the tenure track he is on now. Classmates in a philosophy class about existentialism, Chu and Yu became close friends one night after Chu brawled with his civil servant father

and needed somewhere to sleep. Thinking the office would be empty, he went to his school's student union office, only to find Yu there, reading Lu Xun's *Wild Grass* (1924–26) on a makeshift bed. *Wild Grass* is a collection of prose poems widely known in the Sinophone readership as a dark work where the father of modern Chinese literature takes on "Nietzschean" (38) topics such as nihilism to consider what it means to be human. The text also reflects the difficult period in which Lu Xun wrote, when feudalism had been toppled yet real social change had yet to materialize. Lu Xun's text, which is famous for its experimental aesthetics and portrayal of the blurred boundary between awareness and the dream state, likely inspired aesthetic features in "Arrest," especially in its portrayal of homosexuality. What the story doesn't explain—to the girlfriend or the readers—is what exactly happened that night. Readers are encouraged to draw their own conclusions based on the lingering effects:

之後, 褚回想這一夜, 都記得自己是多麼的渴睡—有生以來從未這樣睏過, 剎那間便掉進了睡眠的黑洞中,連夢都沒有。醒來時天已大亮, 而俞已經不在了。褚揉一揉眼睛, 褚懷疑自己昨晚跟他 (俞)的交談是夢 。然後, 褚看見枕邊有一本紫紅色封面的《野草》。那夜我真的熟睡如死?還是發生過什麼事我卻想 不起來? 一陣洗髮水的香味忽然充滿褚的胸口。這個問題褚懷疑了二十年。(The only thing Chu recalled from that night was how sleepy he had been. He had never fallen into the black hole of sleepiness that fast. He woke up without dreaming. By the time Chu woke up, Yu had already gone. Chu rubbed his eyes, wondering if his conversation with Yu was a dream. Then, he noticed a copy of *Wild Grass* with a red-purple cover by his bedside. "Was I dead asleep, or was there something else?" "Why did I smell shampoo lingering in my chest that morning?"—those are the questions that have bothered Chu for twenty years.) (38)

Chu repeats multiple times in his reverie just how sleepy he was—to the point of self-hypnotizing. With the clarity that time brings, Chu questions the void of his drowsiness and whether something happened that he can't remember. Cheung's queerness here is a sensorial trace, tracking a missed opportunity that was once promising but has not taken shape. That grief is hinted at by the para-text of Lu Xun's *Wild Grass*, which Chu reads: that text bemoans that the new system after feudalism has yet to be born since warlords taking up arms in the North had torn China apart after the 1911 Revolution. Like Lu Xun in the early 20th century, the college student Yu was anticipating a novel horizon, which he would later chase, a future that Chu was not courageous enough to go after.

"Arrest" sketches Chu and Yu's relationship as a silhouette of queerness that fails to materialize into something tangible, like a haze that never materializes into something legible. Chu and Yu meet for the last time against the romantic

backdrop of pink twilight at a swimming pool. There Chu admires Yu's physique and strength, including his "赤裸手臂" (39; naked/bare arms). Even though it is chilly by the pool, Chu's burning desire for Yu keeps his body warm. As Yu jumped out of the pool, Chu's body tensed up, "褚短袖衫下的皮膚突然繃緊" (40; Chu's skin under the short-sleeved shirt suddenly tightened). There was sexual tension between the two, but Chu waited for Yu to make a move. Unfortunately, Yu did not make it. Instead, they talked about their plans for after graduation. Yu was more adventurous—there were rumors that he was going abroad—and Chu asked him why he would take a risk on uncertainty, leaving the familiar behind. Yu replied, "趁還年輕, 做點自己喜歡的事" (40; young person should do things they like). Denouncing adults as people invested in the status quo and money, Yu continued, "成年人都不可信,他們都是既得利益者。" (41; Adults are untrustworthy because they are beneficiaries of the profits they yield.), implying that taking the sideways path to certainty was his way of delaying his subscription to the cultural and financial expectations imposed on him. Here, too, Yu distinguishes between adults who stay faithful to themselves and those who are unfaithful.

Without their queer love consummated, Yu leaves Chu, wishing that they would both "become trustworthy adults in the future" ("希望我們將來是可信的成人") (41). This phrase functions as a queer oxymoron: Yu rejects the conventional adulthood that measures maturity through compromise, instead advocating for a paradoxical adulthood that refuses assimilation while maintaining childlike commitment and authenticity. In subconsciously suppressing his desires, Chu tossed aside queer passion (like going abroad after college and taking risks on the street like Wong's Lo, So, Raggensack, and Leung) as childish anomalies. Things indeed go sideways for Chu when he acts like a queer oxymoron or "可信的成人" (41; a trustworthy adult). When police threaten to arrest Sam for unlawful assembly, Chu surrenders himself to the police in Sam's place. In doing so, Chu forgoes his adult privileges he has accumulated since graduation from graduate school and entering the tenure track. Enacting Nietzsche, whom he teaches and respects as a firm believer in self-abnegation as the ultimate expression of freedom, Chu turns himself in to the police to show his student the importance of staying true to one's queer and radical youthful ambition.

Like *The Death of Lo Kei*, "Arrest" offers a queer Marxist critique of the homophobia, not only under British ruling class during Hong Kong's colonial period (in which the secondary plot takes place) but also the HKSAR at a moment when it has yet to make queer people a protected class. Cheung throws the postcolonial city's homophobia into relief by centering the story on a profoundly closeted character. Chu's eventual self-sacrifice for his student for police arrest paradoxically enacts a kind of freedom by going sideways and relinquish-

ing his status. Moreover, by pleading with Sam to remain faithful to who he is and what he believes now, Chu attempts to contest the state apparatus of a cisgender heteronormative educational system that encourages people to compromise their differences, including sexual differences. Inspired by his reverie, Chu challenges the status quo of modern love in the Chinese Century. In contrast with heteronormative love being that manipulation of affective potentials [which] fostered the capitalistic system (Zhang 22), the queer love in Cheung's "Arrest" represents an alterity to that. Love in "Arrest" comes across more like David Halperin would describe as those "weird or unexpected intensities" (419) that don't conform to the reproductive and productive mandates of biological regulations. Making Halperin's queer affective intensities palpable on the page is Cheung's literary renditions or amorphous forms, from haunting to sensorial memory. All of Chu's hazy reverie of his queer intimacy with Yu nudges him to act sideways and to demand more inclusive forms of identity and agential expressions of autonomy.

There are many ways to demonstrate queer differences. In Wong and Cheung's Cantophone fiction featuring gay men, queerness is almost anarchic; indeed, queer love is so potent that even remembering it from the past triggers radical action, despite consequences, in the present. The following section turns to sapphic Hong Kong love stories. The lesbian characters in these works aren't enacting spectacular resistance at protest sites. Instead, they represent gender in a way that we don't see in the (failed) gay love plots, whereby the stories' displacement and placement of "gendered subjects" (23), as Petrus Liu might call them, demonstrates how the (im)mobility of queer women is tethered to the global and local economy of Hong Kong. Yu Yuen Lan's and Wong Yi's queer women characters highlight the deep ties between gender and class oppression in the city and the linear and non-linear tactics that queer women have devised to survive the fluctuating economy of the Chinese century in Hong Kong during and after the protests.

Sapphic Love Stories: Capitalist Displacement and Romantic Employment in Yu Yuen Lan's and Wong Yi's Writing

Though compromised by the total domination of capitalism, the sapphic youths in the stories still make waves by honing their ingenuity and identifying loopholes for chances to flourish in capitalism. They, like Wong's Lo and Cheung's Chu, are interpellated into the capitalist system and continue to pivot from the linearity of certitude underwritten by capitalism to a different path and temporality. However, unlike Wong and Cheung, Yu Yuen Lan's (余婉蘭) 2020 story "月亮破裂" (Moon Split Asunder), Wong Yi's (黃怡) 2023 short story "擠迫之

城的戀愛方法" (Ways to Love in a Crowded City) discuss love in the context of housing issues. Compared to the romanticization of political agency in the previous section's gay love stories, lesbian affection is hooked to material concerns. In part, such gendered difference rests on the traditional dominance of the service sector in Hong Kong economy, wherein women are more likely to find work but still face challenges advancing. For instance, a 2023 report by law firm Howse Williams found that "a female employee is [still] offered less favorable terms in her employment contract than are offered to her male counterpart in the same position" (Patricia Yeung). Yeung's report "Gender Equality in Hong Kong: At A Glance" added that LGBTQ+ women are also more likely to face discrimination than gay men (2). Because of the pervasiveness of Hong Kong people not able to afford their own apartment, particularly queer women's houselessness in the post-Umbrella movement, Cantophone lesbian literary imagination urges Hong Kong politics to consider gender, sexuality, and class in tandem to better address the personal and financial struggles of queer women, which often fall through the cracks.

Ostensibly, Wong's and Yu's work read personal, but—at heart—they make systematic observations of institutions. Queer women's resilience in the stories below may look nothing like the queer men's herculean resistance as described above, and that is primarily because Wong and Yu are interested in simply representing women in the age of resistance; instead, more so than Lo and Cheung, their narratives allow us to access the material basis on which women's lives in Hong Kong are grounded. As the cast of queer women are by turn interpellated by the (political) economy of the city and the world, their stories—as I interpret them—call for deep analysis and intersectional transformation.

In Yu Yuen Lan's "月亮破裂" (Moon Split Asunder) and then Wong Yi's "擠迫之城的戀愛方法" (Ways to Love in a Crowded City), the following analysis illustrates how young queer women characters in Cantophone love stories embody a state of dispossession. I read these short stories as taking place against the backdrop of Hong Kong's historic and ongoing housing crisis. One of the few alternatives to the exorbitantly-priced private real estate market are the Hong Kong Housing Authority's subsidized apartments, but the Housing Authority's discriminatory Spousal Policy disadvantages queer people—particularly queer couples. Citing that their goal was to achieve "family aim" to promote what it considered to be traditional (heteronormative) family values as a legitimate one, the Housing Authority in the past denied applications from same-sex couples. That changed, however, in the case of *Nick Infinger v. The Hong Kong Housing Authority* (2020) when the litigant brought the case to the Hong Kong High Court, accusing the Housing Authority of differential treatment between heterosexual and homosexual couples. Even as recently as 2024, the Housing Author-

ity has filed multiple judicial reviews to overturn the High Court's progressive decision (including the recent one that was just struck down). Queer people's rights to affordable housing remain—at best—precarious, as they can be overturned at any time by the persistent attacks of the state. Against this backdrop, I position the lesbian love plots as Sisyphean interventions where the authors show how to continue to work with, on, and through capitalist development, prompting readers to speculate what else is new in queer politics now. Juxtaposing these stories alongside recent legal victories for the local LGBTQ+ communities, my analysis gestures at the possibility that taking a strategic side step might be necessary to advance intersectional justice in Hong Kong now. In a city where there is no same-sex marriage or legal protection for queer people in the workplace, Cantophone queer love stories like Yu's and Wong's tell us that queer housing issues are of utmost importance.

Specifically for Yu's, her placement of the queer love plot is structurally similar to that of Wong's: rather than being the main story, it is one of many subplots that make up the bricolage of narratives in "Moon Splits Asunder," which is itself an ambitious story that incorporates the local color of Tsim Sha Tsui (TST), a district as busy as Manhattan during regular days and one that remains home and an entertainment hub for many ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities during the anti-ELAB movement. The shape the lesbian love takes similarly calls to mind that of Cheung's, whereby same-sex intimacy is embedded into the rhetoric of dreamscape. Yu's story bears all modernist trappings: it contains multitudes of intertextual citations from the Qur'an and the *Amitabha Sutra*, and a multiplicity of temporalities. The multiple unreconciled temporalities at the end of "Moon" undermine Goyal's optimism about alternative historical rhythms in postcolonial love plots. The queer couple's consummation occurs in a discounted hotel room—a luxury they could not otherwise afford—revealing queer romance's complicity in the hetero/homonormative economy. Moreover, queer love remains entirely separate from adjacent plots that follow non-capitalist timeframes, including the messianic time symbolized by Yu's Quranic reference to a chapter prophesying the imminent reshuffling of the current world order—a transformation the 2019 protests potentially embody. This temporal irreconciliation between queer homonormative capitalism and revolutionary messianic time suggests Yu's skepticism about queer love's radical potential. Before I explore that, I will offer some contextual information from the story.

Originally part of the online project 我街道, 我知道 (My Street, My Understanding, My Writing), a 2020 collaborative anthology of writing about the eighteen districts that make up Hong Kong, "Moon Split Asunder" is not exclusively a queer love story. Its braided narrative weaves together myriad subplots about

the troubled characters who frequent Nathan Road, the rise and fall of which tracks the British colonial past and the advent of capitalism with Chinese characteristics. From the unhoused 文大仙 (Man Tai Sin), who travels up and down Nathan Road every day looking for transitory shelter in the entryway of banks, to con psychic, 來福伯 (Uncle Loi Fok), a nudist who bares skin sun-scorched like "燒膿豬皮" (over-roasted pig skin) and goes around mumbling "阿彌陀佛" ("to take refuge in immutable light," from Mahayana Buddhist sutras), Yu's third-person omniscient narrator showcases a cast of less privileged characters to bear witness to the 2019 protests, especially when the traffic and order on Nathan Road in Tsim Sha Tsui (TST), the main artery of Kowloon, were suspended.

When telling this story of Nathan Road, Yu is very intent on expressing to readers how it is a historically rich space with each of her descriptive details, from the trees that separate the traffic to its residents recalling a time-space that interrupts the realism of the diegetic presence of the story, which sometimes diverges from or other times reiterates the (post)colonial capitalism of the city. For example, the story recalls the reason why Nathan Road has lines of banyan trees planted in elevated pots in the middle: it was in preparation for Queen Elizabeth's 1975 visit. Some members of parliament deemed the trees' exposed roots to be too "肉酸" (ugly, in Cantonese slang) for the queen's eyes, so they added extra soil around the roots, raised the flower bed, and covered the roots. However, this pedicured urban landscape has quickly lost its expensive and queenly appeal during the 2019 anti-ELAB movement, a time when the story is set: it has become a battleground between the police and the protesters, leaving the once-busy street devoid of tourists. To some characters in the story, like Man Tai Sin and Uncle Loi Fok, this carnivalesque suspension of everyday rules and urban stratification—though different from the queen's visit—allows them to roam free. As perceived by the homeless of Nathan Road, this anarchical suspension of the capitalist time during the 2019 movement is just one of multiple temporalities that expect the arrival of something new. Yu paves the way to anticipate novelty by her apocalyptic imagery—but all only to create a backdrop for her irony to come, one that is to be ultimately delivered by her lesbian love plot coming to us as feminist and queer critique of revolution.

The macabre images at the beginning of "Moon" evoke a solemn mood, likening the protest to a rupture. In the first few paragraphs, "嫦姐看見第一隻鳥掉墮，以異象一般的姿態掉墮," a pious Buddhist who keeps a strict vegetarian diet for good karma, is spooked when a bird suddenly falls to the ground dead. This disturbing visual calls to the readers' mind two events related to death, one immediately associated with the 2019 protest and the Qur'an, which Yu quotes in the title. The first is the death of Chow Tsz-lok, a twenty-two-year-old student who fell from the third floor of a parking lot in Tseung Kwan O, allegedly

because the police were pursuing him during an anti-ELAB protest on November 4, 2019. The second death comes from chapter 54 of the Qur'an, which bears the same title of the story, a surah that may remind Bible readers of Revelations, in which the prophet Muhammed responds to unbelievers' skepticism about his miracle of splitting the moon into halves by unleashing Judgment Day. Yu's allusion to the Qur'an adds local color to her postapocalyptic depiction of the TST, given that it is home to the most prominent mosque in Hong Kong and to the South Asian and African immigrants whose businesses, apartment units, and restaurants populated Chungking Mansions.

So far, in Yu's queer telling of the anti-ELAB movement, the city's presence is separated into two types of temporalities: the linear developmental chrononormative *telos* of Chinese modernity as it is inherited from British colonialism (as hinted at the reference of Queen Elizabeth) and an alternative temporality of carnivalesque as well as "death and decay" (Ferguson 176) all ripped open and resulting from the 2019 movement. These nonproductive times in which protests temporarily disrupted commerce and daily life call to mind James Ferguson's "developmental time" and its challenges in "Decomposing Modernity: History and Hierarchy after Development" (179). The anti-developmental temporality advances as an alternative to linear time when the subplots thicken. Yu's dead birds symbolize both the life lost to the protest and renewal in the Qur'an. Read as a motif of death and decay, the dead birds suggest a rejection of anti-capitalism and staying in sync with the forward thrust of modern times. What is more, the dead birds also augur renewal, as in the Muslim tradition gesturing toward something new. To be sure, the birds' vertical drop from the sky indexes a sudden de-temporalization as well as the rise of "spiritualities and the associated temporalities" (178, 179), and both are criticisms of the telos of "developmental time," which promised the prosperity and progress we saw in Hong Kong before the protest movements of the last decade.

But the story does not end there. Yu wonders about what good protests do to lesbians' lives. Instead of participating in anti-capitalist time lines, the queer love plot of 花 (Flower) and 愛麗絲 (Alice), are rather unheroic if not outright blurred or dreamy. "花的生日當天難得四折優惠，這幾月來沒有大陸遊客敢來香港，酒店的價格終於滑落至叫她們捨得豪擲一次。因為國難，她們一生終於捨得住一晚六星級酒店，為了彼此記憶多出這麼一次奢華經驗，那或者足以證明有愛。" (They decide to take advantage of a rare offer at a luxury Hotel in TST—a sixty percent discount on lodging, spurred by the lack of mainland tourists in the area due to the protests and COVID-19 pandemic—by booking a penthouse room to celebrate Flower's birthday. This is a six-star hotel, and they wouldn't have been able to book a night had Hong Kong tourism not been hammered by chaos and uncertainty). Yu poetically renders the scene as a dream-like state: To them, "

夢與記憶與黑夜開始不分" (dreams and memory became blurred into one as they descended into nightfall). All that is because queer women must stand outside of protest in order to access private spaces. "這晚她們終於有自己一間房間, 毋須假裝" (Tonight the sapphic couple finally have a room of their own in which they don't need to pretend). Yu's evocation of the dream state calls to mind Cheung's employment of it as a reference to Lu Xun's *Wild Grass*, as discussed in the previous section. Lu Xun's text has been noted for its usage of dream as a type of subconscious that "heals" the problems of human consciousness during daytime (Chan "Dreaming as Representation" 17). In this way, the dreamy queer love plot is Yu's solution to LGBTQ+ issues. She believes guerrilla protest tactics don't work for lesbians' liberation. Protests worked for lesbians insofar as they offered a less expensive market which gave them a respite, an easy access to privacy. We see that in Yu's candid portrayal of how the lesbian lovers spend respite not in the crowd on the street but above it, though not without guilt.

Leaning against the room's floor-to-ceiling window that faces the city, the two look at the glittering city lights that refract off cars and Victoria Harbor. Because they are on the top floor, they are protected from the tear gas bombs, rubber bullets, and Molotov cocktails that are thrown on the street below, enjoying the movement in a manner that the narrator calls "貪婪地" or greedily: "窗外遠方催液彈、布袋彈、橡膠子彈和汽油彈的爆破。如火花琉璃, 如夜慶煙火。依舊她們於俯瞰中失去所有人聲、氣味和情感。她和她在擁抱中, 靜得像石" (Beyond the window, tear gas bombs, bean bag rounds, and rubber bullets are shot from afar. They seem like they could be exploding glass bottles or celebratory fireworks. Still, as they take in this bird's eye view of the city up high, they lose all the noise of the people. Smell and emotion. In each other's embrace, they are quiet like stone). Between the public street and a private (albeit discounted) hotel room, the lesbian couple chooses the latter to celebrate their occasion. In this political moment, in the disconnect between the reality of the capital order and the surrealism of the chaos, the queer lovers opt to stay in the space between. As the couple begins to explore each other's bodies, they hug each other tightly, listening to each other's heartbeat. Rather, it resides in a rented, make-shift space, where the couple is temporarily transcended out of straight time. But this transcendence is nonetheless underwritten by capitalism, in the form of a discounted hotel room.

Though this queer subplot isn't at the center stage, it is a significant segment in the story, and it shows how the lesbians' odds of gaining access to privacy and a home are linked to the city's Confucian values and the waxing and waning of capitalism. Flower, a queer woman, is skeptical of the movement. In the story, Flower whispers to Alice, "光復香港, 時代革命?" (Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Times?). What was a slogan of the protest movement is now posed as a question; the conversion here casts doubts on the movements on what or how

little the protests could do for a lesbian who can't afford her own privacy with her same-sex partner until now. Perhaps, Flower's perspective is the closest to Wong's, especially when we look at the narrative's structure at the end: "Moon" ends almost like it begins with Sister Soeng and a dead bird, suggesting that the old (here capitalism) may have overridden all new alternatives. Despite the ruptures that came, the old system returns. However, Wong writes that repetition comes with a shift of perspective. Sister Soeng is no longer an observing subject but rather the object of someone else's observation: a shift that implies that not only is there no outside, but that capitalism is a system that comes with binaries, like victor and victim, subject and object. She appears in Man Tai Sin's dream, in which he witnesses his own death as a pigeon that falls from height: "文大仙一瞪眼，化成為梁婆婆餵的其中一隻鴿子，正想飛去她的掌心時，一下失控僵直地掉墮在地面，成為嫦姐看見第一隻掉墮的鳥，以異象一般的姿態掉墮" (When Man Tai Sin opens his eye, he becomes the pigeon that grandma Leung feeds. As he is trying to fly away from her palm, he slips and falls from a height, becoming the dead bird Soeng saw). This repetition presents a parable of Hong Kong's various paradigm shifts since 1997. From beyond the world of fiction, these shifts include the change of sovereignty from the UK to China, as well as the shift that the protesters hope to advance as they try to transfer power from the government to the people. Against this almost repetitious narrative backdrop, Alice and Flower's withdrawal from the hustle and bustle, claiming comfort in a discounted hotel room, reflects Yu's acknowledgement that capitalism remains the overdetermining factor in poor queer people's lives in Hong Kong, despite the change of sovereignty and politics. However short-lived, Alice and Flower's temporary refuge in the fancy hotel symbolizes a type of contradiction within capitalism, where queer people's rights to privacy and housing are caught in a bind, benefiting from and yet tethered to the system's status quo.

This contradiction within capitalism takes center stage in Wong Yi's short story "擠迫之城的戀愛方法" ("Ways to Love in a Crowded City"), the titular piece of her 2021 collection of the same name. In the story, this contradiction manifests in women's lives—particularly queer women's lives—in absurd ways. Its ludicrous nature is caused by limited space in Hong Kong. The solution to queer women's lack of privacy in Wong's story is renting hotel rooms during protests, whose ridiculous nature parallels the comedy delivered by Wong's lesbian love plot. Both stories reveal a fundamental systemic problem: queer dispossession is constitutive of capitalist accumulation, and there is no outside to capitalism, not even protest movements. Regarding Wong's specific approach, readers may laugh at and cry with the queer women's stories, but Wong's story isn't entirely predicated on humor; one of the lesbian character's internal monologues, as I will show below, dampens what begins as light prose. All of these

possible readerly emotions are indexical of Wong's systematic critique not only of homophobia and misogyny but, first and foremost, of the capitalism that puts Hong Kong people, especially poor lesbians, under existential stress, leaving them with little choice but perhaps to laugh it off. This final analysis of the chapter examines how Wong's narrative content and form conveys spatial constraints, how characters transform public and private spaces into queer territories, and how these arrangements both resist and reinforce capitalist structures. I argue that Wong's humor functions as critical commentary, exposing how capitalism reduces even acts of queer ingenuity to market transactions while attempting to carve out possible queer space within Hong Kong's brutal real estate market.

Leading Hong Kong science fiction writer Dung Kai-Cheung, whose work I will return to in more detail, wrote the preface to this short story collection. He compares Wong's texts to an experiment where each short story operates on "設願" (a set of wishes). Read this way, "Ways to Love in a Crowded City" functions as a thought experiment hypothesizing queer domesticity in a crowded city after the anti-ELAB movement, where protests failed to improve conditions for poor queer women. Wong tests what must be done: mining capitalism's contradictions through queer couples sharing rented space in an expensive real estate market. Building on the phenomenon of spatial constraints in the city at the narrative level of her story, "Ways to Love in a Crowded City" tests out how these limitations manifest in characters' lived experiences. This experimental structure mirrors the spatial constraints of the story itself. Similar to Yu's "Moon," "Ways to Love in a Crowded City" enlists a relatively expansive cast of characters within the confines of a short story through the fictional aesthetic of narrative bricolage, which ties various subplots together without necessarily merging them into a singular story. A feature of Hong Kong literature, the collage, as Sinophone literature scholar Shuang Shen says in her analysis of Sai Sai's *I City*, is the "principle of construction" (580) with which the novel builds up myriad perspectives of "the local" as told from multiple characters' perspectives. Therefore, the sprawl of the city (586) serves as an allegory for the heterogeneity of Hong Kongers' lives. The same is true of "Ways to Love in a Crowded City," though compared to Sai Sai (whom Wong has openly described as a mentor), the scale of Wong's narrative is smaller. Indeed, smallness is the premise of the narrative collage: it presents stories—particularly in parts 1 and 2—of women (especially queer ones) who are put into positions where they are required every day to creatively maneuver cramped small spaces, such as a bus or a 400-square-foot apartment.

Before soliciting the reader's commitment to queer women's rights to housing privacy, the story establishes the context of queer women's desperate need

for more space. In Hong Kong, the story explains, capitalism's time-space compression and over-appreciation of land value demand that queer women's commutes be efficient and productive. We see this in Part 1, "When: 東方之珠輪椅" (Wheelchair for the Pearl of the East), where public transportation is portrayed as a contested space. This section of the story references the wheelchair as a metaphor for how public transportation serves as a crutch in the average Hong Konger's life. Wong's narrator here tells an outlandish story about the extent to which women multitask during a typical morning bus ride, prolonged by the city's characteristically dense traffic. Despite the long ride, many white-collar workers still rely on buses to get to work because it remains the most convenient transportation option. Hence, multitasking on the bus is a normal skill acquired by many to be efficient in an ever-changing and fast-paced economy. Represented as the queen of multitasking is Joanne—the queer philosophy-major-turned-bank-teller—who pursues the life of the mind: she uses her commute time to write poetry. Compared to the numbers she works with every day, she prefers poetry. The narrator likens this preference to her preference for women over men, adding "數字無法如文字般讓她呼吸加速正如男人的手總不如女人的體貼入微" (Joanne appreciates the deft caresses of a woman's hands more than the blunt touches of men).

On the bus ride, Joanne types up a storm on her new typewriter from Taobao (淘寶), an Amazon equivalent in China appreciated by many Hong Kongers because of its low prices and wide selection. The immense satisfaction Joanne finds in using this inexpensive yet stylish typewriter borders on the erotic: Joanne, who would typically moan and grunt while pressing the keys at home, now puts the typing on public display, bringing her typewriter on her long commute to ease her boredom. "有了它以後即使紅隧口塞車塞至日落她也不會在意：圓圓的指頭在俐落的按鈕上堅定的壓動，從此她再聽不見車上的八卦或Roadshow的低能節目，她聽見的，只有那些流利的、借異國的語言轉世的，詩" (Instead of being bothered by the prolonged congestion at the Harbor Tunnel of Hung Ham, or annoyed by the stupid roadshows played on a loop on the bus, she can now, with this portable typewriter, write poems inspired by foreign languages in whose sounds she finds erotic pleasure). The fact that Joanne would do at home what she does on the bus illustrates how space and time are extremely compressed in Hong Kong: The mobile space of the bus not only transports white-collar workers but also becomes something that resembles home because of how often they use it and how comfortable they have become with it. To put it differently, queer women's reterritorialization of public space embodies a variation of capitalism's contradiction. Joanne specifically makes the most of her bus fare by multitasking, treating the seat and table on the bus like a corner of home, deriving not only utilitarian but also erotic value from it by typing on the new portable typewriter.

Moving from public to private spaces, Wong's narrative demonstrates how the spatial crisis requires even more complex negotiations within the domestic sphere. Like Joanne, who is strategic with her use of space in part 1, the lesbian couple who remains anonymous in part 2—titled "Where: 寸金尺土愛巢" (Love Nesting in the Land of Scarcity)—decides to rent an apartment part-time from straight couple 阿明 (Ah Min) and 阿娟 (Ah Kun). With twenty-four years left on their exorbitant mortgage, they become creative in how they pay for an apartment they only occupy for eight hours at night. "阿明和阿娟便把房子自早上八時到晚上十時租給這對會擁吻的女子, 然後在不眠的商場裡纏綿至夜深" (Over time, they open an extra stream of revenue: subleasing their apartment from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. to a lesbian couple. Meanwhile, they hang out in shopping malls to make space). This arrangement proves to be a win-win situation: The straight couple uses the lesbians' rent to buy themselves dinner in Japan, while the queer couple uses the apartment to cuddle, kiss, and be intimate, paying for privacy that their patriarchal and heteronormative families don't afford them. According to the narrator, one of the lesbians' families has been saving up "嫁妝" (dowry), assuming that she will "重回喜歡男性的正軌" (return to the straight track of loving men, in Cantonese vernacular) after having gone sideways in high school. Frustrated by her family, who are as close to her at home as passengers on a cramped bus, the lesbian narrator laments, "到底這城的哪個角落才能容納並不驕傲亦不富有的我們?" (where in Hong Kong can accommodate a lesbian couple like us who is neither rich nor proud?).

Indeed, home is a violent space for many queer people forced to be in close quarters with unsupportive families. That, unfortunately, turned out to be the case for our anonymous lesbian couple, who decided to remain closeted to their families. From their perspective, family is more a form of responsibility than anything else: one of their internal monologues comes when she compares her relationship to other family members to strangers on a Hong Kong bus: "我們在各自的家裡和家人的距離就不比和別的巴士乘客遠" (Our distance with other family members in our respective families is no closer or further than that with passengers on the same bus). But, unlike the single-seeming queer woman Joanne, who finds pleasure not in a partner but in a typewriter, the lesbian couple finds close quarters—like the family and the bus—oppressive. As one of them goes on, "我們甚至沒有辦法像別的戀人般在巴士上依偎擁吻," we can't be showing public affection like leaning on and kissing each other, due to homophobia. And home is not an option because that's where both of their families would impose their respective heteronormative expectations on them: "我們細小的家裡等著和我們討論結婚生子的話題" (waiting in our small apartments are the parents' constant questions about when she is going to marry a man and have children). The anonymous lesbian character goes on to say "租不起獨居

的房間也無法候得公屋" (given that the Housing Authority—by the time Wong wrote this story—excluded same-sex couples from applying for subsidized housing, and that their disposable income isn't high to begin with since the speaker is a freelance worker and her partner is a filial daughter who still pays for the mortgage of her family's apartment). Due to all of the above, they are left with no affordable options other than renting Ah Min and Ah Kun's apartment, a reprieve from home.

However, this arrangement reveals the deeper economic contradictions that Wong's satire exposes. The queer couple's partial takeover of the domestic space of Ah Min and Ah Kun (the latter of whom dated one of the anonymous lesbians) makes the straight couple's perspective on property ownership and public space seem like a radical re-territorialization, but it actually deepens heteronormative dominance. In fact, feeling supported by the unexpected income from the lesbians, Ah Min wonders why there aren't more people renting their apartment units out part-time, using public spaces like parks, cinemas, fast-food chains, shopping malls, and the IKEA showroom as free additions to their units. The straight couple's seemingly progressive re-negotiation of space temporarily turns a private property meant for two into a place enough for four, perverting the plan as originally drafted by land developers and multinational corporations. The biggest beneficiaries are the straight couple, as they profit from the lesbian couple because of the city-wide acceptance of public heterosexuality (and heteronormativity), in that their financial solvency is subsidized by the stigmatization/oppression of queer couples.

Temporarily renting an apartment gives the queer couple a way out. Yet capitalism remains the system that prices out the anonymous queer couple from homeownership and further tethers them to rent. The situation is, at best, a type of Berlantian cruel optimism—a concept whereby objects of desire are attached to conditions that preclude their satisfaction, creating patterns that sustain lives but threaten the very existence they support. Their contemporary arrangement sustains partial queer domesticity, but it will never place the poor queer lovers in the property-owning class. In the long run, this ties the queer couple's dispossession to the straight couple's capital accumulation. The narrating lesbian knows how ludicrous the current arrangement is, so she lies to her partner that the temporary accommodation is free, a favor that is too good to be true. To be sure, renting an apartment part-time is not a fair way to express queer love—but it is perhaps the only way in a crowded city without protection for same-sex couples.

LGBTQ+ progress has been made since Wong's publication of "Ways to Love in a Crowded City" (2021). As mentioned, in a recent 2023 ruling, the court decided that the Housing Authority has discriminated against same-sex couples by rejecting their application for subsidized housing. But Wong's implicit criti-

cism holds: queer couples' pathway to housing is conditional. Just as their access lasts only as long as it benefits heteronormativity in the story, so it lasts only as long as the court defends queer couples' rights to affordable housing by staving off relentless legal challenges.

Nevertheless, Wong's literary approach offers a more comprehensive critique than legal victories alone can provide. Even so, Wong's story ultimately parts ways from the court case because of its clear vision of capitalism's (crippling) contradictions: the satirical overtone of the love story holds accountable not just the Housing Authority, but also the private property developers in the city, whose real estate practices have priced out poor queer people. By holding on to the satirical form—a literary mode particularly effective at exposing systemic absurdities while maintaining emotional engagement—Wong harnesses literature's radical edge to make queer literature intersectional in its systematic criticisms. While the 2023 court victory represents important legal progress, it still operates within the capitalist framework that Wong's satire ultimately challenges, suggesting that true systemic change requires not just legal protections but fundamental economic transformation.

Conclusion

This chapter revealed that post–Umbrella Movement Cantophone love plots are an unexpected plot genre to throw into relief the pressure felt by the queer working class and poor in the *longue durée* of capitalist accumulation and dispossession in Hong Kong. My analysis centered on the impossible desires, longings, and aspirations of queer women and men who have gone sideways, either on their own account or by the imposition of others. These queer protagonists' sideways character development is guided by their longing for a different horizon that is constitutive of who they are, just as it is a result of having been pushed on track by the demands made by the heteronormative status quo. To find utopic horizons within this uncertain future of the Chinese Century is a queer undertaking. In the next chapter, I continue that task by looking at the genre of global Anglophone writing. The sideways developments carved out from that genre are not only Hong Kongers' and their diasporic descendants' adaptations to British colonialism, as in Kit Fan's *Diamond Hill*, and the rise of Global China, as in Jason Ng's short story, but also consequences of the *longue durée* of capitalist dispossession and displacement, which began after the Second World War when imperialists competed for global dominance and extends into the future, all the way to the post-oil technocratic economy of Canada, where the Chinese currency Renminbi is used (as speculated by Larissa Lai's *The Tiger Flu*).

2: Autonomous Youths in Global Anglophone Literature

From Cantophone love stories' attunement to the class, gendered, and sexual dimensions of an intersectional Hong Kong political tradition that began in the sizzling 1960s, I turn now to examine the ways in which anglophone fiction repositions Hong Kong from an insular object of study to the center of a concentric circle of global histories which happenings and populations cycle through. This chapter charts out and speculates the tradition's global dimension by looking at anglophone fiction published after the Umbrella Movement (UM) up until now. It examines three queer authors of Hong Kong descent representing three different diasporic journeys: Jason Ng, an American lawyer and Japanese university lecturer; Kit Fan, a Hong Kong-born UK citizen; and Larissa Lai, an American-born University of Toronto professor. I read these transnational authors' fictions as coming-of-age narratives, arguing that their youthful characters' development registers differential processes of growth (and degrowth). Their queer coming-of-age plots break through the nation's patriarchal imaginations and the diaspora's patrilineal holds, which typically align linear character growth with national development or assimilation into the dominant society. As such, the sideways developments in this chapter build on the previous: they refer to the un/enfoldment of characters who survive by transformation, be it playing into the whims of capitalism's contradictions or disintegrating the Enlightenment boundaries that separate humans from things. Furthermore, these authors chart minor pathways as they revise developmental narratives from an independent and individualist imagination to stories about reciprocity.

As neoliberal institutions across the world continue to compete and collude to establish and ensure chrononormative progress, the plots of Ng's, Fan's, and Lai's young protagonists conjure up queer differences: these stories bring time and space, subjects and objects, things and affects into unexpected nonlinear encounters, interrupting the spaciotemporal arrangement of heteronormativity on the page and in the world that it represents and indexes. Through spectral

encounter, Jason Ng illustrates the plot of arrested development in his short story "Ghost of Yulan Past" (2018): student protester Suze, who died prematurely due to a car accident, comes back to haunt the living during the first day of the Yulan Festival, warning the living character, HKU student Choi, of the effects of linear development projects like gentrification. Kit Fan's historical novel *Diamond Hill* (2021) tells a pre-Handover story of Hong Kong through two characters: the foul-mouthed teenage kingpin of Diamond Hill, Boss, and the drug addict Buddha, who returns to his birthplace from Thailand for a new beginning. In Fan's Hong Kong, maturity either comes too early for teenagers or too delayed for adults in the face of a volatile global economy that withholds resources for personal and social nourishment. In *The Tiger Flu* (2018), Lai sets her science fiction novel against the backdrop of a future post-oil Canada. The Hong Kong mutant, Kora, achieves immortality when her second cousin and doctor, Kirilow, grafts her onto a tree on the land of the Black Foot Confederacy. This transmogrification embodies a lateral reciprocity that we rarely see in the cutthroat (techno) capitalist environment. Persistently, Kirilow's story offers an alternative to rugged individuality in the technological age. These unseasonable youths' sideways developments come to *matter* as they sidestep from the normative pathway. This pivot at once deviates from the anthropocentric strappings of the human figure as defined by social Darwinism. In the context of (post)colonial Hong Kong, UK Chinatown, and the Pacific Northwest of Canada, Ng, Fan, and Lai depict transformation as a process of becoming that differs fundamentally from developmental projects.

My analysis builds on the preceding chapter to track the anglophone fictional lives and afterlives of these youth, all of whom fit the bill of what Jed Esty terms "unseasonable youth," the premature growth and stale adolescence in anglophone turn-of-the-century modern novels. Closely tied to the expansion of European empires, the bildungsroman normatively aligns the protagonist's teleological progress with taking their place in the colonial order. Against this tradition, Esty's *Unseasonable Youth* captures the changes in reality posed to the genre by British authors like Kipling and Wilde, whose protagonists in *Kim* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, respectively, don't follow linear trajectories of growth; instead, they trail after queer temporalities that don't abide linear narratives. Ng's, Fan's, and Lai's stories—with their differing degrees of aesthetic experimentation—further distance the one-to-one correspondence Bakhtin asserted between the modern nation-state and the protagonist's soul. Against the genre's commitment to modernity and the ideological coordinates of human rights, liberalism, and anthropocentrism, the unseasonable youth's development contains numerous discordant elements that disorganize and subvert the bildungsroman's conventions. Instead, these fictions gesture

toward other ways of growing in the modern era that do not involve vertical growth as mandated by global modernity. Departing from Jameson without entirely forgetting him, I focus on what he calls "the rhetoric" and metaphor of "development" to highlight the contradictions and contingencies of global modernization (Jameson 67).

Few genres like the bildungsroman offer a more readily made rhetorical platform for Hong Kong anglophone fiction writers to chart out and work through the metaphors and epistemologies that define individual and national growth. At its European origin, the bildungsroman, the "generic term for a novel that focuses on the psychological and social development of its main character," evoked an ideal for imagining the formation of a new subjecthood, and hence it is traditionally tailored to envision a new modern population that comes with the inauguration of a new modern nation-state (Redfield 191). As Joseph R. Slaughter adds in *Human Rights, Inc.*, the bildungsroman is the "legal and literary form" by which "the norms of human rights" are "disseminated and legitimated" (3).

I would be remiss, though, to argue that by writing with the grain of the bildungsroman, Ng's, Fan's, and Lai's coming-of-age stories merely reclaim human rights for minoritarian aims. They achieve more. If a white, able-bodied, cisgender heterosexual man epitomizes the figure of the human, then these authors take a step further than the bildungsroman that Slaughter studies by deconstructing the human form that figures in the human rights discourse and the literary genre it espouses. Ng's, Fan's, and Lai's narratives challenge and change Western ideologies. As they do so, these queer transnational authors portray youths' growth as dynamic instead of individualistic, exhorting us to uphold relational ethics and anti-developmental ways of flourishing. Emerging from these narratives is a sideways definition of personhood and community and an alternative relation to the land unimagined before: they revise the terms of evolutionary thinking that began in Europe and eventually traveled to modern China and then Hong Kong. As I detail in the next section, this cohort of Hong Kong transnational anglophone authors taps into the equally transnational history of the bildungsroman genre that made its way from Europe to early twentieth-century mainland China and then to post-war colonial Hong Kong.

Reflecting the genre's circuitous transnational history to arrive in Hong Kong, I argue that the bildungsroman by Ng, Fan, and Lai are equally mixed and experimental, following as well as pushing up against the linearity of growth as expected by the genre's conventions, decoupling the one-to-one correspondence between the rise of the modern nation-state and the formation of the self. As these global anglophone texts bring us closer to speculative scenarios of sideways developmental models, they expand the tradition's local foundation from

something relevant only to the city to an analytic akin to Doyle's global inter-imperial critique that has critical and creative purchase worldwide.

As a whole, Hong Kong global anglophone authors envision the global effects of, pushbacks against, and/or revisions to developmental processes. Defying heteronormative endings—like becoming a citizen of an adopted new nation, settling down, and making family—sideways narratives do not have easy denouements. Ng, Fan, and Lai thematize the impossibility of minoritarian flourishing in the face of (techno)capitalism and nationalism, and they parody the personal neuroses and interpersonal toxicity caused by Western individualism. These texts showcase how Hong Kong (diasporic) youth are victims of displacement and dispossession in (post)colonial Hong Kong, as well as the extractive economies in Asia and in North America; they articulate alternative development of the self as inextricably tied to sociality, instead of being constituted by the linear logics of free-willed individualism and exploitative settler colonialism. Rather, these unseasonable youth work around, against, or through these structures just as the queer lovers in Cantophone fiction do.

This resistance to traditional development patterns is evident in Cantonese and anglophone texts and requires a broad theoretical framework to understand the intersectional political tradition of Hong Kong and its international context. To better my analysis, I turn to global literary studies scholar Hadji Bakara in "The Ends of Entanglement: Conjectures on a Future Politics for Global Anglophone Literature" as a supplement to Esty's unseasonable youth in this study of queer coming-of-age narratives. For Bakara, the label *global anglophone literature* should imply a politicized literary analysis. To politicize "entanglement," a metaphor that has become stale in the field, Bakara asks us to look for "the very ontology of the structure that connects us" and to examine the "asymmetrical relation of subjugation and domination" that emerged out of global structures of colonization, imperialism, and neoliberalism. I use the term *global Anglophone* in modifying Hong Kong and Hong Kong diasporic literature to train us to see global entanglement. Bakara qualifies global entanglement as the haunting and ever-present "spooky relations" between entities that are otherwise "at a distance." By that logic, the global anglophone fiction I consider in this chapter reveals that what happens in Hong Kong and its increasingly diasporic populations is "inextricably and uncontrollably connected" to the world and the world system. Following Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Bakara modifies "entanglement" as "enabling entanglement" as an analytical imperative in our reading practice.

In my analysis, how the ghosts die in the first place, how Buddha and Boss establish a father-daughter relationship, and how Kora's and Kirilow's survivals are tied to each other and the Indigenous people of Canada highlight what Bakara calls the "asymmetrical relation of subjugation and domination." Global

capitalist modernity produces the underlying conditions and the causes of dispossession and displacement, deeply rooted in the uneven and combined development of capitalism in the twentieth and twenty-first century. It is worth remembering that China was violently thrust into capitalist modernity during the semi-colonial era beginning in the 1840s (Smith 6). Reverberations of global capitalist modernity have persisted into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in various intensities and iterations on the mainland and in Hong Kong, despite the retreat of European powers. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, China fashioned its own versions of modernity. So far, these modernities resemble the same linear model that has dominated most of the world: they, for instance, share similar aspects of "technological innovation, industrialization, urbanization, demographic growth, the forging of nation, state, and mass political movements" which are all "embedded in what Marshall Berman calls the 'ever-expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist world market'" (Smith 5). This historical context of imposed linearity helps explain why alternative developmental models have emerged as sites of resistance and differences in the political reality and global literary imaginations of Hong Kong. We have seen the lateral and sideways growth of Hong Kong student protesters in their 2014 encampments in Central, Causeway Bay, and beyond. We will see more of that in the fictional world.

The sideways developments I describe reach for intra-active engagement with their milieux. Close analyses in the previous chapter have begun to articulate them through the genre of the Cantophone love story. Something new emerges beyond the forms of the individual and the couple. This chapter captures an additional type of sideways development: unseasonable youth develop through escapades to survive displacement, dispossession, gentrification, and (perhaps most notably) encountering nonhuman differences like spectral, elemental, and arboreal ones. This new narrative type of sideways enfoldment and unfoldment extends from the post-UM queer and trans texts I discussed in the introduction and chapter 1, and we will see more relational forms in the next chapter, as well as entangled shapes in Part II of the book.

To paint a fuller picture of Hong Kong's literary past before turning to its anglophone present and future, I first revisit what youth means in Chinese discourse, beginning in the 1900s, and its attendant literary culture as the Chinese literati imported the bildungsroman genre from the West during the May Fourth Movement of 1912, when anti-imperialist student protesters agitated for national independence by studying Western knowledge. Youth-focused Chinese cultural productions ended up in Hong Kong as people crossed the Hong Kong–Chinese border in the 1950s and, more recently, in Hong Kong's diaspora after people left the city. Just as these migration histories are changes in progress,

what youth means in literature shifts, too. After setting up this theoretical, cultural, and political backdrop, I turn to Ng, Fan, and Lai's work to examine how they repurpose and reuse the traditional plots of the (Chinese) bildungsroman of the twenty-first century.

The Bildungsroman and Youth Discourse in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century China and Hong Kong

The bildungsroman's journey from Europe through twentieth-century China to twenty-first-century Hong Kong transforms the genre's ideology and shape, with the figure of youth reflecting and responding to the changing needs of modern society across nations and regions. This evolution parallels modern China's own role for the figure of youth. In 2022's COVID-ridden Hong Kong, the Education Bureau made a video to celebrate the city's Handover to China: students performed against the backdrop of Victoria Harbor skyscrapers, set to the music of Qing Dynasty literati and political reformer 梁啓超 (Liang Qichao, 1873–1929). Liang's 少年中國説 ("Ode to Young China," 1900) has a nationalist history, which the HKSAR government strategically used to arouse the morale of a sick city. During the dynasty's latter days, Liang developed the trope of "young China" to project optimism in the face of political quagmire (Levenson). In "Ode" Liang compares China's slow transition to modernity as the country's belated entrance to a developmental process Western governments had already begun. For China to catch up, Liang states, the next generation needs to take charge of the future. This message becomes apparent when he says, "製出將來之少年中國者, 則中國少年之責任也" (par 3; it will be this generation of Chinese youth's responsibility to create the next great generation of Chinese youth), making it clear that no one but China's youth has the duty to create young China.

Alongside the literary form of the bildungsroman, China also imported ideas of modernity from the West. Another literati, 嚴復 (Yan Fu), was the first to return to China from England with T. H. Huxley's lectures, including "Evolution and Ethics," which he eventually translated into Chinese. As Chinese studies scholar Andrew Jones has said, "Evolution and Ethics" brought with it Herbert Spencer's vocabulary and theory of development and evolution. With "a narrative mode" to discuss modern ideas around science and medicine, the educated class in China concluded that, particularly in comparison to Europe, their national subjects were "underdeveloped," and they need to "change from the homogenous to the heterogenous . . . and from the simple to the complex" (7, 21). Changes, Liang reiterated, didn't come from the Qing court but from "reformers and revolutionaries" as well as their students and readers of new China, who were all "enlightened trustees of a national community" (Jones 21).

In this transition from imperial to modern, China essentially remade itself from feudalism to Western modernity, a change reflected in the mid-century rise of the bildungsroman in China.

While it made some adaptations, the Chinese tradition of bildungsroman remained consistent with Goethe's urtext, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, which Yu Wenbing first made available in Chinese in 1932. One of the first Chinese-authored bildungsroman, 倪焕之 (Schoolmaster Ni Huanzhi) by 葉聖陶 (Ye Shengtao) in 1929, meets the criteria by which Bakhtin defines the bildungsroman's hero as someone who "is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. [The] tradition is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being" (23).

Ni is the Chinese counterpart to Goethe's Wilhelm. The novel starts with Ni, a firm believer in modern education, finding new hope as the 1911 Revolution ends the last imperial dynasty of China and establishes the Republic of China, but he is soon disappointed by the corruption of the new government and the invasion of foreign empires. Ni's coming-of-age experience as a dedicated educator is a synecdoche of the Chinese nation's transformation from feudalism to modernity. Unlike Wilhelm, who develops from a member of a traveling troupe to part of the Tower Society, Ni disintegrates at the end of the novel when his health collapses after fighting a lifetime uphill battle for systematic change on behalf of his students and colleagues.

The divergence between Chinese and German bildungsroman became starker as the genre developed in China. While Wilhelm finds reconciliation with society by reaching mature individualism, his counterparts in Chinese bildungsroman don't always end up squaring with the nation. 巴金 (Ba Jin)'s first novel, 滅亡 (Destruction, 1958), tells an even more complicated story of party member Da Xin's eventual suicide after falling in love with Jin Shu. The same goes for the protagonist Mei in 茅盾 (Mao Dun)'s novel 虹 (Rainbow, 1930), whose sexuality and gender difference as a woman comrade must always be tamed. That irreconciliation happens outside of the fictional realm as well. When youth didn't see themselves in the present and future of the nation—such as during the Great Leap Forward—they fled the country, and many went to Hong Kong in hopes of a better life. 曹聚仁 (Cao Juren)'s novel 酒店 (The Hotel, 1952) centers partly on Chen Tiansheng (陳天聲), a migrant from the mainland struggling to fit into 1950s Hong Kong. The novel reveals Tiansheng's contradictions: foreign-educated in France, he feels alienated and underappreciated in the city, eventually attempting suicide. Though he survives, his future remains ambiguous. After leaving the hospital, he places hope in his children. The novel ends with Tiansheng staying in Hong Kong with his family, putting their faith in

capitalist society despite its vicissitudes—symbolized by the ominous announcement of typhoon number 10.

Hong Kong author Dung Kai-cheung's 物種源始. 貝貝重生之學習年代 (The Apprenticeship) upends the trend and represents the unknown of the Chinese future. It further registers a distrust of the capitalist tradition that Hong Kong, post-1978 China, and the world as it is now feel. Set in the future, *The Apprenticeship* (2010) centers on Zhi's growth through her participation in a reading group on Sai Kung, a remote peninsula in the New Territories. Through her reading group, she falls in love with the androgynous Zhong, whom she takes to be queer. With Zhong, Zhi begins to participate in environmental activism. However, Zhi's growth goes stale when she discovers that Zhong is a straight woman who ends up dating Zhi's boyfriend. Zhi then becomes skeptical of environmental activism, and the novel eventually goes nowhere. In "A Hong Kong Miracle of a Different Kind," China studies scholar David Der-Wei Wang frames the novel as an update of the traditional bildungsroman. Though Zhi doesn't realize growth, the reading group remains ground zero for "redefining humanity" (84), as it is in Goethe. Still, unlike its seventeenth-century German counterpart, not much happens to Zhi by the novel's end, as Dung makes a point about education's inability to bring the protagonist to meaningful subjectivity. The group's deliberations of classical texts like Huxley's "Evolution and Ethics," Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, and Edward Said's *Late Style* fill up the space and time in this otherwise static novel. Taking cues from these scholarly deliberations, Wang argues that, read as a post–Cultural Revolution Sinophone text—a watershed moment in Chinese history whereby personal harm characterizes the genre—*The Apprenticeship* imagines a "post-historical humanism" (85), which emphasizes the individual over the system. Dung throws that point into relief through copious references to classics, insinuating that studying them fails to bring educated youths like Zhi into fulfilling subjectivity, especially in an era of prolonged environmental and political crises.

Dung's book represents a cohort of twenty-first century Hong Kong protagonists that depart from Liang's imagination and narrative of youth celebrated in the Hong Kong Education Bureau 2022 video. In these nationalist coming-of-age stories, the main character's growth maps onto a country or a region. Dung's twenty-first-century Sinophone novel and the anglophone ones I examine refuse this one-to-one correspondence, as they engage more deeply with postcolonial thought, pushing back against the genre's tradition and pro-Enlightenment epistemologies. Understanding twenty-first century global Hong Kong's creative reconstruction requires acknowledging this literary history: bildungsroman is an import from Europe, and twenty-first century authors like Dung work on and through it, adding queer and (post)modern twists. By nature of this trans-

national literary history, the diasporic Hong Kong anglophone texts I look at respond to the Anglo *and* Chinese traditions of bildungsroman.

My analysis below focuses on the unseasonable youth who challenge the genre's colonial, capitalist, and anthropocentric conventions through their chronotopic networks of pasts, presents, and futures that splinter off from the singular model of capitalist modernity. Their narratives of psychological, social, and character growth present a postcolonial criticism of neoliberal traditions, as they chart out nonlinear temporalities and lateral/intra-active ethics in the face of dispossession and displacement by global capitalism. In the first example of these postcolonial innovations, Ng's "Ghost of Yulan Past" (2018), the dead and the living jolt linear development out of its chrononormative tracks.

Arrested Development in Jason Ng's "Ghost of Yulan Past"

Ng's "Ghost of Yulan Past" first appeared in the 2018 short story collection *Hong Kong Noir*. Ng translates horror from a phenomenon in the city's long history into written words as he infuses a sense of purpose into them: ghosts return from the dead to upset the status quo. At the story's center is Suze, who returns to care for unfinished business, refusing to be forgotten by the cultural amnesia perfected by capitalist modernity. In the following, I will summarize Ng's story, then unpack its social critique as a coming-of-age narrative that features one of its young protagonists as a ghost who died too young and seemingly refuses to reincarnate.

One of Jed Esty's unseasonable youths, Suze is also a ghost. Like Conrad's Jim and Schreiner's Lyndall, Suze is forever frozen in her youth, kept pristine by the seal of death. Despite Hong Kong being outside Esty's scope, his insights still speak to the text, which emerges after the decline of British colonialism and the rise of the Chinese Century. After dying in a car crash, Suze returns to the world of the living to haunt the system—and per Avery Gordon, haunting "always registers the harm inflicted or the loss sustained by a social violence done in the past or the present" (xvii). This specter of the early twenty-something warns the living of the continuing harm done to young people by capitalism.

Ng's short story takes place over one night during the Yulan Festival, when the boundaries between the dead and living are blurred. On his way home from a night of thrill-seeking in Hong Kong's haunted site, self-proclaimed "thrill-seeker" Choi spontaneously detours to the Tin Hau Temple, where he spends hours talking with Suze, a ghost who only appears at the temple this one night a year (23). The two find that they share a commitment to social change, and the story seems to set a budding romance in motion. The story ends with Choi realizing that he has been talking to a ghost. But that realization did not discourage him from returning to the temple "next Yulan" as he agrees with her when she says, "There's nothing to be afraid of. Sometimes, I find people much more

frightening" (34). Despite one being human and the other a ghost, they connect over their mutual support for social movements. During the UM, however, Choi did not participate because "his parents wouldn't let him, for fear that their only son would be injured or arrested," though he claims he has been devoting time to researching student movements for his political science paper (31).

As chapter 1 mentions, capitalist society measures an individual's maturity by value. To prepare students for their future competition in the job market, Hong Kong colleges often take as one of their aims to help students grow by enhancing their marketability. Its culture expects the college experience to accrue value. University professors cultivate a valuable learning experience by guiding students toward self-cultivation through exercises like writing research papers. One of the few in his cohort specializing in social movement studies, Choi complains, "Most of my classmates care only about grades, summer internships, and job offers, oblivious to the slow death that this city is suffering" (32). From what Choi tells Suze, Suze senses that he tends to choose the less-trodden path. For example, he opts for a detour that leads him not home but to a haunted experience; moreover, his investment in studying social movements is a risky choice in Hong Kong, given the current climate. Like Wilhelm's contribution to the enigmatic Tower Society, Choi's study of social movements leads to his gradual maturity, which he believes will be rewarded by becoming a citizen defined, not by the trappings of the nation, but by the grassroots ethos of a collective of activists. Choi's path is markedly different from that of his peers, splintering sideways from theirs, while they opt for the profit-making opportunities of summer internships and scoring As—all of which promise the prospect of exponential personal growth. At the same time, they enter the capitalist society of Hong Kong.

Choi shares Suze's mindset: she believes, too, that maturation, as well as the alignment of the mind and the body, self and identity, comes from participating in social activism, not capitalism. Suze is different, though, in that she learned her lessons on the streets of Occupy Central. Despite this difference, Suze finds Choi a like-minded acquaintance and begins to let her guard down. At one point, Suze plays a prank on Choi, who at that point does not know that she is a ghost: after telling him that she has "yin-yang eyes"—or the ability to communicate with the dead—she talks to the air as if she is talking to a ghost that Choi can't see. Noticing that Choi's face turns pale, Suze admits that it is a prank, and she apologizes, saying: "Consider that a test, my friend. How else would I know if you could handle the real deal?"—foreshadowing the revelation to come.

Feeling this special connection, too, Choi asks if Suze will continue the conversation after her temple shift. Choi suggests they dine together at a "chicken hot pot joint tucked behind Wun Sha Street, a bit of a hole-in-the-wall" (33). Cryptically, Suze responds by saying, "I don't eat much these days. Besides, I

have all of that to finish," pointing "to the plates of fuzzy peaches and steamed buns next to the incense burners on the altar" (33). As it is widely known in the Daoist tradition, only ghosts eat bruised fruits on the altar and take sustenance from inhaling the smoke from burning incense. Suze's comment sends a chill down Choi's spine, and Choi eventually realizes that Suze has no shadow. Suze notices that Choi wants to run but cannot as "his knees have betrayed him" (34).

What starts as a scene of budding romance for Choi turns awry quickly: It ends up being a spooky encounter between a boy and the ghost of a girl. The story—which would otherwise be a bildungsroman for Choi—challenges what Michael Warner calls "repro-narrativity," a feature in the coming-of-age genre (qtd. in Esty 23). In a normative bildungsroman, mating is expected. Though Ng delivers that plot point, Choi and Suze's romance is queered because Choi's night is a detour in his coming-of-age experience: his queer romance with a ghost jolts him sideways out of the realm of reality.

Our heroine's coming-of-age experience goes sideways before the story starts. She is among the ghosts who have "died young" and "haven't experienced falling in love, seeing the world, and making a difference in the city they love" (31). She was run over and killed by a car right off the U-turn in front of the temple. An homage to Myrtle's death in *The Great Gatsby*, the automobile that hits Suze symbolizes capitalism's arrest of her youth. Suze, who dies without a reconciliation with capitalism, accepts her lot as a cog in capitalism and deepens her resistance. In a city where the lay of the land—"One Country, Two Systems"—serves to preserve capitalism as legacy of the British empire now with Chinese characteristics, Suze dies as a stale protagonist, simultaneously refusing to forego her ideals or to mature because she cannot afford Hong Kong's exorbitant real estate market.

Gender further complicates the social critique of Suze's plot of arrested development by death. Esty identifies two women's bildungsroman types: the "historical and linear" type representing the woman's social adjustment, and the "less linear, realistic, and progressively organized" type reflecting her social exclusion (65). Suze's maturation belongs to the second type: becoming an activist spans her lifetime and afterlife, and both happen in spaces excluded from the normativity of the social world—a makeshift tent during Occupy and a spectral realm entirely outside of capitalist modernity. Suze's yearly appearance on July 14 in the Tin Hau Temple is a throwback to the past, an iterative process through which she asserts her identity with an anti-development message. Her ghostly presence symbolizes a being frozen in time to resist capitalism's relentless forward movement. To use Gordon's words, Suze's ghostly apparition that returns yearly has a "real presence and demands its due" (xvi). Charged with an "inef-

fable excess" marked by her fervency for socioeconomic justice, Suzie perennially returns for attention from the living (xvi).

While interacting with the living, Suze speaks critically of urban development projects. For instance, Suze recommends that Choi visit the "Park's Tower down the street," telling him that ghosts loitering in the neighborhood have told her that the tower used to be a movie theater. When they tore it down to make way for an office building, "a couple of construction workers died in an accident during redevelopment" (23). Indeed, Suze is suspicious of, if not outright antagonistic toward, development. Her haunting represents the lives lost to the violence of gentrification in her neighborhood, as she demands "something different from before" "must be done" (Gordon xvi). She complains that landmark structures have been dropping like flies to make way for new development. These structures include those in her neighborhood. Suze's complaint makes readers aware of how anthropogenic forces have rendered old places and traditions deficient and how they are targeted for redevelopment. This is exemplified by the temple's nearby Tai Hang Nullah, a revived grassroots waterway for fish and birds after a period of severe pollution following WWII, now partially capped by cement and partially repurposed as part of the city's urban green project, Kai Tak River. Even the Tin Hau Temple is part of this reshaping of Hong Kong's landscape. Many fishmongers frequented the Tin Hau Temple on Tin Hau Road for blessings before sailing because it was on a hill slope facing the shoreline. But now, Suze says, the coastline is blocks away because of reclaimed land, and the temple is busy only three days a year: Tin Hau's birthday, Chinese New Year, and the Yulan Festival. She admits that though her family owns the temple, real estate developers are "salivating over" the building (24). Though her "great-great-great-great grandfather" (24) gathered donations to build the temple after witnessing a miracle in Victoria Harbor, her family does not have complete control over the place anymore because they are bracing for a government takeover that feels imminent.

In stark contrast to the linear temporality of redevelopment that is displacing the peoples and places in the original Tai Hang area, Suze's family runs on a noticeably non-linear, anti-developmental temporality: the police threw her sister in jail after she "protested against the government's rural redevelopment plan" (32). She even identifies young people's resistance to government's development as one of the reasons for the UM, during which she and her sisters camped out in Admiralty. In her account, the UM is "a culmination of everything that had gone wrong since the 1997 Handover," from "the demolition of heritage sites" (like the Star Ferry Pier) to "a widening income gap" to "sky-high property prices." She says, "I will never forget the sting of tear gas and pepper spray" (32).

The rural redevelopment Suze mentions refers to the three hundred square kilometer Northern Metropolis project, an attempt to bring China and Hong Kong closer, both literally and figuratively. In the wake of the HKSAR government's plan to do away with, if not lessen, the impacts of, the China-Hong Kong border, this project promises Hong Kong people a "land supply" that "offers a 'home-job' balance in the most vibrant area where urban development and major population growth of Hong Kong in the next 20 years will take place," as former chief executive Carrie Lam said in a policy address on October 6, 2021 (Government). However, environmental groups have concerns, including that the project may involve green belt zones previously marked for conservation and that development would likely increase flooding and water pollution and damage wetland ecosystems.

As I mention above, Gordon would read Suze's ghost as a spectral register of "the harm inflicted or loss sustained by a social violence done in the past or the present" (xvi), as her grievances testify to the violence done to local peoples, places, and lifeways. In the more specific context of Hong Kong's horror cinema, Erin Huang's theory of ghosts provides additional local refinement. She describes, building on Gordon, how a "new landscape of bodies-spaces," such as the figure of the ghost, emerges as an "effective mode of excess" to register the "anticipated unknown" of the neoliberal postsocialist era—a future in which Hong Kong now exists as a spatiotemporal frontier (183). Interpreted through Huang's theory, Suze's characterization of the UM as a culmination of former protests, including the redevelopment project of greenery at the Hong Kong-mainland border, positions that land and the Northern Metropolis project as the first iterations of global China. This point is evidenced by the frequent railroad connections linking northern New Territories to Shenzhen's high-end digital infrastructure. So far, the project has faced relentless legal challenges, including a 2024 case, in which indigenous villagers in the New Territories, fighting for their clans' ancestral lands, accused the government's redevelopment project of infringing on their property rights (Lin). The villagers' complaints embody the suppressed environmental resistance that Suze references, invoking a temporality different from the linear present, specifically the anticipated unknown of a neoliberal post-socialist future. This uncertain future is represented by local communities who refuse to participate in cycles of rezoning and development built on local ecosystems and the ancestral lands of peoples who have been there for centuries, such as the Tso/Tong.

Taken together, Suze's sister's imprisonment has, following Bakara, a "spooky relation" to Suze's spectral presence in the temple: As she tells Choi at the end of the story, she has unfinished business: watching over her sister. Choi will feel the effects of the redevelopment project too, since "he lives in Tai Ho with his parents," which is located in the New Territories (32). Choi's future in Tai Ho, which is undergoing improvement projects, and Suze's past,

wrapped in resistance against the Northern Metropolis, are entangled with the city's current development plan—one that expands Hong Kong's frontier by urbanizing the northern New Territories and manicuring its outlying islands at the expense of their natural wildness. Their encounter, as such, is an "enabled solidarity" between the living and the dead (Baraka par. 8): Suze's grievances, which she passes to Choi by haunting him, exhort him to act and resist in a way that she can no longer do. By the end of the story, Choi appears to be compelled by Suze's exhortation: "There is nothing to be afraid of. Sometimes I find people much more frightening." Repeating it back to himself, he thinks "he knows exactly where he will be on the next Yulan," implying that he will come to pay his respects to Suze next year (34). Despite death, Suze's specter not only tries to ensure that her sister's post-imprisonment life is exemplary but also fuels Choi's further engagement with social movements challenging development projects and their concomitant displacement and violence.

As Suze's death by car reminds us, urban development causes accidents by displacing natural habitats at a speed that can be lethal. Along with the lost natural landscapes and historical sites that she advocated for with her protests, Suze falls into what postcolonial film critic Bliss Cua Lim calls "non-synchronism" (297). A "scandalous outside that disjoins the normativity of modern temporality" and "recast[s] the non-modern [like ghosts and historical architecture] as a precursor to [the] modernity" of the Chinese Century, this spectral temporality intrudes into capitalist modernity during Suze's annual visit to the Tin Hau Temple to check on her sister, the rare occasion when Suze can interlope in reality. Her spectral form and the place she haunts manifest her sideways interpolation into capitalist reality, and her haunting constitutes a yearly and cyclical unfolding narrative that seeks to re-territorialize the otherwise linear development of gentrification. But her reterritorialization is sparse and short-lived, given that the gate of hell only opens once a year. In her absence, Choi tells others to follow her re-territorializing suit. Suze urges Choi to be Hong Kong's Tudigong: "We need to stay here and guard this place" (32). Some cultural studies scholars would call Suze's haunting and Choi's ghost-busting a "place-making" practice, a people-centered approach to managing spaces (Courage 1), in contrast to the profit-driven approach to urban planning. With a champion for a people-centered approach to space and a heroine who passes on too early, whose personal development is decoupled from the development of the city—Ng's story exposes the ecology of violence constituted by law and the global economy.

Precocious Youth and Dilated Adolescence in Kit Fan's *Diamond Hill*

In Ng's story of a young activist, the autonomous youth hits a wall: her personal development is petrified by death. Suze's demise illustrates the lethal conse-

quences of the neoliberal forces that underwrite life in Hong Kong. Moreover, the living's interactions with the dead, by Choi commemorating Suze yearly, reveal the affordance and critical potential of haunting. Choi's encounter with Suze is a corollary indictment of the city for its continuous urban development projects that displace and dispossess the working class. Boss and Buddha, the unseasonable youth of Kit Fan's debut novel, *Diamond Hill*, are different: they are alive, and one is a teenager and the other an adult. While the book makes explicit that teenage Boss should be at school during the daytime, Buddha's age is not specified. However, the novel hints that he is an adult old enough to have finished school in the United Kingdom, gone through a divorce, and lost his father's fortune by making ill-timed business decisions. Together, the characters illuminate what growing sideways means during the chrononormative development of Chinese capitalism, which took off in the 1970s and 1980s. In the following, I review the novel's geographical and historical context, which sets many developmental forces into motion that eventually find their way into the squalor of Diamond Hill, where many of the city's poor are cornered and ultimately displaced. I argue that Fan uses two personal development plots—Boss and Buddha's stunted and delayed, respectively, development—as a reflection and critique of urban development predating the Handover, which resulted from local and global conditions that had shaped and continue to shape the city the way it is now.

The 1970s and 1980s were the inaugural decades for Chinese capitalism, when Deng Xiaoping opened China to foreign trade in 1978 in a national move that had implications for Hong Kong businesses. What is more, 1984 saw the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. With the privilege of hindsight, Kit Fan condenses these regional, national, and international developments in *Diamond Hill* with a cast of unseasonable characters determined to leave the city before the 1997 Handover. Set against the backdrop of Diamond Hill during the neighborhood's later days, the novel traces the colonial government's various strategies for managing the squalor of Hong Kong's last slum, from condoning its existence to actively divesting resources and, eventually, eradicating it (Smart). These changing attitudes are part and parcel of the city's responses to the rise of Chinese capitalism on the global stage, and Fan dramatizes the effects Hong Kong people in the bottom socioeconomic strata feel in the face of global capitalism's uneven development by telling contrasting stories of youth whose personal growth is accelerated (Boss) and stale (Buddha). While the youth in Fan's novel don't die—as in Ng's—they do rotate out of the city in fear of the pending Handover.

Diamond Hill's changes are the backdrop for the novel. The number of settlers in the neighborhood went up from three hundred thousand in 1949 to

two million in 1951. Unable to provide affordable housing to the influx of refugees from the Cultural Revolution, the colonial government was willing to tolerate squatters' illegal congregations in the neighborhood, maintaining a laissez-faire attitude toward the Diamond Hill real estate market from 1954 to 1984. Although the wages of people in Hong Kong rose during that period due to specific opportunities related to the 1978 Open Door Policy, the colonial government purposefully kept the real estate market hot by underproducing subsidized housing projects in order to keep Hong Kong's private housing high in demand and low in supply. Consequently, the squalor of Diamond Hill was one of a few affordable options in the private market. Only after the Sino-British Joint Declaration does colonial government intervene—to slate Diamond Hill for redevelopment, in cooperation with the Chinese government. Indeed, as two lawyers from Fan's novel say, the colonial government values Diamond Hill because "the sale is going to break the world" (132). Indeed, the British and the Chinese were both keen to sell the land before the Handover because they stood to gain large profits. As negotiated by Clause 7 of the joint declaration titled "Land Leases"—which the novel cites in the epigraph—"from the entry into force of the Joint Declaration until 30 June 1997, premium income obtained by the British Hong Kong government from land transactions shall, after deduction from the average cost of land production, be shared equally between the British Hong Kong Government and the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government" (Fan 11). Particularly in the novel, the lawyers assist the government in getting rid of potential hurdles that may stand in the way of the deal, including Diamond Hill's infamous residents, the nuns and the Triad members, part of a larger transnational organized crime syndicate. The government offered significant incentives, like subsidized housing units in newly developed neighborhoods, to motivate long-time residents to move and register their land. Tin Shui Wai, mentioned in the novel, is one of them.

Matching the colorful history of the district is Fan's cast of memorable characters, with personalities big enough to rival celebrities. A delusional dishwasher goes by the name Audrey Hepburn and insists she was Bruce Lee's mistress. Her adopted daughter, Boss (probably named after Lee's 1971 film 唐山大兄 [*The Big Boss*]), is a drug dealer in the neighborhood's organized crime network. Boss's biological mother, Quartz, is a former drug addict turned nun, living with the Iron Nun, the head of the nunnery who helped facilitate Boss's adoption. Another resident of the nunnery, Buddha, a middle-age Hong Kong Chinese, is a drug addict just returned to the city from Thailand to get clean. Each character faces personal trials and tribulations and tries to quell their pain—be it through narcotics, religion, or immigration. But these trials are also instantiations of larger issues caused by the conditions of modernity, from Diamond Hill's rede-

velopment to the 1987 global financial crisis. The novel merges local and global crises in the plotline of Boss, who hustles the mean streets of Diamond Hill for 油尖旺大佬 (Big Brother), the local leader of the Hong Kong Triad.

Boss's career depends on the Hong Kong government's neglect of Diamond Hill and rise of narco-capitalism in Asia, an industry that thrives on economic stress and entices members of a "surplus population" to risk their lives in drug trafficking in return for potentially dazzling rewards (Benanav and Clegg 594). According to Benanav and Clegg, global economic growth began to experience cycles of stagnation by the end of the twentieth century. Though the recent boom of Chinese capitalism seems a counterexample, they point out that the two precursors to the rise of the Western economy—manufacturing and industrialization—are not creating "heights of industrial employment (relative to the total labor force)" in China (603). New jobs in twenty-first-century China do not necessarily contribute to the same type of modernization as in the twentieth century. As they put it, "the new industries have absorbed tendentially less labor relative to the growth output" (603). Subsequently, the Chinese working class is taking—if it hasn't already taken—the brunt of stagnant global capitalism. Excluded from capital production since fewer labor-intensive and well-paying jobs exist, the Chinese working class is rendered "pure surplus," barred from the means of capital reproduction that would eventually promise stability.

These surplus populations are forced to be nomadic, engaged in "endless migration between urban and rural slums" as they search for jobs (599). Boss is part of this nomadic class, which expanded both in China and its periphery as the country opened to foreign investments, further cementing the Chinese working class's disadvantaged position in the global economy. Instead of receiving an education in hopes of entering the traditional workforce, Boss peddles drugs. Her lack of education and socioeconomic status is expressed in her Cantonese cuss words. In one instance, she tells Buddha, "陀佛, 死開, 唔好阻住我發達" (43; Get out of my way, dickhead. Don't stop me from getting rich). A rude response from a minor to a concerned adult, from the perspective of adults, Boss's foul mouth makes her a precocious youth who does not act her age.

In the same scene, Boss tells Buddha to call her Boss like everyone else does in Diamond Hill, and Boss's impersonation of a gangster and her juvenile behavior contradictorily embody what Esty calls "stunted youth" (3). Unlike stereotypical cisgender white heterosexual male characters, minoritarian characters, Esty argues, such as women, people of color, and queer characters, in the bildungsroman re-envision a nation's inherent patriarchal epistemologies. Boss represents an anomaly in genre. Obviously, she is not Dickens's Pip in *Great Expectations*, but nor is she Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre: she does not receive a proper British education, nor does she assimilate into the British empire's het-

eronormative expectation of marriage. In contradistinction to a typical bildungsroman that upholds the value of institutional education, Boss self-educates (not unlike Goethe's Wilhelm, interestingly) on the mean streets of Diamond Hill. She ditches school, peddles drugs, and teaches herself to speak English with an "American accent" that sounds like it "came straight out of a gangster movie" by watching films (Fan 33). Her accent may be American, but Boss is an Anglophile: she decorates her room, as Buddha puts it, like "a crazy Victorian film set" (116). There is a "bookmarked *Pride and Prejudice* on the bedside table" and, on the walls, prints of Westminster Abbey and a British naval ship in a port "somewhere exotic with palm trees, perhaps, India or Malaysia" (116). "Leatherbound sets of Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, and George Eliot" (81), which are upon closer inspection "wooden props," complete her bedroom's British theme. Combined with her American accent, Boss's love for British culture renders her a simulacrum modeled on the prop versions of the British and American empires, each asserting their colonial and financial influence over Hong Kong at the time when the novel is set.

Boss's fantasy about the Western good life as glamorized by Hollywood is something she learns from her mother, Audrey Hepburn, the supposed mistress of Bruce Lee. Because her claim lacks credibility and because she wears outlandish outfits to her dishwasher job at the café, people in Diamond Hill call her Audrey Hepburn. Boss wants to realize her mother's dream of being a British woman—a dream Boss will help her achieve by the end of the novel; it is why she's involved in drug dealing in the first place. Boss's pursuit of an excellent British life, which forces her to shoulder the burden of making it out of the slum for her family, makes her a stunted youth. "Immature figures" in fiction embody, as Esty puts it, "a composite model of the queer figure who holds a position outside dominant discourses of progress at the level of individual self-formation and of social reproduction" (23). And Boss's coming-of-age experience makes her queer: she becomes the head of her family at too young an age, positioning her outside of the heteronormative discourse of a nation whose idealized subject is a boy who grows up straight but also encapsulates a crisis of global modernity that runs on credit.

Like Dickens's Pip, Boss is an orphan who experiences poverty and the lack of a nurturing family during childhood. Adopted by a delusional woman who thinks she is a Hollywood star, Boss finds her place in the social hierarchy from her adopted mother's dream of grandeur and aspires to climb up that ladder to achieve wealth. But unlike Pip, who sets out to be a blacksmith because of his proximity to his brother-in-law, she finds work in an illegal trade close to home. Boss lacks protection and mentorship and falls prey to Diamond Hill's drug trade. Just one of the many propertyless victims of the government's alternating

indifference and landgrab, Boss is further a victim of drug lords' predation that is, according to medical humanities scholar Maziyar Ghiabi, a form of "labor extraction" and "addiction," as drug lords not only make dealers hustle but also get them hooked on drugs until the pipelines of narco-capitalism consume their everyday lives (12). Though readers never see Boss abusing drugs, her role in hooking her biological mother, Quartz, on the narcotics that eventually kill her positions Boss as both predator and prey in the system. A peddler in Triad's middle management, Boss continues to sell herself to narco-capitalism because the kingpins prize her for her location in Diamond Hill, rife with potential new clients like former addicts Quartz and Buddha. Boss, in a sense, rides on Hong Kong's economy, at that time undermined by China's competition but buoyed by hot money of the drug trade. In the reversed hierarchy of transnational narco-capital, Boss is so busy making money for and through the system that she has no time to enjoy life as a teenager. She seems to buy into the fantasy of reward and escape, believing she must hustle to achieve her adoptive mother's dream of leading a good life in the United Kingdom.

But the sad fact is that Boss and Audrey's lives become even more erratic and itinerant than usual during financial uncertainties. Fan represents minoritarian characters' frantic movement against the ripple effects of Black Monday, the global stock market crash of October 19, 1987, and the fallout from Black Monday is a backdrop for Boss's promotion; simultaneously, Boss's biological mother, Quartz, disappears. Buddha, who has developed feelings for Quartz, searches for her in Tin Shui Wai (TSW)—where the government is relocating Diamond Hill residents who are legal citizens and registered their properties. As he is searching, Buddha hears the news that the Dow is down by "22.6%, wiping out an estimated $500 million," which initiated "a crash around the world" and that "by noon, the Heng Sang Index, influenced by the weakening Nasdaq . . . fell 120 points" (236). His driver sighs and complains, "I bought quite a lot of shares at cutthroat prices yesterday just before the market closed. It won't flatline for long, I bet" (236). In the age of globalization, even the poorest at the lowest end of the pecking order in Hong Kong are influenced by the volatility of the world financial market.

The taxi driver won't lose everything if he holds on to his shares long enough for the market to rebound, but Boss, the ultimate disposable figure in the book, is less fortunate. Taking advantage of this free labor, Boss eventually recruits Quartz, who, as a former addict, becomes hooked and addicted to it again. In the scene in which Buddha eventually finds Quartz, she dons a red cap that Boss used to wear, wandering on a bridge. When Buddha and the taxi driver try to get her in the car, she acts out, yelling, "I am not leaving until I've sold all my keyrings" (243). Buddha can only get her in the car by promising to buy the remaining keyrings.

To Buddha's disappointment, Quartz's health worsens at the nunnery, and she dies, overdosing on the white powder that she obtains from Boss and hides from Buddha. Boss, her only biological kin, makes it to the nunnery to see Quartz one last time. Without remorse, Boss admits that she had enlisted Quartz into her expanded drug-peddling squad despite knowing that Quartz was trying to stay clean and that selling could easily cause a relapse. That Quartz would agree to sell for Boss, understanding the high risk of a relapse, is a testimony to Quartz's maternal attachment to Boss and Boss's willingness to exploit Quartz. The novel gestures at this as Buddha (who knows of the potential biological tie between the two) interrogates Quartz, asking her, "Why are you torturing yourself like this? Is it your way of getting closer to Boss?" Quartz does not deny it but quietly acquiesces, before she shifts attention back to Buddha about his wife and her miscarriage, secrets the Iron Nun has shared with her.

It is increasingly apparent that Boss's exit plan to England—which now includes running a Chinese restaurant as a front for the crime syndicate—is built at the expense of her biological mother's life. After spending the night with the corpse of Quartz, Boss becomes apathetic. She insists on no personal wrongdoing, blaming instead the purity of her powder and making light of Quartz's death. This apathy illustrates what queer Chinese studies scholar Liu calls the "atrophy" of a capitalist subject's compassion, here a result of narco-capitalism and the larger family-wrecking forces that gave Quartz no choice but to give Boss up for adoption in the first place (*Specter* 99). At an earlier point, Boss clarified to Buddha that even if Quartz were her biological mother, she is different from Audrey: "Don't compare Quartz to Mum" (253). As she adds, "[Audrey's] madness has fed me, brought me up, got me out of trouble" (254). Even then, Boss confesses to Buddha, "Between you and me, I am fed up playing this game of who is mother and who isn't" (253), saying that the Triad is successful because, "like the nunnery, they promote a twisted version of family values and all these broken kids are desperate to be adopted" (254). As if she has seen through it all and reached a real epiphany, she, in a cold-hearted way, compares "mothers" to "disposable plastic cups. They're useful for a while, but you chuck them in the bin when the party is over" (254). She concludes in a true foul-mouthed style: "I don't give a fuck about my *heritage*, my *origin*, my *family*. I am only interested in making something of my life, earning lots of money, and becoming a famous film director" (254).

Diamond Hill does not limit that atrophy to those directly in contact with capitalism: even as Boss refuses to take responsibility, the Iron Nun orders Quartz's corpse to be taken from the temple at once so it won't scandalize another monk. As it turns out, the Iron Nun is not as holy and uncontaminated by greed and egotism as expected. She is revealed to be Audrey's sister. Knowing that her sister would need assistance as a mentally disabled person, she persuaded Quartz

to give up Boss for adoption, so that Boss could help take care of Audrey for the rest of her life. These scandals from the nunnery, which may seem personal, in fact reflect how global forces (such as a volatile stock market and a capitalist economy) breed psychological neuroses and social ills, rendering gendered subjects like—per Liu—Quartz, Boss, Iron Nun, and Audrey all "fragmented" and "reified" "experiences of precarity [and] marginalization" (*Specter* 99). In a pattern Asian literary scholars from both sides of the pond have identified (Koshy; E. Ho), Asian diasporic novels typically show immigrant families as bound by their debts, and erin Khuê Ninh has gone so far as to develop a catchy term—the debt-bound daughter—to describe immigrant children's subordination under their parents because of the parents' monetary and emotional investment. Despite her disbelief in family as a genuine source of support and probably because of her utilitarian thinking about what her adopted parents could do for her during her transition to British life, Boss eventually makes her own family by flying all of them to the United Kingdom with fake passports. Her queer formation of a fictive family shows a slightly different logic of kinship that earlier scholars have understood through the political economy of debt, which is in no way more radical. Boss's coming-of-age experience is a tragedy of financial credit: Boss is robbed of the luxury of being a child. Instead of having a normative family life, a key site of social reproduction in which the father is the bulwark of the family and the mother offers the child the unpaid labor of care, Boss cannot afford to be innocent and so steps up to provide for Audrey, Buddha, and possibly the whole nunnery. Her financial solvency is buoyed by the lead-up to Black Friday and the crisis itself, which spurs drug consumers to turn to narcotics for stress relief—a demand that Boss's business is all too happy to match with expanded supply.

Boss's promotion in Hong Kong and her future business in London run on credit: she borrows on her faith in a better future, funded by drug dealing. This business gambles on the steady demand for narcotics during grim times. Even before she sets foot in London's Chinatown, Boss's contradictory relationship with family is already evident: she curates an adoptive family while simultaneously disavowing that very desire. Buddha breaks Boss's fictive nuclear family by disappearing on her at the airport after they have landed in the United Kingdom. At the same time, the novel arrests Buddha's growth and returns him to the beginning of adolescence. Buddha's anti-developmental stance continues to make him a dilated adolescent in the United Kingdom at the "never-quite modernized periphery of the modern nation-state," symbolizing "the global asymmetries of capitalism" in terms of what Jed Esty—after Hannah Arendt—has called "a permanent process which has no end or aim but itself" (Esty 7). Buddha goes through his supposed second coming-of-age experience in Diamond

Hill, where he expects to reach a new level of maturity defined by sobriety and guided by the nuns. In the nunnery, he is promised a second chance to grow: he enjoys solitude as he detoxes, unlearning his habits as an addict and reintegrating himself into society by practicing Buddhism. In his all-women nunnery, his solitude translates to confinement in a hut with a bolted door that locks from the outside. In exchange for the space, he takes up the job of teaching Quartz English. He eventually falls in love with her, beginning a brief relationship that leads him to take responsibility and attain a level of personal growth, though readers will never see him achieve maturity by capitalist definition, even by the end.

Buddha comes from money and has been set up to succeed in colonial Hong Kong by his family, so it is a hard pill for him to swallow when he fails his family business and essentially falls from grace. The novel hints at the trappings of his past elite education; it makes the point that he speaks British English, and various characters comment on this. Boss, for example, picks him to be her fake dad in London's Chinatown because his British accent could give her drug business a good reputation and fend off potential inquisitive phone calls from the British government. Buddha acquired his English at Hong Kong's St. Paul College—"the Eton of Hong Kong" (98)—founded just ten years after the British took possession of Hong Kong (1841) by Hong Kong's first chaplain. Eton has been a cradle for prime ministers for the British and colonials for the overseas colonies; attending the Hong Kong equivalent should have prepared Buddha for a time of linear progress and career success. That, unfortunately, is not the case. Buddha lost his father's fortune because he was not prepared for the challenges Hong Kong businesses faced after China opened to foreign trade. His life went sideways as China reinserted itself into global capitalism after the Maoist years of self-isolation. Buddha's inability to adapt to the linear growth of Chinese capitalism turned him sour. From there, he splinters off from China, going overseas: first to Thailand, then to Diamond Hill, and finally to the United Kingdom. These transitory stops allow him to reintegrate into a capitalist world from the outside, but he forgoes those opportunities. Ultimately, he represents an anti-developmental stance as he tarries in places and lies down with objects of decay. However, that is not the last that readers see of him. As mentioned, Buddha leaves Hong Kong for the United Kingdom with Audrey and Boss, only to abandon them, escaping another cycle of narco-capitalism. As the novel suggests, Buddha must always be on the run to exist outside the system.

And Buddha had been on the run before, after he lost his family's fortune. As he admits to Quartz, "To be honest, I still don't exactly know what happened" (122). He adds, "I took a big loan to expand the business, but the gamble did not come off. I had to borrow more money from other sources to keep the company afloat. In one season, our debts snowballed to seven figures. I had to choose—

kill myself or leave Hong Kong." It is the "ambition," or his idealizations of never-ending expansion, that he later comes to characterize as "misguided" in time (122). This financial loss is the first time Buddha's life goes off the rails: after his monied wife lost her baby because of the stress of impoverishment, Buddha fled to Thailand, childless and penniless, where he lost himself in drugs and attempted to find himself again by claiming tutelage from a monk named Daishi. His newfound faith in a religion that believes in the peace that nothingness brings has likely planted a seed of anti-developmentalism in him.

Buddha's past makes it possible to interpret his last act of escaping from Boss's drug business in London's Chinatown as a decidedly anti-developmental stance. Be it done out of a subconscious habit of avoidance or an intentional choice for anti-capitalism, Buddha's motive is not specified by the novel. His action, however, clearly shows that he has, temporarily, extracted himself from capitalist modernity. Spoiling the linear unfolding of the story that mirrors the linearity of capitalism as embodied by Audrey and Boss's migration to the West in pursuit of the proverbial good life, Buddha's eventual pivot to the side implies a risk. For him, as an immigrant traveling with a fake passport, it means living without the protection afforded by being a human and a subject in civil society. This sideways move does not promise a better future, but it at least opens a new avenue in which he does not need to compromise his agency.

The closest that Buddha comes to achieving a heteronormative future is his budding romance with Quartz; unfortunately, their relationship is cut short when Quartz overdoses, dies, and is cremated. Upon seeing this, Buddha takes some soil from the burn site at the nunnery and stores it in an urn. Unlike Ng's Choi, who happens upon Suze's ghost in a temple, Buddha deliberately keeps a material piece of the dead with him, which is his tradition. When Daishi passed, Buddha also preserved his ashes. Carrying these two persons' ashes with him, Buddha enacts a form of entanglement between the living and the dead that Baraka would call an "enabled solidarity" (par. 8). Here, Buddha commemorates the dead—or is in communion with the ghosts—by submitting himself to near-death experiences, returning to a cave of hibernating bats, a secret place in Diamond Hill that only he and Quartz are supposed to know about. Inside the cave, he turns off his torch and "imitate[s] the position of the reclining Buddha from the famous temple in Bangkok" (287).

Resting opposite the bats hanging down from the ceiling, Buddha vicariously re-enacts the reincarnation journey that Quartz has embarked on. He scatters Quartz's remains in the cave, which immediately become "indistinguishable" from bat droppings "once the black ash landed" (287). Her cremation is not the only death in and around Buddha: he "opened the bamboo container" of Daishi's ashes, "tipped it" into his "mouth," and found the texture tastes "bitter, chalky,

salty, sweet" all at once (287). Buddha believes that this olfactory sensation creates a portal for him to identify with the deceased: Buddha wonders if it tastes like "the eight-flavored herbal tea that Meng Po, the Lady of Forgetfulness, offers the returning souls by the river" in the underworld, where he believes Quartz is (287).

Yu's evocation of the apocalyptic scene from the Qur'an in "Moon Split Asunder" (see chapter 1) introduces a nonlinear temporality as an opportunity for interrupting capitalist time, only to be forgone by the queer couple whose intimacy is made possible by discounted hotel rooms during social movements in Hong Kong. Fan's novel's engagement with Buddha's anti-capitalist stance is similarly nuanced. Buddha's embodiment of the reclining pose calls to mind the article "Decomposing Modernity: History and Hierarchy after Development" by Black Studies scholar James Ferguson. In rejecting Western-centric modernity, Ferguson expounds upon how specific African communities began to turn toward "other religion" and concepts of "decomposition," including "death and decay" as well as "apocalyptic temporality" (169, 176, 178). Apocalyptic temporality is a mode of suspending and denying cooperation with a Western-centric modernity that only means more labor exploitation and land expropriation. Ferguson's theory on temporality offers a lens to read Buddha's scenes of disengagement from Boss as a means of "de-temporalization" and "re-temporalization" vis-à-vis capitalist modernity's ruthless forward charge (178, 168). Attuning to all his senses, including his breath, Buddha thinks to himself, "I had learned how to breathe when I came out of my mother's womb, but for the first time in my life, I gained a new awareness of my breathing, which started to regulate itself, establishing a slow rhythm I'd never known before" (287). This rhythm is more in sync with Buddha's dormancy and his milieu; it calls to mind the alternative pace and rhythm that Yogita Goyal and Pang Laikwan of "De-Sovietization and Internationalism" have named in their respective studies of decolonization in the postcolonial world and de-Sovietization in China. Buddha's self-pursuit of peace in the face of personal grief is described as a "long and deep" sleep, a quiet "rest" with the bats to whom "sharing a place" with him "made no difference to them or another" (287). Buddha's decompression and immersion in near-death experiences are useless judged on the productivity scale, but his dormancy marks a short respite, a de-temporalization from the linearity and straight progression of a capital system that makes money by constantly displacing people and demolishing and reconstructing buildings. But the future of that break remains uncertain. By the end of the book's last paragraph, all the readers know is that he has "turned away" from Audrey and Boss, "moved in the opposite direction" (294), left the airport, and "hopped onto a bus" that has "turned a corner and joined the traffic, following the signs to Central London" (295). With this ending, Fan's

imagination of queer alterity, like in Yu's Cantophone short story, remains conservative. Like how Flower and Alice's liberation from home is enabled by the inexpensive six-star hotel room that is only discounted because the 2019 movement has discouraged tourists from visiting Hong Kong, the queer author Fan's anti-capitalist temporality as epitomized by Buddha's corpse pose in the bat cave is short-lived. And in fact, the rest of the novel shows that to escape capitalism's co-optation, rather than staying in stasis, Buddha has to keep running, skipping in and out of systems (be it kin system or narco-capitalism), just like how he traveled to the United Kingdom as Buddha's adopted father and left the airport as a single man.

By the end of the novel, Boss and Buddha become inverses of each other. At the extremes of unseasonable youth, Boss is a teenager acting as a precocious kingpin and the head of a family, while Buddha is a drug addict who refuses to assume adulthood's mantle and settle down. Their careers, in turn, prematurely peak and foreclose because of the ebbs and flows of capitalism undergoing cycles of crises and transformation. Boss's precocious coming-of-age story ironically signals the crisis of childhood. Because of the uncertainties posed by the economy, children cannot afford to be children. Boss, instead, must act like the adult in her family to pull it together. Simultaneously, Boss's accelerated growth signals the family crisis in global modernity, where the economy stagnates. The novel therefore offers a broader critique: precluding any redistribution of wealth, the global economy makes it difficult for individuals from surplus populations to break the status quo of dispossession. The irony is that the fantasy of a good family life, promising shelter and stability, pushes Boss to hustle indefinitely, whether in an urban enclave in Hong Kong or the United Kingdom, and to refuse responsibility for the death of her biological mother.

By contrast, Buddha's self-destructive impulses indefinitely cut his maturation short. Juxtaposing these two autonomous youth, Kit Fan shows how growing up in Diamond Hill indexes various developmental outcomes, partly made sideways by global conditions and partly by personal decisions. These decisions are—too—the autonomous youth's deliberate pivots to game the global development of capitalist modernity to stay on top of it, like Boss's participation in the transnational drug network, or to protest against it, like Buddha's refusal to become a pawn in anybody's scheme or a subject in any world system.

Fan's story does not provide us with a happy ending: the unseasonable youth's pivot from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom does not promise a utopic good life, and the last scene augurs another cycle of dispossession, another lifetime of fugitivity. That transitory emergence and subsequent dissolution of the fictive kinship entanglement clarifies how global capitalism pressures the institution

of family. But Fan's portrayal of the family is complicated: the nuclear family is shown to be and upheld (particularly by the Iron Nun and at one point by Boss) as the bulwark against socioeconomic uncertainty; on the other hand, the novel also warns against any easy fantasy about family being a solution to narcotic and financial problems. The Buddha-Boss-Audrey entanglement enables Fan to criticize the *longue durée* of capitalist modernity, the uneven developments of which breed neuroses and social conditions that force and halt individual growth and separate families, whether biological or surrogate. The sideways life courses that the two unseasonable youths are still pursuing by the end of the novel show that nonlinear development can both accelerate and stunt the effects of a heteronormative capitalist timeline; however, they can also be strategic pathways to undermine it. Absent in Fan's twentieth-century novel is a sustained and prolonged queer challenge to the status quo, perhaps because it would take a concerted effort across classed and racial lines. Present is that intersectional coalition in one of Lai's latest sci-fi, which begins in the twenty-second century.

Queer Mutations in Larissa Lai's *The Tiger Flu*

Larissa Lai's dystopian portrayal of a diasporic Hong Kong unfolds within an advanced neoliberal future where traditional boundaries between nation-states have dissolved and reconfigured. In this transformed world, humans and mutants seek refuge from a deteriorating ecosystem by selling their labor to technocratic oligarchs who vie for market dominance. Going beyond Ng and Fan's narratives of sideways growth—both as remedy for and consequence of neoliberal development across twentieth and twenty-first century Hong Kong and the world—*The Tiger Flu* extends the conceptual framework by positioning Hong Kong diasporic anglophone literature within an era of environmental catastrophe where sustainable personal and collective developments manifest laterally rather than vertically: Lai's vision of sideways development puts adaptation, community, and relationality above the neoliberal obsession with technological transcendence.

Situated in the depleted landscape of the twenty-second and twenty-third centuries (2145–2301), where oil is dried up, Lai's narrative unfolds in Cascadia, a North American region devastated by the Tiger Flu pandemic. This plague resembles HIV/AIDS: it causes lesions on the skin of the infected; but instead of a virus, tiger wine—a libation of alcohol mixed with extracts from the Caspian tiger fur invented by businessman Lennox Ko—spreads the flu. Urban planning shifted in response to the outbreak of the disease: instead of the grids, British Columbia and its neighboring Alberta now exist within four concentric quarantine rings radiating outward from Saltwater City (formerly Vancouver), where

conventional currency has collapsed and the renminbi reigns as the privileged medium of exchange for essential goods. Wealth concentrates in the urban core, dominated by ultra-elite figures like mixed-race Asian CEO Isabelle Chow of HöST Light Industries—a corporation promising a supposed cure to the tiger flu in the digital form of eternal life through consciousness transfer to the orbiting satellites Eng and Chang. The working class inhabits the First Quarantine, including fifteen-year-old Kora Ko, one of our dual protagonists, whom Lai characterizes as a "girl-woman" due to her accelerated development necessitated by a cut-throat techno-capitalism and environmental decline.

The Second Quarantine Ring encompasses Cosmopolitan Earth Country, a nuclear power under the influence of the United Middle Kingdom (the reconfigured China). The Third Quarantine contains the New Origins Archive, repository of deposited memories, and the "Dark Baths" (276)—a gateway to the satellites owned by Chow's business rival, Elzbieta Kruk. The Fourth Quarantine comprises wilderness where mutant Grist Sisters, including our second protagonist Kirilow Grounsel, have been exiled. Settler colonialism persists in this future of the extractive economy: Lai predicts that by making references to displaced Indigenous populations in *The Tiger Flu*, such as the Coast Salish people now sharing their ancestral lands with the cloning corporation Jemini, and through Indigenous characters like Billy Armstrong of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

Lai links the depletion of native sovereignty and environmental resources: oil reserves have been exhausted, rainfall is "too contaminated to be useful" (26), and pollution forms "a heavy layer that lies over Saltwater City all through the dry seasons" (31). Against this backdrop, the Hong Kong mutant Kora's coming-of-age journey challenges conventional development narratives in the face of ecological collapse. Born into a maternal lineage of Grist Sisters, Kora is unaware of her ancestry until she encounters Kirilow Groundsel (a Groom or doctor, in the Grist Sisters reproductive system), who is searching for the last remaining doublers (Grist Sisters who are able to bear and rear children). Kora, a starfish, and Kirilow both descend from Grandma Chan Ling, a Hong Kong refugee who fled during the Japanese occupation to work for Jemini in Cascadia. She pioneered artificial parthenogenesis out of her cell, resulting in mitotic reproduction where daughter cells differentiate into "starfish" (organ producers), "doublers" (reproduction specialists), and regular clones like Kirilow, who became grooms by studying medicine.

Despite her genetic susceptibility, Kora survives through the medical assistance of Kirilow. Their collective perseverance as Grist Sisters presents an alternative posthuman bildungsroman where communal identity supplants the isolated liberal subject. Lai portrays genetic modification from a disability-

informed perspective, in which mutation is a creative response to a series of crises, from ecological degradation to health problems. Kora's evolution—from discovering her ability to regenerate organs to ultimately being grafted into a living tree—embodies an affirmative vision of mutation within a contaminated landscape, conceptualizing a queer trajectory of future growth for diasporic Hong Kong identity. Her narrative pays homage to the Blackfoot practice of tree burial that emphasizes the inextricable relation between humans, mutants, and environment. This entanglement challenges conventional distinctions between natural and unnatural, revealing the "interconnectedness of all our relations," as Anishinaabe scholar Nicholas Reo describes (68). This emphasis on relationality stands in stark contrast to the individualism celebrated within the competitive technology sector, which prioritizes life extension for the wealthy while cannibalizing and siphoning off the consciousness of mutants like Kora from their bodies.

The emerging technological era is ruthlessly competitive. Uncle Wai repeatedly emphasizes to Kora the necessity of having new filigree (USB-stored information) inserted into her scale—a neural interface apparently implanted at birth for Saltwater City residents. Yet this alone proves insufficient given their economic deprivation and the reality that mere information access cannot facilitate Kora's social stability. Her mother, Charlotte, enrolls her in the Cordova Dancing School for Girls (secretly the lost tribe of Grist Sisters established in the First Quarantine by Grandmother Chan Ling's sister, Grandmother Wun Ling)—not from Kora's desire, but to enhance her scavenging and throat-slitting skills.

Kora eventually encounters Kirilow at the school. Kirilow traveled to the First Quarantine from the Fourth following the death of Peristrophe Halliana—her beloved and the last known starfish in Grist City—during a corporate assault. Kirilow journeys in search of another starfish to prevent extinction, ultimately arriving at the Cordova School after being pickpocketed. Unable to overcome the thieves, she joins them instead. At the school she discovers Kora when the girl seeks treatment for a dog bite that severed her hand. Recognizing Kora's facial features as characteristic of a Grist Sister, Kirilow's suspicion is confirmed upon witnessing a new hand regenerating without medical intervention—Kora is indeed a starfish. Though initially rejecting this identity, Kora gradually embraces her connection as Kirilow's "sisters in blood and struggle" and accepts her role in their collective survival (234).

In her conference paper "The Posthuman Bildungsroman: The Clone as Authentic Subject," Katherine Rollo examines clone characters like Kathy in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, arguing that the clone's developmental journey intensifies rather than transcends the life-script imposed by capitalism on the liberal human subject. Lai's Kora and Kirilow represent clones of a maternal

lineage, variously described as "clones" (20) and "mutants" (89) who evolved from the matriarch's cells "beyond the know-how of the clone company Jemini that spawned" (20) them. Unlike Ishiguro's Kathy's aspiration to become a carer—which merely underscores the (post)human subject's entrapment within capitalism's medical-industrial complex—Kora and Kirilow's survival alongside their Grist Sisters reveals an alternative possibility for the posthuman coming-of-age narrative: the bounded liberal subject no longer dominates the genre but gives way to a collective of clones or mutants.

Lai's posthuman coming-of-age narrative follows a distinctive evolutionary trajectory: Kora attains maturity through witnessing and being around multiple deaths, including going through her own (near) death experience. These deaths function symbolically as the death of liberal subjecthood in the traditional bildungsroman, replaced by Lai's radical portrayal of collective survival and interdependence. My examination analyzes the traumatic scenes when Kora witnesses the death of other Grist Sisters at the Pacific Pearl Parkade and confirms her parents' transition to the non-physical shape of Isabelle Chow's digital afterlives, followed by the scenes depicting the demise of Isabelle Chow and her competitor, which also inflict irreparable damage upon Kora. Finally, I pay attention to how Kirilow essentially extends Kora's broken body into her second life as a starfish tree. Throughout this examination, I demonstrate how these deaths function as revelations that catalyze Kora's growth and ultimately lead to her (re) generative mutation.

Techno-capitalism in Saltwater City exacerbates the gap between the rich and the poor in New Cascadia like never before, with the line drawn between the two groups sometimes racial and other times class-based. The ultra-rich are primarily involved in the life-extension businesses. This class comprises businesspeople like Chow's HöST and later competitors Traskin, K2, and Elzbieta, who all have been fighting for the profits of prolonging lives by digitally uploading human and mutant consciousness to Eng and Chang. Their technology is far from perfect; to achieve digital verisimilitude, they have been kidnapping mutants like the Grist Sisters and drugging sick men infected by the tiger flu to use them as test subjects for their uploading technology, otherwise known as the LïFT.

An increasingly inhospitable environment fuels this competition for digital human life extension, made even more inhospitable due to building a technologically advanced metropole. The sick and genetically mutated are mostly descended from people of color, which ironically matches the heritage of some of their oppressors. How they are treated by their white (and now additional Asian) oppressors in the twenty-second century recalls critical race studies scholar Iyko Day's description of the changing makeup of Chinese immigrants

in nineteenth and twentieth-century Vancouver. The first "15,000 Chinese came over in the early 1880s" as "industrious, sober, and cheap labor" to "build the most dangerous and difficult section of the Canadian Pacific Railway" (CBC). Some of them fled home because of war and famine, only to find the other side of the Pacific equally hostile, as they were labeled "unfit for full citizenship" by the 1902 Royal Commission. The poor class background of Chinese immigrants began to change in 1967 when the point system was introduced to assess prospective immigrants, privileging those with professional skills and higher education degrees. In 1986, the Canadian government rolled out a Federal Immigrant Investor Program, eventually attracting many nouveau riche from China (Yan). This class disparity between the rich and the poor Chinese immigrants is what Day means when she writes in the context of Vancouver:

> Immigration policy increasingly privileges flexible Asian citizens with foreign capital, expanding and entrenching the alignment of Asians with an abstract dimension of destructively alien capital. Vancouver's identity as an Asian metropolis and "Pacific gateway" has coincided with widespread resentment of wealthy Chinese investor-migrants, who are blamed for the city's skyrocketing property prices. At the same time, poor Asian migrants situated at the margins of legality represent a perennial threat to the social order and remain indebted to the precarious structure of settler colonial hospitality. (155)

In Lai's twenty-second-century techno-capitalist future, the wealth gap between rich and poor Chinese remains. Wealthy Asian settlers like Chow and K2—Kora's older stepbrother who wins the fight for the inheritance of the cloning company Jemini—eventually enjoy many privileges in settler colonial capitalist economies. Kora—who has the superpower to regrow her organs—and Kirilow, a doctor, are what Iyko Day would call the "high-tech coolies" (156). Though they are not foreign-born scientists (despite coming from Chan Ling), they are not that different from the retro version of coolies from whom the settler colonial economy extracts labor, even though they are not subject to the blatant discrimination of nineteenth-century immigration policy.

Day's analysis of Chinese labor in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries maps onto the environmental crisis of the twenty-second and twenty-third centuries in Lai's imagination because mutants like groom Kirilow are medically sought after due to their genetic rarity and technical know-how. But instead of being commodified as labor where high-tech coolies are compensated for the labor they perform, techno-capitalists like Isabelle Chow turned the Grist Sisters into a consumable source of food: fish.

In front of a device that looks like an elevator called a LïFT, Kora sees a "hundred women with identical glazed eyes, black hair, sharp faces of the same height" who all look like her, their resemblance suggesting their genetic similarity with her. These Grist Sisters queue for their turn to take the elevator up, only to return "as a writhing, flapping mass of fish" (213). Like an elevator, the LïFT goes up as it uploads the women's consciousness onto the satellite Eng to test out the new uploading technology; when it comes down, some of them are turned into fish and later fed to the Parkade's prisoners.

Kora's presence in the Parkade is eventually spotted by Chow, who then orders her henchmen—men sick with the tiger flu and indentured to her—to throw her into the LïFT. There, Kora's elevator stops at multiple levels: on one level, she sees the digital apparitions of Charlotte and Wai (her mother and stepdad) as if they are on a movie set and do not seem to realize Kora's existence; on another level, she encounters Chow herself. The tech tycoon tells Kora not to worry about her parents, informing her that they have been "uploaded to Quay D'Esport, her little paradise on Eng" (217).

Though not transmogrified to fish herself, Kora's treatment by Isabelle is indexical of an exploitative mechanism symbolizing the violent force of what science fiction studies scholar Sherryl Vint calls "the real subsumption of labor [and life] under capitalism" (16): the Grist Sisters' labor, flesh, and spirits are siphoned off. Despite being Asian in this new Cascadia, the technocrat Chow's willingness to sacrifice the lives of women of color shows her complicity in the extractive logic of techno-capitalism. With that, Lai makes the case that race-based solidarity cannot be assumed. To truly survive the environmental crisis, as Kora and Kirilow's eventual settlement in the new Grist Sister villages shows, it takes a broad base of constituents that crosses racial and class lines.

During a conversation with Traskin, the leader of a rival corporation, at the Parkade, it comes out that Kora is the actual biological child of Kai Tak Ko and the heir to the Jemini fortune, a fact that Kora refuses to acknowledge despite knowing it for a long time. Kora's eventual decision to relinquish her potential wealth and choose alliance with Kirilow represents one of Lai's novel's central arguments about the necessity of cross-class solidarity in the face of ecological collapse. The solidarity between Kirilow and Kora embodies an alliance within Day's "triangulated model of Native, settler, and alien populations and positionalities," which illuminates how Asian people's complicity in settler colonial economies is "fulfilled through the migrant labor system" (Day 159). In the relationship between Kirilow, who comes from nothing, and Kora, who comes from generational wealth, Lai creates a narrative framework to prepare readers for the novel's later reimagining of Asian-Indigenous relationality.

The next scene of usurpation takes place at the New Origin Archive in the Third Quarantine Ring. The archive's high priestess tracked Kora and Kirilow down under the guise of celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival. But before the festivities began, Chow takes over Elzbieta Kruk's building, trapping both her and Kora. Lai presents a gruesome scene of cannibalism when Chow transforms her competitor into a "stuffed squash" and "scoops some onto Kirilow's plate" (314). This scene further illustrates the endless cycles of betrayal among technocrats, and Chow's celebration of her newfound economic monopoly in the life-extension business in Cascadia begins to erupt into "uncontrolled laughter of someone who has lost her senses" (315). Echoing in the Hall of Chang are the rumbles of an unexpected ballistic missile launch targeting the satellite Chang. Unexpected, too, is the falling debris from the exploded satellite, which strikes a beam above Chow's head that collapses and kills her. Her corpse—ironically like those she killed—becomes prey for the "turkey vultures" who are "circling in the sky, closing in on their meal" (323).

This chaos eventually creates opportunities for the Grist Sisters to escape. Unfortunately, Kora becomes collateral damage: she is discovered "trapped" under "a giant chunk of brain coral" (319). After they roll it over, they find Kora's torso smashed flat, with "blood pools around her in a wide circle" (319). To rescue Kora and bring her back to life, Kirilow first finds transportation—one of Chow's batter kites, which Kirilow starts by applying her cutting and suturing skills passed down from Grandma Chan Ling through generations, "cutting," "pull[ing] at muscle and vein," "nudg[ing] nerves," and "detach[ing] and reattach[ing]" them in hopes of coaxing the part-organic, part-electronic vehicle back to life (320). Second, with Kora's body broken beyond repair, Kirilow uploads Kora's consciousness to the batter kite using the LïFT. Although the device initially symbolizes the violence of what Marx calls subsumption, Kirilow employs it for a collective survivalist outcome: the LïFT preserves Kora's consciousness, and whatever flesh remains after the upload will regrow. Kirilow—after their getaway on the batter kite—grafts Kora's remains onto a tree. Though the last part of the book refers to it as the new Grist Garden without specifying its location, the hilly terrain recalls a conversation between Kirilow and doubler Bombyx Mori during their escapade, where they mentioned a "well-hidden valley" where Kirilow once took down an "old bull elk," a land that would require permission from "the Kainai" (109), also known as the Blood Tribe, Káínawa, one of the first Nations that comprise the Blackfoot Confederacy in southern Alberta. Not only does the new garden's mountainous landscape suggest that the new settlement would be in Blackfoot territory, but the way Kora recounts her story for her offspring gestures at a burial tradition typical in Blackfoot culture:

> I nearly died. I had to be uploaded to a batterkite and become its consciousness. And then we discovered that the tentacles of the kite doctored carefully and left to lie long enough atop fertile soil could become roots. Bombyx Mori and Kirilow Groundsel worked for many years to make me what I am and to seed the entire Starfish Orchard that nurtures the great Grist Garden (328).

The fact that Kora is planted into a tree evokes the Blackfoot burial practice known as "scaffolding," where the deceased is "buried" in or hoisted into a tree to acknowledge the body's return to nature and its connection to the natural world (Schultz). Since Blackfoot culture holds that the dead travel to a place called Sand Hill, burying them underground would prohibit their spirits from completing this journey (Hungry Wolf). If we were to read the little Grist Sisters as awakening insects in spring, which is curiously listed next to the column "node" on the first page of Part V, it would explain why some travel in formation—with some "fanned out beneath the Kora Tree like synchronized swimmers" (327)—while others journey in packs, "described as fresh litter of young sister doubles comes up the hillside" (328). In this way, the final part of Lai's novel becomes a metaphor for the dead heroine's posthuman continuity in the form of a tree and the shading it offers insects.

But if we were to suspend disbelief and read this at face value, the synthesis of mechanics—like the batterkite that Kirilow coaxes back to life—with Kora's organic materials, and subsequently her body with botanic substances, speaks to the indispensable role of all technologies involved in Kora's ecology of mutation. This new life cycle bypasses heteronormativity, exemplifying what eco-feminist Catriona Sandilands calls queer ecology, which "re-imagines evolutionary processes, ecological interactions, and environmental politics in the light of queer theory" (1). In *The Tiger Flu*, each role in the Grist Sisters' ecology—the doublers, starfish, and grooms—has equal significance in preserving the Grist Village, inviting us to consider a collaborative lifeway begun by parthenogenesis (a practice that was once the center of much discussion of lesbian separatism, as I discuss below) and quite different from the straight and competitive logic of settler colonialism. In the face of twenty-second-century techno-capitalist settler colonialism, the Grist Sisters' queer ecology represents a variation of enabling entanglement. This Asian-Indigenous, human-environment entanglement demonstrates how the new mutants' boundaries become porous with native land and lifeways: the starfish tree, another entangled figure, freely shares history and knowledge of survival, taking up Vint's challenge to imagine a "decommodified future" (21).

Kirilow models her medical repair of Kora on grandmother Chan Ling's genetic engineering: this nonprofit and feminist self-reproductive technology

of mutation sets the Grist Sisters' life extension technologies apart from those pursued by Chow and her competitors, with the former being capitalist and for-profit and the latter anticolonial and accountability-oriented. Instead of uploading or reproducing through the heteronormative process of fertilization, Chan Ling invents a parthenogenic mode of reproduction. Kirilow describes this self-reproducing process:

> We egg ourselves along—I mean, the long, lizardy love of the Grist sisters. We split, we slit, we heal, we groom, self-mutated beyond the know-how of the clone company Jemini that spawned us and the HöST scale and microchip factories that bought our grannies to work for them. But there are flaws in our limited DNA—the DNA of just one woman. We mutate for better and worse, for sickness and health. But more for sickness and worse. Only our starfish can save us by regrowing whatever grooms like me cut out of them. Grandma Chan Ling invented the kiss cut, the repair job—what do you say? The fix, the patch. The first starfish gave her liver, kidneys, and her red-hot heart to the first doubler. And so it was, in the beginning. (20)

The cut that is central to the continuation of the Grist sisters calls to mind trans theorist Eva Hayward's musings in "More Lessons from a Starfish." Following disability studies scholar Robert McRuer and hydro-feminist Stacy Alaimo, Hayward imagines that "cutting is a generative enactment of growing back," instead of being a pathological act of castration, a trans-fem perspective sees a starfish's cut as a "trans-enabling" act (71, 70). Chan Ling's parthenogenic mode of reproduction might be more aptly called a queer enabling because it recalls a chapter of lesbian separatist history in the 1970s and 1980s, such as Jeanne Gallick's contribution to *Amazon Quarterly* (1973) that fantasized about what cloning technologies could do for women in the creation of a future without men (Rensenbrink 304). Lai's portrayal of Kora and Kirilow as cloned genetic mutants also resonates with queer studies scholar Ramzi Fawaz's *New Mutants*, which examines how post-war Silver Age comics actively reclaim "mutant outcasts" who ultimately forge a new conception of citizenship beyond the Golden Age's exclusive focus on superheroes as embodiments of American exceptionalism. Lai's treatment of Kora and Kirilow as mutants directs us toward a different mode of belonging—one unbound by national borders but defined by collective commitment to survival.

By partly centering the tale on the coming-of-age of a mutant, rather than fixating on human genomic purity in the post-Hiroshima era, Lai envisions a queer and lateral trajectory of growth for the Hong Kong diaspora amid environmental crisis. Through a perilous expedition rivaling Katniss Everdeen's in

The Hunger Games, Kora eventually finds a second life in the new Grist Garden with Kirilow. Their success demonstrates interdependence not only among the Grist Sisters but also with the native land they ultimately inhabit. Kora's personal development becomes inherently relational rather than individualistic, demonstrating what Trawlwoolway scholar Lauren Tynan terms "relationality" as onto-epistemology (600)—attuned to differences across gender, ability, and cultural backgrounds. Through this narrative, Lai suggests how evolution occurs when the boundaries defining the traditional liberal subject of the bildungsroman are severed, sutured, and mutated through openness to others. The more-than-human becomes essential for sustainable development in a climate-altered world.

At bottom, *The Tiger Flu* is about adaptation: it not only tells readers a tale of Kora's posthuman evolution but is itself a product of it. Grandmother Chan Ling's "partho pop" technology recalls an urtext of queer Hong Kong literature: Dung Kai-cheung's 1994 novella, 安卓珍尼 (*Androgyny*), which features a slightly different Hong Kong hybrid, a lizardy creature called *Capillisarus varicaudata* that is endemic to the countryside of the city. This chimeric species is described as androgynous in the story because of its female anatomy, and some of the members pretend to be males when mating with each other during the spring season (Dung 11). The novella's chimeric figure never shows itself and was reportedly last seen in the summer of 1994 on Tai Mo Shan, the highest peak in Hong Kong, but it is compelling enough to mesmerize the main woman character to leave her husband to trace the whereabouts of the lizard. Dung's queer imagination anticipated Lai's Grist Sisters: it is described as "蜥蜴" (22; a lizard), "單性" (56; single-sex), "雌性自身生產" (57; all self-reproducing females). Hailing from this diasporic lineage beginning with Dung's "non-existent species," Lai's Kora becomes Hong Kong's intertextual successor.

The Tiger Flu draws from a Sinophone literary memory of the city from the last century, whose present population sees a significant exodus. Reflecting the diasporic reality of Hong Kong is Lai's tale of the future. Incorporating concepts of gender and sexual differences from Dung's sci-fi, Lai tells an updated story for our time, enhanced with posthumanism as well as awareness of queer history (such as parthenogenesis from lesbian separatism) and trans theory (like the starfish from Hayward). Lai's posthuman imagination, which partly takes the form of a coming-of-age narrative, challenges the liberal subjecthood typical in the genre at the verge of global environmental breakdown, where individual survival, even with the assistance of life-extending technology, is antithetical to collective survival (as proven by one techno-capitalist's usurpation after another).

By the end of the novel, Kora reaches maturity by providing for her younglings through her organs and stories. By positioning Kora's storytelling at the

novel's end, Lai challenges the linear process of evolution traditionally championed by the mandate of "the survival of the fittest." The Grist Sisters' survival is sideways, collective, and lateral, in collaboration with community members and the ecosystem. Just as Kora suggests to her descendants, *The Tiger Flu* suggests to readers (primarily diasporic Hong Kongers) that they must practice the posthuman ethics of collective survival as part of the continuous process of navigating the futures of capitalist (post)modernity.

Conclusion

In the face of these (inevitable) cycles of crisis, Ng, Fan, and Lai's unseasonable protagonists show us that one of the anti-inter-imperial ways for minorities of all kinds to survive and resist complacency is to grow sideways. The sideways pathways by which the untamable specters in Ng's ghost story travel, as well as the "unseasonableness" that youthful characters in Fan and Lai novels manifest, are "at once critique[s] of a singular developmental model and the rethinking of historical time in terms of its possibilities rather than its determinations"—to borrow postcolonial literary studies scholar David Lloyd's words (qtd in Esty 197).

Interesting, too, are how these sideways developmental models arrive to the readers in narratives rhetorically marked by what postcolonial studies scholar Dipesh Chakravorty calls the theory of "History 2." Existing to the side of "History 1," which is the terrain of modern capitalism destined to continue in the Chinese Century in a revised or repetitive form, History 2 is not noncapitalist per se but results without feeding back to further capitalist ends. For instance, Ng's narrative of Suze's haunting constitutes what Lim calls "the radical noncontemporaneity" that "disjoins the normativity to modern temporality" (70). And Fan and Lai both introduce secondary time-telling schemes at the beginning of each section: the twenty-four solar terms in the Chinese calendar, which mark the twenty-hour segments a year that remind the farmers of agricultural activities influenced by weather change. In *Diamond Hill*, seasonal markers like "The Awakening of Insects" (13; 驚蟄), "Grain Rain" (51; 穀雨), "Grain in Ear" (91; 芒種), and "White Dew" (14; 1白露) appear. In *The Tiger Flu*, each chapter is formatted like a diary entry, announced by a "Day" followed by a number, and then "Node" followed by "Kernels Plump," "Grain in Bread," "Minor Heat," and "Autumn Equinox." These Chinese solar markers—unlike the Gregorian calendar that symbolizes the linearity of capitalism and modernity—index a cyclical temporality. They tell stories of alternative agricultural developments that observe the weather—units of History 2, where they "inhere in capital and yet interrupt and punctuate the run of capital's logic" (Chakravorty 780). These temporal markers encourage readers to understand these narratives as part of Lim's

"non-synchronism," which challenges the "elitism of modernity's consciousness of time" in the US-led twentieth century and the China-led twenty-first and twenty-second centuries (297).

Global Hong Kong anglophone fiction offers my theorization of sideways development with exemplifications and options. Together, these novels heighten our attention to Eurocentrism's complex emplotment and translation in (post) colonies and peripheral regions, including (post)colonial Hong Kong, London's Chinatown, Indigenous land, and ethnic enclaves in Canada. From arrested development to anti-developmentalism to queer involution, this cohort of historical, horror, and science fiction authors reframes the historical past, present, and future, not as something that is fixed but instead as conditions for other possibilities of survival and becoming. The fact that Buddha, Boss, and Kora persist until the last page despite persecution and criminalization and Suze continues to haunt the living (if not outlasting them), indicate the viability of a sideways response to capitalist modernity that imagines nonlinear, anti-developmental, and posthumanist life trajectories.

Building on this chapter's focus on queer Hong Kong anglophone literature, the next chapter plumbs the depths of another anglophone literary genre: poetry. It builds on this chapter's theorization of sideways development, particularly as a form of radical collaboration, by delving into its various forms, histories, and implications in the current moment as they are rendered to us by trans and nonbinary Hong Kong diasporic poets.

3: Translating Queer-ness in Transnational Poetics and Performance

This chapter examines sideways development within the intensifying new Cold War against the backdrop of this book's writing. Traditional Cold War analysis positions China as the Soviet Union's successor in a linear struggle against US hegemony. However, world-system theorist Immanuel Wallerstein's cycles of hegemony framework offers a different perspective: the current US-China rivalry represents "an intra-core competition" where China has risen from the periphery to challenge the established core (Xing and Bernal-Meza). This fundamentally reframes the new Cold War not as an ideological battle between communism and capitalism, but as competition between two capitalist powers: the declining US metropole versus China's ascendant statist capitalism. In light of this update, decolonizing Cold War thinking requires us to adopt anti-capitalist and nonbinary perspectives. I propose looking to the works of queer, nonbinary, and trans diasporic Hong Kongers residing in the US, UK, and Canada for answers. Their cultural expressions transform sideways development from fictional characters' plot trajectories to embodied relational aesthetics and poetics within performance and poetry.

I analyze these sideways orientations and relations using intersectional formalism against the backdrop of major politics that unfolded during and after the Umbrella Movement (UM). Drawing on queer theorist Eve Sedgwick's concept of "periperformatives"—utterances peripheral to oppositional struggles (70)—I explore how these artistic works resists being defined by dominant ideologies. Wu Tsang, Mary Jean Chan, and Grace Lau create what I call an "aesthetic of beside-ness"—a relational approach where growth happens sideways through self-assembly and minor alliances, allowing their queer and trans poetics to develop through placing different parts of a whole alongside each other rather than in hierarchical arrangements.

This beside-ness appears in Asian American trans artist Wu Tsang's collaboration with their Hong Kong translators. Together, they translated the poetry

of Qiu Jin, a Qing Dynasty poet and lesbian revolutionary, whose story Wu and their partner Boychild enacted on stage. Mary Jean Chan presents beside-ness in their poetry through two personas: the poet and their mother, or as their feminine and masculine self. This duality symbolizes what Melanie Klein called the process of reparation and love, essential to a child's achievement of a sense of autonomy. Chan's autobiographical poetry imagines nonbinary growth as a becoming process that requires connection and distance. Similarly, in Lau's poetry, beside-ness emerges in her gastronomic poetics, in which her emotional growth involves embodying the personas around her, including her father and her favorite drag queen, Yuhua Hamasaki. Drawing on Freud's concept of introjection in discussions of psychological development, I interpret Lau's imagery of food as part of her expressions of growing sideways rather than upward. From Tsang's (mis)translation project with the Mistranslation Club to Chan's queer translation as a poetic mode to Lau's poetics of introjection, Hong Kong diasporic artists demonstrate sideways orientations across the page and stage. Their aesthetics are periperformatives that cluster around but do not exacerbate the major politics of the new Cold War, offering a potentially de-Cold War alternative to the binary logic that dominated political and cultural discussions of and about Hong Kong during and after the Umbrella Movement.

As Chen Kuan-Hsing expounds, "to de-Cold War at this point in history does not mean to simply rid ourselves of a cold-war consciousness or to try to forget that period in history" but to "mark out a space in which unspoken stories and histories may be told" (120). I study three works of three distinct artists engaged in marking out these spaces. Asian American artists Tsang and Boychild collaborated with Hong Kong's LGBTQ+ community, members of the Mutual Love Society (共愛會) recombined as the Mistranslation Club, to produce *Duilian*, a multimodal project comprised of a 2015 exhibition, a film, a performance, and a booklet of poetry. I also select poems from Chan's debut *Flèche* (2019) and their subsequent collection, *Bright Fear* (2023), and from Grace Lau's debut publication, *The Language We Were Never Taught to Speak* (2021). Their poetics prompt us to envision a periperformative in the new Cold War, prompting a decolonial, de-imperial, and de-Cold War imagination of a "minor-to-minor network" that bypasses major states (Lionnet and Shih 8). This minor-to-minor LGBTQ+ allegiance exists in Sedgwick's "periperformative topoi" of the main stage of Cold War politics, where ideological divisions are entrenched (79). Unlike the protest sites in the 2019 anti-ELAB movement where thousands of Hong Kong protesters waved the American flag, these poetics are less divisive and more social, and people who identify with a Hong Kong lineage turn to relation-building with the self and others as a continuation of a pluralist political expression that is inclusive of sexual, gendered, racial, and ethnic minorities.

In their poems and performances, Wu, Chan, and Lau show awareness of the allure of the (neo)colonial co-optation of minorities—they are not mouthpieces. Wu Tsang's *Duilian* calls out the "New Youth" in the Chinese diaspora for their corruption because they "don't understand Western knowledge," insinuating their hypocrisy (scene 12A, *Duilian*). Mary Jean Chan's *Flèche* offers a trenchant criticism of religious colonial education in Hong Kong that requires students who are assigned female at birth to wear a uniform that "shuts" their "body up" (10). In the autobiographical poem "Red and Yellow," Lau's narrator wonders how her partner and, by extension, her partner's elders of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, survived the violence of the Indian Act in Canada. This 1876 law notoriously stripped women of their native status if they married out (Lau 69). By endorsing neither Western (neo)liberalism nor Chinese capitalism with socialist characteristics, Hong Kong diasporic queer and trans poetics holds space for untold stories and histories.

Little work has been done to explore trans, nonbinary, and queer diasporic Hong Kong aesthetics for its comments on global politics, with one exception: Howard Chiang's work on the intersection between transgender studies and transnational politics. In Chiang's *Transtopia in the Sinophone Pacific*, he focuses on the "powerful but also monstrous" "castrated figures" in the "late [old] Cold War" cinema (1947–1991) that call forth the centuries-old trope of "body-as-signifier" around the Sinophone Pacific (23). The trope, he adds, holds geopolitical significations across history and regimes from "Ming Dynasty, anti-Manchu nationalism, revolutionary Maoism, radical France, Asian America, and postcolonial Hong Kong" (10). Borrowing this trans concept of "body-as-signifier" from the Sinophone world for my trans, nonbinary, and queer focused studies of anglophone Hong Kong and Hong Kong diasporic texts in the twenty-first century calls forth a very different cohort of cultural illustrations; I specifically look to poetics. Indeed, as poet Oliver Bendorf says, the queer genre of trans poetics is always already bodily, and he calls the literary works themselves "poem bodies": aesthetic extensions of their trans, nonbinary, queer, and gender expansive creators (422). "Poem bodies" are also the sensate receptors and expressions that "grieve and feel shame and sense things and exist in a certain time and space" (Bendorf 422).

The poem bodies I consider in this chapter resemble what Peter Kalliney calls, in *The Aesthetic Cold War: Decolonization and Global Literature*, "forms of intellectual nonalignment," whereby cultural producers "imagine themselves as part of an international affirmatively nonaligned network of intellectuals, crisscrossing national boundaries and entrenched ideologies" (13, 15). At its origin, the anglophone literary field is the cultural terrain where Cold War politics played out, with "big states" either "subsidizing literary productions" or "harassing dissent writers" and with legacies that outlived the actual Cold War (Kalliney

13). Though the Cold War supposedly ended when the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, the political binarism produced by Cold War rhetoric continues to structure political analysis in the current era. Indeed, in the age of what political pundits have called the new Cold War, Hong Kong is the site of stand-off between China and the US.

In this polarized, politically charged context, Chinese British Chan, Chinese Canadian Lau, and Chinese American Wu alongside the Mutual Love Society all imagine alternative relations. Their poems braid together a minor and translational genealogy of queer and trans networks of revolutionaries that go beyond the here and now, involving not only the artists themselves, their (distant) family, (fictive) kin, and historical rabble-rousers from China. I analyze them by training attention on the expressions of minor-minor alliance to identify how components of queer and trans poetics come together in the process of translation—a process that all three artistic units take up as a metaphor or actual praxis.

As such, this chapter challenges major interpretive frameworks that idealize herculean actions, such as protests, as the ultimate political expression. In "The Elusive Material," Rey Chow discusses why quieter behaviors like translation, performance, and poetry writing have had difficulty being recognized as political. Major political systems, like Marxism and liberalism, she argues, habitually measure resistance through material change. And change is often gauged by "agency." Such agency is measurable only as "a motion and transformation which aimed at an increasingly better (that is, more advanced, more enlightened, and more democratic) world" (223). The same logic applies to how major politics has shaped the mainstream reception of Hong Kong LGBTQ+ anglophone poetry, as I briefly illustrate below with Nicholas Wong's poem "Children of China." I argue that this poem falls into the interpretative framework of the major, making it immediately legible as a response to major politics, like the US and China's tug-of-war and Hong Kong social unrest. From this backdrop of Wong's work, I turn to Chan's, Lau's, and Wu's, Boychild's, as well as the Mutual Love Society's queer and trans poetics and politics.

Major Politics in Queer Poetics

Anglophone poetry is not and will not be a Hong Kong genre, suggested Nicholas Wong, winner of the Lambda Literary Award in the category of gay poetry, in a 2019 interview: "each city has their own genre, and Hong Kong needs a bit of time to explore" (K. Cheung). Wong also provided some personal insight: "I've been a bit withdrawn, or detached, from the act of writing . . . I don't get up in the middle of the night, feeling bored, and start writing like I used to." He con-

tinued, since the 2014 start of the UM, "the energy of the whole city changed, and so did my own. I lost my sense of balance and well-being, and I can't write creatively anymore." Politics caused a creative dry spell for the poet: "The subject has overridden the entire city—it's shattered it."

Unlike others who have successfully found creative inspiration from the protests, Wong's imagination has been curbed by revolutionary politics. His anxiety is understandable. An ethnically Chinese writer in English at a moment of heightened politicization for a global audience, Wong—like Hong Kong—is caught in a tug-of-war between two global superpowers—China and the US—and his interview expressed that sense of anxiety and frustration. He mentioned being aware of a "red line" concerning political speech that he cannot cross in the city. He also recounted how "American publishers" "will be turned off" when "they hear Hong Kong" come up because "they don't have [the stomach] to digest," having "enough shit to deal with on their own with regard to race, sexuality, gender, immigration" (K. Cheung). Given these comments, readers might be forgiven for expecting Wong to retreat from politics entirely. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, his second collection, *Besiege Me*, published with American press Noemi in 2022, reflects a willingness to draw upon the fraught legacy of the protests to challenge and critique China and appeal to Western audiences.

Nowhere is this dynamic more apparent than in the first poem, "Children of China," which at once regurgitates Orientalist tropes and indexes the challenge of achieving legibility in the anglophone cultural arena during a new Cold War. Narrated by a collective "we," the poem addresses a "you" who appears to be the speakers' parent(s). The parent-child relationship is almost coercive, as is immediately clear in the first line: "we wake, forced to taste your colostrum" (3). Setting the politically confrontational tone for the collection it inaugurates, the poem's collective narrator also accuses China of violating human rights, "a sanctity of humans locking up humans" (3). Critical of the rise of a global class of Chinese nouveau riche that the parents are part of and their suppression of voices that dissent from the order which enabled their rise, "we" directly addresses their Chinese parents in a tone of increasing frustration: "You're aimlessly loud & lewd—in a gallery or gulch, squatting" (3). Indicting their Chinese parents, "we" demonstrates to a global anglophone audience their awareness that those parents are the shameless pirates of other countries' "plackets, rockets, and luck," who are bullies that "[exaggerate] until [others] accept" them with insatiable appetites that equate "more" to "orgasmic" (3). Essentially, the "Children of China" announces to a global audience that Wong is a voice from Hong Kong, representing the student protesters fighting against a vast, imposing parent country.

The poem's position makes it even more conspicuous: it comes before the

epigrams, against the usual convention of poetry collection. This unusual placement overdetermines the script, offering readers the key they should use as they proceed with the collection. Most of the remaining poems are about Wong's fraught relationship with his father—poems that would not appear as immediately political if readers were not primed to read his father as a metaphorical extension of the Chinese patriarch. To rise to legibility, Wong presents American readers with the theatrics of "generational change." In her essay considering a post-UM subjectivity, Agnus Ku observes that the Umbrella Generation's expression of self-determination, distinct from the previous generation, is "a new blend of confrontational and expressive repertoires" (122). Bringing these theatrics into the legislative council—such as mispronouncing "the People's Republic of China" in their vow to serve the SAR—some young protesters who were elected to represent their districts were eventually disqualified and imprisoned. Though not to the same extreme, Wong's "we" positions itself as a moral arbiter, distinguishing itself from the older generation by playing what Hentyle Yapp calls "major China" (10). The collective "we" is Wong's poetic translation of the UM Generation onto the page, brandishing their newfound agency. Just like generations of Asian/American artists (beginning with pioneering author Maxine Hong Kingston having to subtitle the fictional *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* as non-fiction), Wong—more likely than not—had to respond to editorial and readerly expectations conditioned by global politics. The performative aspect and discursive placement of "Children of China" may reflect Wong's personal political views, but it may also be evidence that he had to satisfy strategically the liberal publisher's anticipation of what an LGBTQ+ artist from Hong Kong looks like: a herculean subject fighting the US's major geopolitical competitor.

Wong is not the first Chinese artist to navigate major international politics in the global literary and art world. In *Minor China*, Yapp explicates what he means by "major China" through examples of the global art world. For post-Tiananmen Chinese art objects to be deemed valuable, they must be created by artists who validate the biases of the liberal institutions which habitually seek "herculean resistors to an authoritarian state" (16). Yapp uses noted Chinese artist Ai Weiwei to illustrate major politics' overdetermination of the global art market. Ai is largely remembered as a Sisyphean dissident from China, and the art world prizes his art for its resistance. As Yapp points out, this reflex interpretation emerges in the wake of the Cold War. What that framework misses are more subtle responses to major politics—subtleties that minoritized artists, such as women and queer and trans people, in China and the Chinese diaspora often have to master because of their vulnerability to surveillance and punishment.

Unlike the familiar narratives of major political systems Chow describes,

political change by minorities does not follow the formulaic narrative—beginning with the oppressed population's realization of their oppression, moving through heightened consciousness and eventually action—and escapes recognition by interpretive value systems. The same logic applies to how major politics has shaped the mainstream reception of Hong Kong anglophone poetry. "Children of China" is a major—or legible—response to major politics because it demonstrates resistance in the broad, obvious way that liberal institutions expect and value. Unlike the "we" in Wong's poem, the poems by Chan, Lau, and Wu are less performative and more subtle.

Returning to Sedgwick, Wong's "Children of China" is an Austinian speech act that dares a reaction from the Chinese authorities, an interpellator who makes up half of the main stage of the new Cold War: Wong, representing the West, is the addresser of the dare, and China the addressee. In contrast to Wong's performative utterance, the periperformative utterances imbedded in the queer and trans poetics of Wu, Boychild, the Mutual Love Society, Chan, and Lau cluster around the sides of the center stage. Sedgwick concretizes the meaning of periperformative: in a space created and defined by "a third-person plural, a 'they' of witness" breaks the presumed "consensus" between "the speakers and the witnessed," "embodied by the lack of a formulaic negative response to being dared or to be interpellated as a witness to dare" (70). Refusing to agree or disagree with either party to the dare—the US or China—Wu, Boychild, and the Mutual Love Society; Chan; and Lau embody the "witness"; their queer and trans poetics are periperformatives "clustered around" or "near to or next to" the performative sites (68). The poets were either in the vicinity of the protests, like Wu and Boychild were, or they expressed concern over the city in their poems, despite being thousands of miles away from home, as Chan and Lau did. However, the distance from the main stage of politics does not make these poetic works apolitical. Afforded the advantage of critical distance, Wu's, Chan's, and Lau's poetics are periperformative utterances, not premeditated knee-jerk replies to the privileged performative site of the ideological and physical stage.

Misrecognition, Mistranslation, and Minor-to-Minor Alliance in Wu Tsang's *Duilian*

From March to May 2016, the Spring Workshop in Hong Kong displayed Wu Tsang's exhibition *Duilian*, the result of the artist's two three-month residencies at the workshop, a space dedicated to international cross-disciplinary programs of curatorial residencies, films, and talks. *Duilian* leverages the artist's decade-long research into the life and writings of the nineteenth-century revolutionary poet Qiu Jin, often portrayed as a national heroine in the Chinese

mainstream. The multimodal installation included moving images, writings, sculpture, and performance, all centered around an experimental kung-fu film, also called *Duilian*. The film focuses on Qiu Jin's intimate relationship with her friend and calligrapher Wu Zhiying and a radical group of like-minded 金蘭姊妹 (sworn sisters) in 1906, when she joined the "Mutual Love Society" and left her abusive husband and children for Japan to initiate a revolution in the hope of a better future for China. These sworn sisters were a collaborative effort, and so, too, were the film's and exhibition's production. Wu and her artistic partner Boychild—along with what she named the "Mistranslation Club" of local LGBTQ+ community members—(mis)translated Qiu Jin's poems from classical Chinese to English and then interpreted and performed them with choreography and voice acting.

For Wu, she and her club's "mistranslating" or "reading between the lines" of established narratives about Qiu to arrive at greater truths about gender and sexuality are born out of her identity search in China, a trip when she first discovered Qiu's poetry. Wu—who was assigned male at birth and maintains an androgynous presentation now—shared in an interview with *The White Review* that she first read Qiu Jin's poetry when she visited China in her early twenties with her father, a trip in which she had a "rude awakening" (Barget). She recalled, "Things I thought I would discover about myself, I didn't necessarily find. But I did discover Qiu Jin." Wu has held on to Qiu's poetry since then. Depending on tones, Wu's title for the exhibition has two English transliterations of the Cantonese words 對聯 (couplet poetry) and 對練 (sword dueling), two terms that imply dualities, and *Duilian* is Wu's speculation of who Qiu is and what her story means for Wu's self-discovery as a trans person in the Chinese diaspora. In telling Qiu's story, the exhibition also refracts Wu's social and cultural transition as an Asian American when she travels to Hong Kong and China. *Duilian* suggests that this transition involves more than one person.

The project's title and its content suggest that transition is a collaborative process. In the film, Wu and Boychild (whose off-stage name is Tosh Bosco), respectively, play Wu Zhiying and Qiu Jin, by turns reciting poetry and sitting side by side or wielding swords at each other in the liminal space near the waterway where mainland China and Hong Kong share a border (see Figures 3 and 4)—a contemporary trans embodiment of China's past. Their opening stage performance at the exhibition on March 24, 2016, echoes these scenes: Wu, in a skin-tight bodysuit, is enveloped in illuminated armor composed of Wushu swords, LED rope lights, steel, cables, and wires. She reads English translations of poems by Wu Zhiying and Qiu Jin, while Boychild, bare-chested, dances downstage. This opening performance, *You Sad Legend*, condenses the film into a four-act dance and serves as a funeral, properly sending off Qiu's spirit with

Fig. 3. Wu Tsang. *Duilian*, 2016. single-channel digital video (colour, sound), duration: 26 min. 16 sec. M+, Hong Kong. [2019.505]. © Wu Tsang. Image courtesy of M+, Hong Kong.

Fig. 4. Wu Tsang. *Duilian*, 2016. single-channel digital video (colour, sound), duration: 26 min. 16 sec. M+, Hong Kong. [2019.505]. © Wu Tsang. Image courtesy of M+, Hong Kong.

the ritual of burning paper offerings—something she did not receive upon her premature death in 1907 at the hands of the Manchu government.

As a whole, *Duilian* poses two questions: What does it mean for Wu Tsang and Boychild, a trans Chinese American artist and a trans Filipino American performer, to misrecognize and re-enact the history of a failed revolutionary heroine whose poems became the incriminating evidence for her execution by the court of Qing (1644–91) in a situation quite similar to Hong Kong's current prosecution of "seditious" cultural productions? What is gained and lost in their trans bodies' re-enactment of a figure whom the Chinese government has now immortalized as a "巾幗英雄" (heroine), a decidedly gendered term for a woman patriot? To unpack these questions, we have to understand what Wu means by translation: what she calls mistranslation; how she and her club members mistranslate Qiu's poems; and what the significance is when the mistranslations become the script that Wu and Boychild use to give voice to Qiu and Wu Zhiying in the film and the opening performance of the exhibition.

Quoting materials from the past has always been a part of Wu's aesthetic repertoire. In her film *[For How We Perceived a Life (Take 3)]*, for instance, Wu and her cast borrow their lines from director Jennie Livingston's fieldwork notes from when she was making the 1990 documentary *Paris Is Burning* (qtd. in Lee 685). Wu called this practice "full body quotation" (Lee 680). Asian American film theorist Summer Kim Lee deepens the practice's theoretical engagement of Wu by distinguishing how it is different from traditional borrowed speech: rather than citing the original text to prove her mastery, in Wu's full body citation the borrower "gives an account of oneself through another with no institutional, proprietary claims over what one comes to learn about oneself, which is always about what one comes to learn about others" (681). Wu's discovery of Qiu—including her eventual mistranslation and enactment of her—is Wu's attempt to show what she has learned about trans/queer identities in Chinese history, which is also an attempt to reveal herself by identifying with Qiu, who must be closest to how Wu sees herself. However, both the film and the exhibition *Duilian* twist Wu's usual practice of full-body quotations with a linguistic difference. Her and her team's mistranslation of Qiu provides space for errors and misrecognition, acknowledging that she is not the master but a student of Qiu's history and poetry. Wu's self-discovery eventually involves more than herself and becomes a ground for building what she calls "indebted relations" between her and other sworn sisters (Lee 680)—queer and nonbinary activists in Hong Kong—all in the name of and owing to Qiu and her "Mutual Love Society," as well as her art's indebtedness to the tradition of Chinese poetry and performance. But then what does it mean to understand mistranslation as a mode of building "indebted relations"?

As Wu explained in *The White Review* interview, "The metaphor of translation became a way to talk about queer history. Queer history always involves a bit of a misrecognition. You have to see it or misrecognize it in the clues that exist. You can only wonder and speculate, which makes it special. It has a relationship to truth and history that is not so fixed" (Barget). Wu's (mis)translation is a mixture of "originals written by Qui Jin, Wu Zhiying, and Xu Xihua [another intimate friend of Qiu]" and some "modern poems playing off of the original" (Barget). Thus, Wu's use of "(mis)translation" encompasses a praxis of art making and a metaphor for making queer kin across Chinese and diasporic subjects living unhappily under the global cisgender heteropatriarchy.

Wu is cautious about not mapping her contemporary trans identity to that of Qiu in the Qing dynasty. To create space between the otherwise one-to-one correspondence typical in normative translation, Wu and her team devise the method of mistranslation. Mistranslation represents disloyalty to the original, but not out of spite. To the contrary, mistranslation demonstrates Wu's respectful attitude toward non-Western and non-contemporary Chinese queer identity. Wu's method, which reveals the gender-queer possibilities of the non-Western past, calls to mind Carolyn Dinshaw's discussion in *Getting Medieval*, where she offers feeling as a way to trace queerness and transness across periods. Dinshaw suggests that by "focus[ing] on the possibility of touching across time through affective contact between marginalized people now and then," queer and trans historians can open up possibilities to "form communities across time" (qtd. in Devun and Tortorici 518).

In *Duilian*, Wu finds an affective foothold in playacting the history of Qiu, the cross-dressing, sword-wielding revolutionary heroine of the late-nineteenth century, by choosing to perform—with Boychild—poetic vignettes that highlight Qiu's anger, dysphoria, and feelings of alienation. By performing that history on stage and screen alongside her Filipino American partner, acknowledging the mistranslation of their English renditions of Qiu's poems, Wu builds a global community with both the reality and fantasy of queer and trans communities in the past and present of China and Hong Kong. Furthermore, *Duilian* undertakes two epistemologically significant tasks: by mistranslating Qiu and becoming part of her history through that misrecognition, Wu actively disembeds herself from Western-centric teleological narratives of queerness and transness. In keeping with myriad projects in US-based queer and trans of color critique, Wu then re-embeds herself in a non-white queer and trans genealogy, entering a temporality "with no clear origin and point of arrival" (Snorton 2). (Through different modes of operation and poetic aesthetics, we will see Chan's and Lau's poetry performing the same task by naming themselves and claiming kinship with queer and trans figures across the literatures and histories of China and

Hong Kong.) From a performance studies perspective, Wu's mistranslation of Qiu ultimately constitutes her attempt to give an account of herself—an account that necessarily encompasses others.

In her analysis of Wu Tsang, who uses the phrase "full body quotation" to describe the aesthetic practice of lip-synching in their videos, Summer Kim Lee mines the relation-building implication of this practice. Rather than an attempt to speak for or on behalf of someone who does not necessarily share her background, Wu's "full body quotation" is her ethical performance of her indebtedness to trans and queer artists and activists who came before her. Without them, as Lee's extrapolation of Wu's work has it, she could not give an account of herself without providing an account of the other. In this light, Wu's mistranslation eventually became a relation-building mechanism across trans Asian American artists and their local counterparts, Qiu's poetry and its translators, and *Duilian*'s performers and audience. Understanding how *Duilian*'s poetics of ventriloquism operates and what it, in turn, means for Wu, her collaborators, her audience, and even Qiu retrospectively requires us to closely compare Qiu's original poems, written in classical Chinese, to the Mistranslation Club's English translations as printed in the project's publication *Tears, Tears, Tears* and as performed during *You Sad Legend*.

Qiu's poetry is informed by the context in which she lived. Considered a national heroine in communist China and a martyr for the cause of feminism, Qiu is remembered for her patriotism and immortalized beside West Lake of Hangzhou after being beheaded as a traitor to the Qing government. Born in 1875 (–1907) into a wealthy family in Zhejiang, Qiu grew up to be a path-breaking leader in a conservative and feudalist China that habitually prioritized men over women. After China lost the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) to Japan, Empress Cixi set up channels to send Chinese elites and scholars to study abroad in the hopes that they would return to the country and help rebuild the Qing Dynasty with the modern ways of life that they had acquired in Japan, which had already opened to the West. Qiu was one of the youths who took advantage of the rare opportunity to go abroad in 1903.

While spending time away from home in a more liberal environment, Qiu began to come into her own: she started to practice martial arts and was spotted dressing in Western men's clothing. She also made acquaintances with Chinese international students committed to nationalism and anti-Manchu causes, including the Mutual Love Society and members of the Tongmenghui, an underground organization started by Sun Yat-sen. After returning to China, Qiu founded *China Women's News* in 1906 and became head of the Datong School in Shaoxing, officially a school for sports teachers and secretly a training ground for revolutionaries devoted to overthrowing the Qing Dynasty and

restoring Chinese rule. The Manchu government caught wind of the operation of Qiu's school and eventually decapitated her in 1907, at the age of thirty-one.

While Qiu is widely remembered as a national heroine who found company with woman revolutionaries like Wu, her trans desire to appear as a man in public has never been taken seriously by mainstream historical records or interpretations of her by the Chinese Communist Party. Common understanding of her is determinedly cisgender and heteronormative, and any queer and trans sentiment—including the following excerpt cited in *Duilian*—is quickly regulated by a normative regime that flattens her sexual and gender differences. Appearing both in the film and *You Sad Legend*, these lines from 滿江紅.小住京華 (Full River Red: Living Briefly at the Capital City; 1903) set up a contrast between masculine and feminine: "身不得, 男兒列, /心卻比, 男兒烈!/ 俗子胸襟誰識我?/ 英雄末路當磨折。/莽紅塵, 何處覓知音? 青衫濕" (Though my body is not as robust as that of a man,/ my heart is braver than one./ How can an everyman understand my soul?/ A hero is ready to suffer during tough times./ How do I find a knowing friend?/ My robe is stained wet)!

Written when she was eighteen years old, Qiu was at that point unhappily married to 王廷鈞 (Wang Tingjun), a lieutenant in the Qing Dynasty army, and still three years from her organizing work with her sworn sisters. Moving to Beijing with her husband made her feel stifled by domestic life. Admitting that her physique is not as strong as men's, Qiu's poem insists that her heart is braver. Lamenting laymen's contempt for her, she also mourns that she has no clear path forward after her divorce. Belatedly, her friends Xu Xihua and Wu Zhiying fulfill her desire to be understood by like-minded friends, which explains the great grief of their later separation by death.

古詩文網 (*Gushiwen*), a popular government-sanctioned Chinese website, offers translations of classical Chinese poems into vernacular equivalents. The website celebrates Qiu's poetic work as evidence of her political awareness, praising Qiu as a woman gifted with an acumen that attends to the danger and needs of the Han people. As the website extrapolates from her poetry, Qiu was a person who had "民族危機 [感]" (a sense of national crisis). Due to fervent patriotism, according to *Gushiwen*, Qiu cross-dressed as a man to travel to Japan, where she would find another path in life to bring pride to the people ("拋家別子, 女扮男裝, 東渡日本, 去追求另樣的人生, 去尋求民族振興的道路"). This patriotic reading reinforces the Sinophone world's common cisgender heteropatriarchal reading of Qiu's oeuvre, which admittedly the corpus invites. At one point, she is quoted by the website telling Xu Zihua to start dressing as a man because the political situation was so dire that it was their responsibility as women to put on armor for the nation ("時局如斯危已甚, /閨裝願爾換吳鉤").

Statements like this dramatize Qiu's militant revolutionary spirit, and social-

ist readings of her work are now commonplace: despite being shunned in the Qing Dynasty, her portrait is now displayed in the Communist Museum in Shanghai. As mentioned, the contemporary stereotypical interpretation of Qiu does not make space for Qiu's gender queer possibilities, including their queer desire for same-sex accompaniment and trans desire to cross dress. Wu Tsang and her collaborators' mistranslation and enactment of Qui's poems retrieves that queer and trans possibility from the unknowable past.

Transgender discourse in China has always been around but has not circulated in the way the West's discourse has. Often, it is tied to entertainment: crossing-dressing, for instance, was a common practice in the Chinese opera as early as the Tang Dynasty (618–907). Qiu's public appearances—that is, beyond the stage—in which she dressed as a man may make her one of the first modern instances of female-to-male (F-to-M) transness in China. Far from being a theatrical antic or an auxiliary in the Manchu government, Qiu wrote about her discontent with being a woman in many of her poems, including one the Mistranslation club translated. Wu reads 自題小照男裝 (Self-Titled: A Little Picture of Me in a Man's Attire) as a voiceover of Boychild's bare-breasted dance in *You Sad Legend*. In 1906, Qiu did not have a trans vocabulary and could not specifically articulate the poem as trans, but Qiu's trans sentiment shines through in a roundabout way. Quoted in both the film and *You Sad Legend*, "Self-Titled" reads, "儼然在望此何人?俠骨前生悔寄身。/過世形骸原是幻,未來景界卻疑真。" As Boychild dances, Wu reads from her faithful translation: "Who could this person be, / Looking so sternly ahead? / The physical form that I now inhabit / Is but a phantom, / The bones I bring from a former existence / Regret the flesh that covers them. / But in a life yet to emerge, / I trust it will be more real" ("Self-Titled," *Tears* 15).

Composed after her return from Japan, Qiu's original poem demonstrates an unease with her present moment, and Wu's reading onstage evokes the misalignment that Qiu feels in her femme-presenting body. Boychild's sensational choreography makes this dysphoria particularly palpable: pulling against the push of gravity, Boychild's dance moves, at turns stilted and smooth, resemble Butoh, a Japanese avant-garde dance style from the 1950s and 1960s. Its spasmodic movements recall the haunting memories of the dead pulsating after the blast of the atomic bombs. Boychild's embodiment of the lines "The bones I bring from a former existence / Regret the flesh that covers them" recalls Qiu's dysphoria without claiming it; instead, Boychild finds relations with it. "Self-Titled" is an ekphrastic image of Qiu wearing a Western men's suit, a pair of leather shoes, and a paperboy's hat, holding a cane in her left hand (see Figure 5). Wu's voice and Boychild's dance suggest that the dancer's unnatural movement may be a result of possession by someone who is not them, making the audience

Fig. 5. Qiu Jin dressed as a man. Image from the zine *Tears, Tears, Tears* by Wu Tsang and the Mistranslation Club. Image courtesy of Spring Workshop Hong Kong.

aware that the performers do not claim ownership of Qiu's story (see Figure 6). Boychild's performance creates spatiotemporal distance and emphasizes differences in identity. Wu's ventriloquism and Boychild's physical enactment recalls Arielle Concilio's article, "Pedro Lemebel and the Translatxrsation: On a Genderqueer Translation Praxis." Concilio came up with the theory of "*translatxrsation*" to refer to how nonbinary or genderqueer translation "destabilizes" (468) the "binaries of author/translator, original/translation and source/target texts" (462) meanwhile turning the translator's "co-embodiment with [the] text" as a site of engagement with others and these binary pairs (467).

Given the performative dimension of *Duilian*, the duo's ventriloquism and dance break another binary: between the artists and their audience. Wu and Boychild's translation and performance of Qiu's poem "感憤" (Rage) breaks the

Fig. 6. *Duilian*'s opening performance. It took place on March 12, 2016. Boychild, on stage, reenacts Qiu Jin mourning her heroic death. Wu Tsang serves as the narrator of the poems that comprise her elegies. Image courtesy of Spring Workshop Hong Kong.

fourth wall, lamenting how "the luscious land of God is sinking" ("Rage," *Tears* 23). In the original context, Qiu refers to the slow demise of the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BC), a confederacy that long resisted the total takeover and inevitable conquest of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC). The poem tells a story about the Zhou court as an allegory for Qiu's situation: she is a Qing Dynasty poet determined to revive the rule of the Ming Dynasty that came before it. Paralyzed by political failure and disappointment, Qiu resorts to writing, which in turn sends her into a depressive spin. She writes, "國破方知人種賤, 義高不礙客囊貧; / 經營恨未酬同志, 把劍悲歌涕淚橫。" (*Gushiwen*; it is only when the country has fallen apart that we know lives are cheap. High morals won't help with the guests' poverty. / The operation hates that it can't repay its comrades, welding swords to melancholy songs, crying.) Wu and her collaborators mistranslate these lines as follows: "When the country has fallen, lives become unworthy like cheap slaves, even in dire straits, do not succumb to compromise and cowardice! Because the revolution has failed our community / All we can do is brandish our swords and sing karaoke with snot and tears!" ("Rage," *Tears* 25). Underneath the veneer of anger in this poem—both in original and mistranslated forms—is the poet's grief for her country and compatriots. As the original text indicates, only after a country's collapse did she feel human lives became cheap. In the

face of impending fatality, all she can do is hold her head high and resign herself to entertaining pastimes, including her hobbies of sword play and singing. The most noticeable divergence between the original and mistranslated poems is the last line: "Because the revolution has failed our comrades / All we can do is brandish our swords and sing karaoke with snot and tears" ("Rage", *Tears* 25).

Karaoke, only invented in Japan in the 1970s and imported into China in the 1980s, is a contemporary spin. When Wu read those words during *You Sad Legend*, it solicited a few chuckles from the audience. While these few laughs could be pure reactions to the show's comic relief, the audience's sporadic laughter could be a knowing nod at a periperformative comment on Hong Kong's political quagmire in the wake of the UM, a revolution as failed as Qiu's, which left protesters abject and eventually complacent in the status quo in the face of an increasing counterinsurgency effort. This opening performance represents *Duilian*'s most explicitly political moment, with audience laughter creating a connection through shared understanding of how Qing Dynasty dissidents used coded language for political critique. Similarly, contemporary Hong Kongers have employed indirect discursive strategies amid Article 23—the controversial national security law first proposed in 2003 and finally enacted in 2024, eight years after this performance—which criminalizes speech deemed seditious by the HKSAR government. The shared sense of grief and abjection, on and off the stage, suggests how the brunt of Qiu's revolutionary politics echoes those of present students', and the scene crystalizes that *Duilian* as a performance is as much about Wu's cultural transition in China as a trans person as it is about Qiu's turn-of-the-century gender transition.

The performance also implicates the political transition that provided the backdrop for the American artist's residency at the Spring Workshop. Over the course of 2015, the UM's momentum fell apart, and the Hong Kong Legislative Council, driven by its pro-democratic members and the constituents they represented, vetoed the Beijing-backed electoral reform proposal. Wu would not have been able to escape these events because they were televised everywhere. Integral to the postcolonial Hong Kong experience, the concept of revolution—as in the slogan "revolution of our time"—may have shaped how Wu designed her stories about Qiu, herself a revolutionary. To escape surveillance and avoid appearing incendiary, Wu adopts mistranslation and ventriloquism as strategies to create space between herself and Hong Kong politics writ large—all the while borrowing its vocabulary, like *revolution*, to tell parallel stories of Qiu's gender transition story in the Qing Dynasty and her cultural transition in China. As such, *revolution* connects the imagined world of *Duilian* and the reality of Hong Kong in 2015 and 2016.

Following this interpretation, *Duilian* holds interesting implications for

trans, nonbinary, and queer-led movements. First, the show's main mechanisms of misrecognition, mistranslation, citation, and ventriloquism all foreground relation-building, facilitated by the collaborative creative process and performances of *Duilian*. Wu and Boychild's eventual voiceover and physical enactment of Wu and Qiu in English are the results of the trans duo's "indebtedness" to other students of Qiu and Wu in Hong Kong, like assistant mistranslators Sonia Chan and Siufung Law and (more importantly) the paying audience members who supported the show. Because of their participation in *Duilian*, all these individuals are bonded over their shared anger and grief at the status quo—the Qing Dynasty, the American Empire, or CY Leung's administration. Qiu's anger—as amplified by the Mistranslation Club's "Rage aka Fuckin' Angry"—becomes the first iteration of an intergenerational grief that makes up a trans, nonbinary, and queer sociality that transcends historical and geographical boundaries of the region and diaspora.

Duilian performs a type of "kin-making" by (mis)translation or, as Maxine Savage would specify, making "fictive kin." Citing sociologist Victoria Pitts-Taylor, Savage writes that "biological investments can result from emotional connection and togetherness." Wu, Boychild, and the Mistranslation Club's translations make kin, allow them to enter into a relationship with not only Qiu's original text but also possible future relations. But Wu and Boychild's queer citation, translation, and ventriloquism of Qiu disalienates Qiu from her nineteenth-century China context. As the translators, performers, and the audience spent time with the legend, Qiu became an identifiable ancestor for those in the audience (particularly the queer and trans ones) feeling alienated, depressed, and lonely in the face of Hong Kong's current political quagmire. By (mis)translating and (mis)recognizing Qiu Jin's history as an ancestral story of revolutionary trans people in Hong Kong and in the diaspora, *Duilian* invites the audience to feel identity, temporality, and sociality in a way that goes beyond the fixity of gender essentialism, linearity, and heredity by extracting from China's dynastic past a usable and trans-inclusive present.

During her time in Hong Kong, Wu's full-body citation, mistranslation, and ventriloquism gave Qiu legibility as a queer and trans subject—a decidedly radical subject, as Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson define it (Smithsonian). However, due to the UM, Wu turns to Qiu and Wu Zhiying, as her closest equivalents in China, to give an account of herself. This process turned Wu Tsang into a student of Qiu and Wu, an identity that at once links her to other student-members in the project, like Sonia Chan (then a PhD student in Gender Studies), who facilitated a workshop for the Mutual Love Society, and other members who are students in the Society (like the trans bodybuilder Siufung Law, who was then affiliated with the University of Hong Kong) and voice acted the Chinese

parts in the film *Duilian*. This cluster of students came together not because of an *a priori* national affiliation but because of their shared sense of indebtedness to Qiu as a queer and trans-adjacent ancestor, who also ran a school. *Duilian*'s success, therefore, suggests that student revolutionaries are indebted to the voice, theories, and histories of the other, in the sense that they are always given voice by and give voice to other ideologies, stories, and lived/living realities as they give an account of themselves. This case becomes even clearer in the queer and trans poetics of Mary Jean Chan, who grew from student to poetry teacher during the decade of the Umbrella Movement and the anti-ELAB movement.

Queer Translation in Mary Jean Chan's Trans/Nonbinary Poetics of Splits and Sutures

Published in the wake of the UM in September 2014 in the "Withering Hong Kong" special issue for *Cha*, a Hong Kong-based online literary magazine that features anglophone literature, the poem "From a Distance" comprises two stanzas—the first with thirteen lines and the second with fourteen. The poem draws inspiration from American singer-songwriter Bette Midler's 1990 hit pop song. Like the song, which takes a bird's-eye view of the world at the tail end of the Cold War, Chan's poem focuses on a situation of conflict: the 2014 confrontation between the HKSAR government and student protesters. Unlike Midler's song, which praises how distance allows for our better imagination of an omnipresent God who offers an otherwise confused humanity clarity, Chan's "From a Distance" begins with an objection: "Some things are not clearer from a distance." For Chan, the spectacle of young protesters occupying the busy streets of Hong Kong was a confounding sight: they write, "What grief moves you to sit-ins, marches, words that reverberate across generations, and tears for a city that was never ours to keep?"

Opining that their faith in "democracy never took root in the city" as it has been steered away by "financiers" and the "edicts of English" that still hold Hong Kong in a firm grip, Chan doubts the efficacy of civil disobedience but deems it a "beautiful mess" as they repeat, "when the young and old were moved to sit-ins, marches." Different from the queer romantic love in the Cantophone fictions in chapter one, intergenerational love is what inspired Chan to write "From a Distance." With humility, Chan admits that perhaps reflecting on how beautiful this sight is in poetry is the most a poet far away from home can do in the face of major politics that make individuals feel minor and insignificant. Eventually, Chan inserts themselves into the poem; rather than positioning themselves as a valiant resister like "we" in "Children of China," Chan humbly describes themselves as someone "whose multiple selves struggle to echo a singular voice."

"From A Distance" offers an example of the UM as a flashpoint for Hong Kong's political transition, which overlaps with the poet's transition from being a woman to nonbinary. In this 2014 poem, Chan undergoes an identity crisis that prompts their transition, and they compare it to the plight of being stuck at a crossroads. Chan's motherland shares this plight: Hong Kong "quiver[s] between two possible futures." As such, like Wu's performance of Qiu, Chan's poetry—with "Distance" as an exemplar—allows us to imagine political and gender transitions in simultaneity.

Though the *Cha* publication is the closest that Chan comes to writing about Hong Kong's postcolonial development, Chan's trans poetics—their poetry about translation and transformation specifically—holds periperformative comments on splitting and integration, both of which are psychological as much as political concepts. Much has happened since the beginning of 2014 in Mary Jean Chan's life, as in Hong Kong. The UM was quelled in seventy-nine days. Chan graduated from Swarthmore, enrolled in the PhD program in Creative Writing at Royal Holloway at the University of London, and is now a Judith E. Wilson Poetry Fellow at the University of Cambridge.

Beyond their career, Chan publicly acknowledged their queerness in two iterations of their article, "Queerness as Translation" (2018, 2022), in which they reflect on "what has become newly possible in the translated text of my life, and what meanings I might find in the source text of my past" through the lens of their newfound knowledge of queer theory, literature, and identity. More recently, they came out as nonbinary in an interview with *Cambridge Review of Books* (Nicholson), embracing a gender-diverse identity that celebrates rather than fixes gender multiplicity. This series of gender and cultural transitions has directly informed the content of their poetry across the years.

My reading unpacks the queer and trans poetics in Chan's developing corpus as a growing poem body inextricably tied to their experience of transitioning into a queer, nonbinary person from Hong Kong, with correlations to the stuffy Confucianism in their family, the strict gender roles in their Anglican primary and secondary schools, and the small square footage reflecting the dense, covert, and minimalist aesthetic of their poems.

Chan confesses that they work well with the genre of poetry because they grew up constrained by heteronormative expectations to grow up straight under British rule in colonial Hong Kong and the Basic Law of SAR's legal and economic structure. Like section III in the poem "Ars Poetica" in *Bright Fear*, the narrator bluntly admits that they would not know what to do with the luxury of space: "What does it feel like" not to "have to hide things like/ a small splinter of sadness or an even smaller need?" (27). The narrator laments: "I work too well with constraints, so I cannot enjoy/ the sheer amount of space a prose writer

deserves" (27). Chan even mentions their vexed relationship with prose to their therapist, who suggests it's related to their "relationship to freedom," something they have found as "trying as prose" (27).

Growing up in a heteronormative and oppressive structure where veneration for elders and self-abnegation are traditional signs of propriety, Chan—as a proto-genderqueer child—developed a roundabout way to respond to major politics, like the patriarchy, by turning to writing poems, particularly small ones. As Chan further recalls in "III," "As a teenager, I learned to minimize myself whenever / My father's face transformed into a furious sunset" (27). Writing poetry hence becomes what Sedgwick would call Chan's periperformative response to major politics. Developed out of the need for survival and then habits over time, Chan would go on to write poems that are packed with meaning operating in complex modes. Even after leaving home, even when the transnational poet's queer and gender identities are celebrated by the neoliberal multiculturalism of global literary markets, Chan's work remains critical of world systems and their mode of delivery circuitous.

Chan first articulates the underpinnings of their circuitous meaning-making in their critical essay, "Queerness as Translation," which appeared online in *Modern Poetry in Translation*, Chan gestures at how their interest in translation as a concept stems from their desire to find language to articulate their nonbinary experience as a multilingual user who speaks Mandarin, Cantonese, and English. Particularly in the context of translating between English and Chinese, gender identity is easily lost, mixed up, or mistranslated because, unlike English, the pronouns "he," "she," and "it" in Mandarin and Cantonese are pronounced identically as "ta," though written differently. With newfound knowledge acquired from queer theory, literature, and newly-translated Chinese titles like *Jade Ladder: Contemporary Chinese Poetry* and *Something Crosses My Mind*, Chan is "eager to re-read and re-write [their] life as ongoing poem, but no longer in linear time." As they elaborate, "linear time suffocates; it forces the now into the future and refuses any meaningful engagement with the past." Instead, Chan wants to inhabit a state of play. As they explain:

> I have begun [. . .] to enjoy Chinese texts translated into English. [. . .] As I learn more about the politics and poetics of translation, I am curious about what can or cannot be translated, and what the ethics of translation are. I am also curious—on a metaphorical level—about what has become newly possible in the translated text of my past. I am attempting to reject binaries and polarities and am beginning to marry the parts of myself I had compartmentalised and kept apart so well during my young adult life. (8)

Contrary to translation conventions that emphasize fidelity, Chan—much like Wu Tsang—argues that translation, specifically queer translation, is a productive site of meaning-making, where the translator isn't solely beholden to the authority of the original text. For Chan, a queer and nonbinary poet, queer translation is a practice of "marrying" or bringing together of the source and target texts—and, by extension, Chan's own past and present. Here, the source text or the past is not something to be replicated in another language but rather a part to be transformed and preserved in Chan's trans becoming for reparative ends. In the 2022 version of the essay in the journal *Writing in Practice*, Chan clarifies that they theorize queerness as translation as "something that is inherently political and historically complex," a perspective they compare to that of the Korean American poet and translator Don Mee Choi, a reference worth mulling over given how it has a bearing on our understanding of translation as a queer operation in Chan's poetry.

In her pamphlet "Translation is a Mode = Translation is an Anti-neocolonial Mode," Choi reflects on her relationship with English and the Korean vernacular script hangul, which was invented in the fifteenth century by King Sejong. Choi preserves the linguistic twoness she embodies as a Korean American in her poetry through practicing translation as a mode of what she calls "translation performance" (10). Just as she translates not to oil the machine of American imperialism—demonstrated by her volunteer work as a Korean-English translator in the International Women's Network Against Militarism—Choi practices translation as an antineocolonial mode in her poetry as well. As a poststructuralist, feminist, poet, and translator, Choi's "translation as a mode" is inspired by Deleuze and Guattari when they say "translation is a map, a mode that can trigger endless crossings from one part to another" (3). We see this in "Planetary Translation" in Choi's poetry collection *DMZ Colony*, where she recalls what fellow Network member Ahn-Kim Jeong-Ae told her about South Korea's military's massacre of civilians just before and during the Korean War. She doesn't directly translate this encounter into conventional poetic Anglophone renderings, but rather she performs translation with elaboration: she reprints the circles that Ahn-Kim drew of an unknown facility that Choi translates as "Planet Nine" (*DMZ Colony* 43). In re-translating how Ahn-Kim translates Korean history into circles she sketched out on the page visually and poetically, Choi "maps her [and her people's] dislocation" from home ("Translation is a Mode" 10). In the stanzas that follow these reprints, Choi comments: "the language of capture, torture, and massacre is difficult to decipher. It's practically a foreign language . . . Difficult syntax! It may appear as faint dots and lines, but they're often blood, snow, or even dandruff. How do I know? Foreigners know" (*DMZ Colony* 43). "Planetary Translation" as such illustrates how Choi "travers[es] order-words,

map[ping] them, and superimpos[ing] another kind of map—the map of her dislocation" (3). In the poems I study below, Chan employs a similar practice on the page: queer translation, with and through which they map a circuitous, border- and gender-crossing process.

Though not explicit in either iteration, translation holds a palpable allure for Chan as a queer operative to locate their multiplicity of self, which resides in and is lost at the interstices of languages, places, and genders. Unlike standard translation practice that pairs equivalences between languages, Chan invokes what I call a queer translation: a translation that is not literal but that gives them access to multiple languages to play with in the process of shaping who they are. This queer translation "fails" (à la Jack Halberstam's theorization of queer) in that it does not necessarily produce a linguistic one-to-one correspondence, but rather opens up something different as it refuses the linear temporality which typically governs the process of converting from source to target language—and that underpins capitalist development and dimorphic models of gender and sexuality. Instead, queer translation is "a state of play time" where "time dissolves and there is only being, breath, and the myriads of languages we allow ourselves to inhabit and speak" (par. 12). Queerness as translation—fundamentally—offers an alternative, non-teleological temporality that permits the past and present, original and translated text, to co-exist.

As their autobiographical writings and selected poems from their 2019 and 2023 poetry collections demonstrate, Chan's queer translation engages with Choi's concept of translation as an anticolonial mode, featuring a distinctly trans aesthetic flair that defines itself as a poetic descendant of a queer of color genealogy with Chinese characteristics. In translating their Hong Kong experiences into an Anglophone poetic tradition, Chan performs what we might call, extending Choi, a double anticolonialism—of both heteronormative gender systems and Western literary hegemony. This dual movement in Chan's nonbinary and trans poetics exemplifies how queer translation can function as an anticolonial writing and interpretive praxis that refuses both cultural and gender assimilation.

According to trans poet and theorist KJ Cerankowski in *Suture: Trauma and Trans Becoming*, "trans writing is not only about trauma, but it is trauma" (20). On the page, it presents as writing in "fragments," in a collage of pieces sewn or sutured together, "made to fit haphazardly sometimes and never meaninglessly" (20). Cerankowski provides language to understand Chan's thematic and aesthetic of splits that I discuss below, which requires the reader to collaborate with the text and the author, bringing LGBTQ+ perspectives into our interpretation to accentuate its trans aesthetics and transnational mode of operation.

Cerankowski's theory on trans cultural production's dynamic engagement

with the reader/audience as testimony is in keeping with an existing genealogy of trans cultural productions, like Eliza Steinbock's *Shimmering Images*. There, Steinbock discusses the genre of phantasmagoria using examples such as Zackary Drucker and A. L. Steiner's *Before/After* as that which invites the audience to "enter the reparative mode" to make sense of the trans protagonist's past and future (58). Steinbock elaborates that for Drucker and Steiner's "Untitled Series 'Before/After'" to work and be understood as a transition narrative made out of a piece that has no transitional shots and "entirely ignores who is in transition" (55), the filmmakers rely on what Eve Sedgwick calls the audience's openness to good surprises (58). Steinbock writes, "the artworks pivot on the goodwill of the artist revealing something of themselves, but also on the viewer's goodwill to demonstrate openness to the new in the anticipation of the after shot, or what emerges in the becoming" (58). Steinbock's citation of Klein by way of Sedgwick guides our understanding of a strand of trans cultural productions' engagement with the readers' positive intention, enabling readers to respond to otherwise fragmented trans narratives that rely on readerly engagement to complete the feedback loop. For Drucker and Steiner, trans aesthetic is a phantasmagoria without transition, and for Chan, it is their translation performance that requires readers to make sense of their fragments as part of a mapping of displacement or relocation, moving from one place to another. That dynamic is precisely, too, what Cerankowski means when discussing suturing.

Cerankowski's theory of suturing suggests a mode of repair, a two-way process that involves both the poet writing their wound and the reader bearing emotional witness. In my reading of Chan's works, I demonstrate how they incorporate queerness as translation as a mode in their poetry by integrating gender, geographical, anatomical, and psychic splits, from classical Chinese tales and personal trauma that they experienced in Hong Kong into the diegetic present of their growing poem body. The splitting appears in Chan's work as fragments and descriptions of divisions, while the suturing occurs as Chan translates their past pain on the page, sometimes writing in first person (taking the role of their inner child) and other times in third person (offering a mature commentary), as they invite the readers to witness and even participate in the reparative mode. As a collaborating reader of Chan's suturing poetics, I moreover read queer translation as Chan's site of struggle to self-define as they work through physical and psychic dislocation in the face of ongoing antitrans, homophobic, and transphobic violence while resisting their identity's incorporation into neoliberal operation.

For Chan, as for Choi's translation as a mode, queer translation functions as a mode of operation in their poetry, operating as a mapping—here, more specifically, the process of splitting and suturing. So far, while we understand suturing

as a medical and poetic mode of repair, the psychic concept of splitting (which may sometimes lead to physical splits) needs more explanation. According to Klein, infants undergo the psychic drama of splitting their mother into "good" and "bad" halves in her absence. The mother appears as good and bad breasts in the paranoid-schizoid stage, with little separation between them. As children progress beyond this stage, they understand that the two mothers, one toward whom they show compassion and one toward whom they show aggression, are the same person. With this understanding, they reach the depressive stage, recognizing that all human beings are imperfect; the infant's acceptance of this imperfection signals their own maturity marked by an acceptance of ambivalence, admitting that reality can be both good and bad at the same time. Self-love and love for others emerge after this developmental stage. Adapting this schema, Chan queerly translates Klein's maternal split as a way of writing and reading about gender, geographical, generational, and international splits in their poetry.

Before Chan became a poet and came into contact with trans (and queer) poetry as defined by Anglophone discourse, they were first a reader who eagerly practiced a reparative reading of gender splits in texts that are not labeled as LGBTQ+. One way they did that was through an unliteral translation of *Twelfth Night*, which they recalled encountering while growing up in Hong Kong without much exposure to queer and trans cultures. Preparing for the Common Entrance Exam (equivalent to the SAT), they studied Shakespeare's play. As a closeted child, Chan was drawn to this play—and later all Shakespeare plays—due to the queer pleasures they could derive from the homoeroticism made possible by cross-dressing. Rather than viewing Viola's masculine presentation as Cesario merely as a subterfuge advancing heteronormative endings, queer and trans theory prompted Chan to accept Cesario as is. Chan used their newfound English skills to translate a straight text to a homoerotic and pleasurable play, reimagining *Twelfth Night* (minus Duke Orsino) as the story of a trans man named Cesario (previously known as Viola) courting Olivia.

The more Chan found queer joy in reading English, the fewer Chinese books they read. Because their mother forced them to pledge allegiance to the Chinese canon, they made a pact that "for every five books [they] read in English, [they] read one book in Chinese." Eventually, however, "a kind of splitting emerges." Though Chan reads and speaks Cantonese, their English increasingly took over, ultimately causing a wider split in Chan's literacy and psyche, torn between "my emergent self" (in English) and "my mother" (in Chinese) ("Queerness as Translation"). They have actively read translated Chinese works to gain more access to Chinese wisdom and narrow that "split." As a firm believer in Adrienne Rich's *The Dream of a Common Language*, which teaches them of "the redemptive possibilities of language," Chan argues that it ultimately takes writing poetry,

an active practice of queer translation, converting memories and imagery into words, to marry or suture their splits into relationship. As I demonstrate, the suture in Chan is light, or brightness, which stands in as a figurative speech of poetry in their second poetry collection, *Bright Fear*. With that foresight, I argue that poetry sutures Chan's psychic and interpersonal splits. As Micha Cárdenas has said in *Poetic Operation*, stitching, which I take to be synonymous with suturing, "is an operation of trans of color poetics that allows the poetics to extend beyond the individual experience to bring about [social] relation" (25). That relation maps the dynamic of genders, geographies, and generations, as well as that of the trans/nonbinary poet and the reader.

Chan's practice of queer translation as a mode goes beyond being a reparative reader who makes queer sense out of a few clues in a straight text. One of its other notable deployments is as a mode of writing, which is evident in *Flèche*. In that text, they claim a hybrid genealogy from two notable antecedents. The first is James Baldwin, a pioneer of queer of color culture in the US. The second antecedent is the mythological figure of Nezha, a Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BCE) deity now reclaimed by some in the Chinese LGBTQ+ community as proto-trans. While the reason for Chan's embrace of Nezha is self-evident, their choice of Baldwin may appear odd at first, especially given the distance between Harlem and Hong Kong. However, Baldwin's essay "Nothing Personal" (1964) establishes a textual connection. Addressing a divided America during the civil rights movement, "Nothing Personal" writes of the significance of finding hope when repairing the self. For Baldwin, America was a loveless society at that time. It is against this backdrop that he presents "Hong Kong" (47) as a fantasy—a place that "you," who were born in "Chicago" (46), cannot live without since "you" have fallen in love with a resident of the Asian city. Though subjunctive, this Hong Kong becomes a place of "light" (48) for Baldwin, functioning as a type of usable fiction, tying the broken and split selves back together in one piece. Chan's poetry gives flesh and history to Baldwin's abstract Hong Kong. Educated at Swarthmore and now a UK resident, Chan maintains a complex long-distance relationship with Hong Kong, the city of their parents, and their childhood at an all-girls Anglican school. While physically away from home, Chan writes poems bridging geographical and emotional distances out of love. Evident on the page is a testimony of their striving to come to terms with their new transnational and nonbinary identity. Like Baldwin's Chicagoan who finds hope with a Hong Kong lover in a loveless America, Chan's identity development involves making peace with Hong Kong, which holds part of them captive psychologically. If Hong Kong promises the love that Baldwin's America needs to address the pandemic of lovelessness, Chan's *Flèche* takes it to a queer Hong Kong context, positioning love—especially intergenerational love—as a correc-

tive to Confucian filial piety's one-way sacrifice. Reading Baldwin and Chan along this textual genealogy makes the former even more relevant to the latter than expected: Baldwin sets an antecedent for Chan in placing Hong Kong at the transit point of queer of color love.

Drawing on Baldwin's earlier essay titled "Down at the Cross" (1963), another civil rights-era text, Chan theorizes queer of color love as defined by mutuality through shared vulnerability: "Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within" (1). Making this point in the context of US race relations and sexual intimacies in the '60s, Baldwin explains to his white compatriots that love—"in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth" (*Fire Next Time* 94)—is vital to the development of racial relations between Black and white Americans in a nation riddled with conflicts.

Borrowing Baldwin's words, Chan reframes love from Confucian self-sacrifice to self and interpersonal love as an uncompromising search for themselves and the almost idealized intergenerational love that they depict in the poem "From a Distance." This search, as the poems in *Flèche* show, involves them pleading "for a state of grace" (as Baldwin would say) from their mother. But this plea would not be culturally specific to Chan's situation without translating it to a Chinese context. When doing that contextualization, they turn to Nezha, an androgynous deity famous for having a fraught relationship with their parents.

Chan draws on the legend of Nezha from *The Investiture of the Gods*, published during the Shang dynasty (1368–1644), in the poem "Always" that appears in *Flèche*. As legend has it, Nezha, after waiting in their mother's belly for more than three years, came to the world as a ball of flesh that prevented people from telling their gender. General Li, their father, ignored them because of it. Resenting their father's negligence, Nezha returned their bones and flesh to him to disown any relationship with the neglectful patriarch. In their rebirth process, they took refuge in lotus root, which became part of their body. Not unlike the process of gender transition, gender-ambiguous Nezha's rebirth included making new organs and limbs from non-corporeal materials—explaining why Nezha has been recently reclaimed by Chinese netizens as trans. However, in "Always," Chan queerly translates this myth to exemplify queer love for their mother while preserving their childhood self's self-respect and self-love without requiring the sacrifice of their flesh and selfhood. Instead of flesh or lotus, Chan holds up their poems as parts of their body to be gifted, like bones, back to their mother. Returning to Oliver Bendorf's poem bodies, Chan intends their poem bodies to be the extra limbs and sensory organs devoted to their mother to augment her debilitated state, produced by her long grief over the death of her father in China and the disappointment she endured after Chan's coming out. These "poem

bodies" are "the ears that hear her" and her "mind's eye" "tracing / [her] frantic footsteps / towards the grandfather / I would never meet" (9). And, in contrast to the mythic story, this gift does not sever the relationship but repairs it. Chan's creative mistranslation of Nezha transforms the dynastic past into poetic origins. Like Wu's poetic performances, Chan conceptualizes translation queerly and loosely as a metaphor for looking back on the past through the lens of their new queer and nonbinary identity with the purpose of making sense of them as part of their trans becoming.

In their rewriting of Nezha, Chan demonstrates the practice of queer translation as one that retains the gist of the original, meanwhile adding commentary on how the original maps and does not map into contemporary experience: their poems are packaged as a combination of loosely translated texts from Chinese with their added commentary as a queer and nonbinary person. Both techniques exemplify the "rejection of binaries" and "marrying the parts of myself" that Chan has stated as the reasons for their queer translation and to stay in a stay of play to articulate who they are by and where they come from by way of writing poetry.

Chan applies this logic to their poetic writing practice in two fencing poems in *Flèche*. In the poem, girlhood and boyhood are not mutually exclusive: they exist next to each other. Indeed, in the book, the poems "Practice" and "Dress" are physically side by side, typeset on facing pages. In "Practice" (11), fencing transports Chan beside themselves: it detours them away from the monotony of the everyday, rule-bound life. Fencing is an extracurricular activity that provides them an opportunity to experience their trans desire as they replace their "white dress" with "breeches" (11). As Chan writes in this autobiographical poem, "Fencing was the closest thing I knew to desire." It is the means by which Chan achieved a "prince[ly]" identity among girls, offering a break from being a girl all day. In hindsight, donning fencing attire completes Chan, uniting their femme half with their other half, namely "the face of a boy in the mirror" they see "every morning," as it is written in "Dress" (10). Being clad in fencing gear allows the narrator to step aside from the dysphoric feelings of having their body "shut up" by "a white skirt, blue collar, blue belt, blue hem" (10). Fastening on a cisgender identity as surely as the uniform demanded by the nuns and priests, the "no-nonsense kind of blue" in their Anglican uniform rhymes with the blue in the Union Jack, a color that Chan describes as haunting their "skin" (10). By the end of the poem, the narrator stands beside a pond, "slip[ing] into the blue water, stripped of the glowing dress you wore for thousands of days" to shed all that does not belong to them (10).

Just as Chan remembers lunging forward and parrying backward, their dual-directional play while fencing is a metaphor for their eventual identity man-

agement outside of fencing. As a poet and queer translator, Chan reads trans and nonbinary identities back onto their body, which their gender-segregated Anglican school had overdetermined as feminine. By juxtaposing "Dress" and "Practice" physically in the book—each exploring a boyhood lost at school and found on the fencing court—Chan reinterprets her girlhood as a proto-trans/nonbinary childhood. As a queer translator of their past, Chan does not subsume girlhood to boyhood or vice versa in their poetic reverie of them: Chan sutures them as poetry to preserve them both, creatively presenting this as a simultaneity of who they always already are. By translating their past to the present, Chan the poet oscillates between the two poles of the gender that their Anglican school thought it had gatekept so well.

Besides Chan's masculinity and femininity, other splits emerge in the author's poems, as they translate their psychic state into poetic occasions. We see, for example, their Chinese and English selves in "How It Must Be Said." In a therapy room, Chan reflects on how they passively listen to their voices. They confess, "Each year, I migrate between cities / and myself," and sometimes, they are shocked for one half of themselves to hear the other—shocked because of "how a familiar voice can make one weep" (*Bright Fear* 55). What is unsaid, of course, is that their Chinese and English halves are always beside each other. Similar to the representation of their genders in "Dress" and "Practice," Chan's Chinese and English sides don't collapse into one. In the therapist's room, duality is at play, and one split does not subsume the other: one-half of Chan listens to and comprehends what the other half says, reaching a moment of breakthrough, a catharsis, which causes them to cry.

This moment of relief—as Chan retreats from their memory of the past to the third stanza of the poem—corroborates the reparative potential of queer translation; in this case, Chan's English self makes sense of their past by taking stock of their Chinese self or vice versa in a way that completes them. The aesthetic representation of beside-ness in "How It Must Be Said" exists beyond the therapy room. In the fourth stanza, Chan writes that the act of deciphering is an act of listening in which the listener derives significance from reality, a translation that their life "could bear" (55). Translated words are life-giving: "Plants without roots wither in the rain, my mother tells me in a text message. This is a / translation of the way I understand my mother in three languages. For over a decade, I have taken what I could bear from the source text and discarded the rest" (55). This instance of Chan translating their mother's arboreal wisdom in her absence calls to mind what Klein calls the stage of integration that the poet might have achieved: the mother, at whom they are so vehemently angry, is now a source of wisdom toward whom they show appreciation.

Chan continues to take up psychoanalytical references in their poems,

queerly translating theory into art, especially in poems about their mother and grandfather. For example, in "A Conversation with My Fantasy Mother," the narrator praises her mother for "taking my coming out as calmly / as a pond accepts a stone," "siev[ing] their tears," and "celeberat[ing]" them (19). But the fantasy, as Klein and Chan both know, exists in the first place because the child did not receive the love they had expected: the fantasy of the good mother soothes a love-deprived child. In Chan's case, it cancels out the violence of their actual mother's negative reaction. Though not explicitly, a ghost haunts the composition of this poem: the bad mother who necessitated the poem about a "fantasy mother" in the first place.

In a more explicitly Kleinian vein, Chan writes about the psychoanalytic concept of split in reparation theory in the aptly titled "Splitting," a poem literally split into two halves.

> The poet does not understand everything
> But being self-aware knows enough to say
> Splitting is a defense mechanism against
> Love and its absences. (48)

While not explicitly about Chan's coming-out experience, "Splitting" reflects on an unnamed incident in their mother's apartment in Hong Kong after she had purchased them and their partner plane tickets to return home. The incident caused a "collective grief" that made the poet wonder "if any / of the joy would become apparent in a future poem of hers" (48). The poem's layout has a more general implication for the current analysis: the two splits exist side-by-side in Chan's poems, analogous to the visual duality that Klein's child conjures up and holds on to in order to go through reparation.

Aesthetically, the splits existing side by side—masculinity and femininity in "Dress" and "Practice," as well as the Chinese and English selves in "How It Must Be Said"—are the splits that Chan's holds multiply as a person of in-between identities. On the poetic level, Chan enlists readers as witnesses to their process of psychological development toward reparation with their mother and family, encouraging us, as they do, to thread together the splits.

Chan continues to bring more splits together, this time intergenerational splits for reparative ends: Like photochemical tissue bonding harnessing light to bind tissues, in Chan's *Bright Fear*, light functions as metaphor for queer translation's suturing power. In "XV," Chan writes about how they treasure the "Chinese translation of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poems" because their "mother loved them," and she loved them because they were found by her father "in a time of famine" (*Bright Fear* 39). With Shelley, Chan's mother cultivated in Chan an appreciation of "the light that language emits" in literature—a recognition of the

lessons "harvest[ed] from the wild fields of sorrow" (39). This theme of light as connective tissue between generations reimagines the family tree. In the poem "Post-script," ending the collection, Chan creatively mistranslates the traditional family tree, imagining a "child's version of paradise / where the trees are free to bear their multitudinous light" (*Bright Fear* 60).

Though Chan has not given birth biologically, they produce poetry, transmitting the light their grandfather, who died in communist China, received from the translated Shelley to their "poetry students," who talk about "grief and mothers and queer joy or shame" with them every Thursday at the university where they teach (36). Chan's queer relation-building is queer kin-making, distinctively made possible through translating, book gifting, poetry reading, and writing—charting a relational lineage defined not by bloodline but by poetic light that bridges generations divided by life and death, national borders, and community boundaries.

The light created by Chan's poetry—connecting Chinese elders to British students—carries political significance within Cold War contexts. Though Chan doesn't explicitly frame it this way, their work emerges from a political history in which their grandfather's persecution under Mao's Cultural Revolution represents the complex legacy of communism's struggle against global capitalism. As cultural historian Arif Dirlik has argued, this period requires a more nuanced understanding beyond simple Cold War binaries. Chan's queer and trans poetics piece together a minor-minor alliance, where struggles against normative standards of gender, sexuality, colonialism, and neoliberalism intertwine with personal histories. Instead of a needle, the light emitted from the poetic narrative sutures together a tapestry of fragmented histories and their minorities' psychic episodes.

Chan's nonbinary identity, both culturally and in gender terms, appears as a site of wounding sutured by light. These poems function as textual extensions in which Chan engages in a form of "trans* temporal kinship" (575)—establishing connections across time with ancestors and literary figures alike (Pyle). Drawing from anglophone poetry as their language of kin-making rather than a singular native tongue, Chan weaves together American, British, and Chinese traditions with their translated counterparts. By incorporating both estranged biological ancestors and spiritual kin like Nezha and James Baldwin, Chan places their poetic body within an open, multilingual temporality that transcends conventional boundaries. Handing down poetry through translating—reading, writing, and teaching (iterations of Chan's queer translation)—brings together split selves, generations, and poetry communities across nations. This periperformative act creates new social realities throughout Chan's journey of becoming nonbinary, a journey bookended by their two single-author poetry collections.

Positioned as the last poem before the postscript in *Bright Fear*, "Out" inter-

weaves multiple temporalities: a dream, a past phone call, a more recent phone call, and the diegetic present in which the poet queerly translates and makes sense of these fragments. The first timeline begins with Chan recalling a dream in which they asked their parents, "Can I be myself now?" (33). The answer was a long silence, which they attribute to how things typically are at home, "punctuated by half-finished sentences." The second vignette exemplifies the Chan family's speech pattern. During this phone call, their mother asserts, "We [mother, Chan, and father] are one body, you know that, right?"—meaning one nuclear family, one flesh connected by blood. Chan plans to disagree but realizes that "to disagree was to admit [in their mother's face] to [their] desire for cruelty." Borrowing from Kleinian language, they understand also that "to disagree" is to "sever," a "severance" that would "have allowed [them] to chisel a way out" (58). More recently, while talking to their parents, Chan's parents blurted out "a yes." Chan responds, "Yes?" This second yes prompts the family's reply: "Yes, we love you." The poem concludes with a newly gained perspective: "The sentence was complete, no longer half-finished. The months ahead of me are wide open" (37).

This sequence of three "yesses"—the first a single word, the second a question, the third an answer—demonstrates how one word shifts meaning depending on linguistic context. Chan's perspective matures chronologically, from the distant past to the poem's diegetic present. This evolution shows developmental growth, as they progress from seeing their parents' speech as deficient, incomplete, and ungrammatical, to recognizing it as fulfilling, part of a complete sentence from which they draw strength. Ultimately, the yes affirms both questions: they can be themselves now and they are one body with their parents. Affirming these seemingly contradictory statements reflects Chan's developmental achievement of integration, realizing that family can offer support *and* be a place where a grown child needs distance to be themselves.

They could not have achieved integration without the light of poetry, which gives Chan a space to suture their fragmented memories and give meaning to them in hindsight. At the end, Chan feels openness because accepting their parents' reaction to their homosexuality and gender-queerness longitudinally, across the years, is the struggle of their life. Compared to the state of closetedness that Chan describes in *Flèche*, where their body is hidden behind a uniform in "Dress" and their desire cloistered by their parents' expectations to conform to heterosexuality in "Always," "Out" is a celebration of simply *being* out in the open.

Crystallized by "Out" ultimately is Chan's practice of queer translation as a mode where the epiphany of the present does not simply subsume what happened in the past. Chan achieves this epiphany by playing with multiple languages and temporalities, even exploring the numerous parts of speech that a word like "yes" can be, depending on context, bringing them all together rather

than having one override another. This act of unfolding one past experience after another and then folding them all together by accepting both the good and the bad is the mode of Chan's queer translation. It does not follow traditional linearity but embraces playtime, when Chan frees themselves from preconceived narratives of intergenerational trauma and melancholic cycles and instead invites contingency into their long process of trans becoming—all sutured together and given form by the light of poetry.

In the end, Chan's poem body becomes Chan's textual extension, where they work out what they have loosely referred to as playtime—or I, following Métis/Nishnaabe theorist Kai Pyle's theory, calls "trans* temporal kinship" (574) in the case of indigenous trans*historical methodology. For Pyle, a two-spirit translator like them "establish[es] kin relations across time, with both ancestors and descendants" by way of the language they commonly share (575–576). For Chan, a Shanghainese Hong Konger now residing in the UK as a university poetry fellow, their heritage is always already cross-cultural. Rather than a native tongue, the language for kin-making for Chan is anglophone poetry (and literature writ large), a corpus that draws from the American, British, and Chinese traditions as well as their translated editions. By integrating estranged ancestors like their grandfather and his beloved Shelley transmitted by their mother and literary and mythical figures like Nezha and James Baldwin who are trans and queer, Chan situates their poem body—and their multiple selves—in an open and multilingual temporality.

Chan's practice of queer translation of myriad texts and experiences is their offering in the New Cold War: a method that marries or sutures split parts together to enable relation-making. This logic of suturing represents one approach to minor-minor engagement in the queer and trans poetics of the anglophone Hong Kong diaspora. Another anglophone poet in the diaspora, Grace Lau in Canada, utilizes the poetics of introjection and the language of food and digestion in her poems, using bodies as allegories to epistemologically fold minority issues like LGBTQ+ rights into the more familiar discourse of the family in the Hong Kong diasporic community. As Lau does so, she forges an unexpected intersection between the Hong Kong experience and the Indigenous community that her queer partner is part of, demonstrating how different minority experiences can inform and enrich each other.

Introjection and the Translated Language of Love in Grace Lau's Gastronomic Poetics

In Grace Lau's "Letter to Longing," which first appeared in *Verse* with the dedication "Written for Hong Kong, during the protests of 2019," the narrator exhorts

the readers to "love each other in a language in danger of being eaten." Perhaps because of political concerns, this line was removed from the version that appears in *The Language We Were Never Taught to Speak*, Lau's debut poetry collection. My analysis teases out the discursive ways that Lau makes political comments through gastronomic language in her trans/nonbinary poetics in *Language* despite its seemingly apolitical content.

Like Chan, Lau suggests love as a political and periperformative response to oppression and suppression, but unlike Chan's intergenerational poetic light, the love that Lau receives and gives takes on carnal and gastronomic metaphors and materiality. Influenced by living with immigrant parents whose first language isn't English, Lau must sometimes go through layers of translation to make meaning for herself, and Lau's love and love language take unexpected shapes. In the collection, Lau launches into a feast of gastronomic poetics, where food is treated as the translated language of love and care. But while the poems present the food with warmth and lavishness, its consumption is sometimes an aggressive affair. Who the eater is varies, and what they stand for changes too, but throughout the collection, many of the hungry figures are ravenous and careless consumers. Following scholarship in critical food studies, I call these insatiable diners "unconscious eaters": they will eat whatever comes their way. As such, they represent imperial forces and capitalist systems menacing Lau and her fellow activists, posing as a force that puts people on edge.

Yet the collection also depicts another, less rapacious eater, "the health-conscious eater," similar to the collection's autobiographical narrator. Unlike an unconscious eater, devouring everything and anything available without understanding what food they eat, what labor goes into making the food, and what nutrients their food holds or does not hold, the health-conscious eater practices mindful eating and reflects on the impacts of eating. Lau is similar to a health-conscious eater who monitors the effects of consuming what she eats. For her, to eat the language of love and care offered by her family is to be nourished by it. Therefore, Lau is part of a critical eating tradition that conscientiously reproduces and preserves a culture, preventing it from being devoured by uncritical eaters and their homogenizing politics.

Lau's poem draws on the processes of consumption and digestion as metaphors, translating these bodily experiences into reflections on the nourishment that the city extracts from immigrant culture and that immigrant elders provide to their descendants. Gastronomic poetry is Lau's translation of political and socioeconomic processes into intergenerational and interpersonal processes and dynamics. Food expresses the poet's love for her elders who don't speak much English. By extending that love with her gastronomic poems, Lau comments on the cultures and politics that she lives with in Toronto now and those

that she left behind in Hong Kong. Taken together, Lau's food poems offer an entryway to read her sexual, gender, and transnational politics, which she writes about in gastronomic terms as well. I then extend my attention to the material impact of the poet's self-edifying labor of translation to make sense of the non-gastronomic concepts in her poetry as the foreign objects that stay within the body after consumption. Instead of causing discomfort, the ingested food and introjected language arouse euphoric feelings of pride and confidence in Lau.

In "Gastrointestinal Effluvia and Translation," translation theorist Brandon Brown argues that the usual metaphors attached to translation, such as treason versus fidelity, take away the translator's agency, rendering translation as mere repetition or inauthentic rendering of the original. This, Brown argues, emphasizes the premise, rather than the process, of translation. As an alternative to the standard metaphors, Brown offers two gastronomic terms: *indigestion* and *defecation*, to better represent, respectively, the translator's reading of the original text and their production of the target text. These graphic analogies allow us to explore the nuance of translation processes as carrying undigestible food, being constipated, or worse. Brown quotes Ariana Reines, the translator of the activist and author-led French journal *Tiqqun*, who reported that the original of her translated text "gave [her] migraines, made [her] puke." The waste, as such, becomes the tangible testimony of the labor of translation, the molecular changes that a translator's body undergoes. Of course, Brown's base account of translation dramatizes introjecting something foreign into the digestive system, which he uses as a metaphor for a translator's comfort zone. Discomfort, then, is Brown's way of figuring a process in which the translator confronts a type of otherness that is bound to alter their body somehow. The result of such encounter can be bad (as in diarrhea) or good (like nutrients extracted from digestion).

Brown's two metaphors provide a way to read the gastronomic poems in *The Language We Were Never Taught to Speak*. Lau's gastronomic poetics make visible the agency of the translator (be it Lau's parents, who translate their love to food, or Lau herself, who translates Chinese language and theatrical movements into Asian North American ones) whereby the aftereffects of translation remain in Lau's body as nutrient and are metabolized into trans/nonbinary affective sustenance.

Instead of describing translation as a process by which words travel linearly from one language to another, Lau's source and target texts are not verbal; instead, they are affects and foods, objects that leave behind positive molecular changes in the human body. For example, "Ginseng, Winter Melon, Lotus Root" centers on the experience of Lau and her parents' migration from Hong Kong to Canada: while they pack into the moving boxes things like the "Batman figurines, / Ultraman comics [she] couldn't read yet," and "dresses [she] hated wear-

ing," they leave behind things that appear more critical—"status / confidence / and language" (34). As any immigrant knows, these things remain behind not of the immigrants' own will but of the host country's demand for assimilation. After primarily focusing on Chinese, the language that they left behind, the rest of the poem enumerates the different types of food through which "an immigrant family" has created its "own vocabulary for apology." This takes place in an English setting, where the Chinese-speaking parents are not as verbal as they were at their home country. Lau writes that "rows of sushi rolls bursting, / imitation crab meat / daikon / cucumber / avocado" are parts of a vocabulary that translates to "I'm sorry I lost my temper." She continues:

> The softest, most delicious chocolate chip cookies
> *I'm sorry for hitting you when*
> *we were about to eat dinner*
> Soup with ginseng.
> *I'm sorry.*
> Winter melon.
> *I'm sorry.*
> Lotus root.
> *I'm sorry.*

To the anglophone reader, the lines that make up these stanzas are paratactical. They do not mean much when put together since no connectives explain the clauses and lines' relationships. But to the stomach and mind of Lau, each of these foods carries a meaning of its own. From California rolls to plant roots to cookies, they are the secret language of apologies that perhaps only children of immigrants like Lau would understand. In the words of gender and critical race studies scholar Kyla Wazana Tompkins, food here becomes more than a commodified and fetishized object. It is turned into a "matter" where "human appetitive energy is directed" (3).

Tompkins's critical eating studies, which zoom out from food as a mere sign to the entire ecology around food from production to consumption, imparts a significant lesson that one becomes what one eats. From this logic, what Lau incorporates into her body is the affective investment of her parents, which takes the shape of vegetables, the dough of the cookies, and the surimi that went into making imitation crab. What Lau eats is the edible language of love that her parents were never taught to speak because of the conservative culture of the Sinophone world. Food—as Lau's source text—is also a source of nutrients that linger in her body.

The motif of food as the translation of something other than language continues in the poem "3 am Communion," in which Lau compares phố to the "language of care / we were never taught to speak" (28). As a preacher's daughter, Lau wonders why no one at home talks about "really good phố" like they talk about communion, as a salvation for queers drunk at three o'clock (28). Writing from her own experience, Lau advises "queer kids discovering the meaning of family, what you need / are friends and a bowl of Phố" because it can "change you" (28). Delivering eaters from the side effects of drinking, "Nothing tempers the fire of red dragons and tequila" like "clear, glistening broth" and the "tang of basil, cilantro, fresh chili peppers, and lime" (28). In a poem that recounts an experience when she was drunk at 3 am, Chan ventures an informed guess that potentially answers her own question: in Canada, no one takes phố as a form of food and remedy, as a language of care, because the soup is an immigrant food, maligned as a dish made up of the "ugly parts of the animal." Toronto, as Lau describes in "I Don't Hear Cantonese in Chinatown Anymore," speaks of "veganism and venti," and phố has lost its appeal in the face of—to borrow a term from Arab feminist Juliana Yazbeck—white veganism, which rails against eating animals while benefiting from the exploitation of farm laborers.

Lau addresses the importance of plants and roots in "Red and Yellow," naming her "ginseng" and her Indigenous girlfriend's "sage" as medicine that they share to heal each other. In a country that has historically reduced and objectified Asian and Indigenous peoples with legislation like the Chinese Immigration Act and the Indian Act (69), these legislative acts, as Canadian gender and sexuality studies scholar Iyko Day argues, declare the "proprietorial logic of whiteness" under which immigrants are subsumed (24). White settler colonialism abstracts Asians into alien capital and gentrifies traditional Asian community spaces like Chinatown so much that the language and the population historically there became displaced. The same force further displaces Indigenous peoples and lands, which eventually bolsters whiteness. The plants and roots—the last frontier of white liberal appropriation, with the advent of white veganism—are what Lau and her partner reclaim as resistance and a right to health.

Not all forms of settler colonialism look like the classic tropes of violence, such as spectacular killing and labor extraction, and "3 am Communion" hints at the ongoing and morphing form of settler colonialism: "We are talking about food—and cultures are for eating" (28). These last lines of the poem call out whiteness's unconscious eating, devouring of minority culture, rendering a metacommentary on white liberalism's promiscuous attitude toward "ethnic" food and, by extension, culture. The poem lays out two appetites, one white and the other Asian:

I grind my teeth
on the ugly parts of the animal.

There are no ugly parts of the animal
in this food.

These two stanzas look contradictory: they represent the white and Asian appetites inside of Lau: the attitude of white eating and Asian eating. But reading the second stanza as correcting the first allows us to understand the speaker is calling out Canadian multiculturalism for not fully understanding ethnic foods and nuances. Her translation of phở into a language of care is a humbling offering to rectify that.

Lau's gastronomic poetics share similarities with Chan's trans/nonbinary poetics, particularly in how they talk about their bodies. Though Lau does not explicitly identify as trans or nonbinary, her experience of having her body scolded—when someone "tell[s] [her] / not to lovedefendsavor / [her] body" (10)—is reminiscent of how Chan's body is "shut up" by their Anglican school uniform. The effort that Lau puts into articulating her body prompts us to read her gastronomic poetics as what Rebekah Edwards characterizes as "trans-poetics." For example, in "When Yuhua Hamasaki Went Home," the speaker (she/her) identifies with the drag queen Yuhua Hamasaki (they/them), referring to them as a "feast" (*Language* 3). Describing her connection to an Asian drag queen through food imagery, Lau expresses pride in her heritage—a creative way to portray herself consuming and becoming like Hamasaki. The poem portrays Hamasaki as Christ-like, suggesting that consuming her is a communion that unites Chinese queer, trans and nonbinary diaspora members. Similarly, in the poem, Lau commemorates the day when "RuPaul told the first Chinese drag queen / in ten seasons of Drag Race / to sashay away" (3). To the speaker, the pain of this moment of elimination elicits "a small. Familiar ache / for the Chinese girls who are not good, not submissive, who aren't ashamed to be hungry" in real life (2). As if proposing a toast to her sworn brothers, sisters, and nonbinary comrades—"brother-sister," "drag-on-queen" (3)—the narrator ends the poem by saying, "This feast is for us" (3). The daughter of a Chinese pastor and author of "3 am Communion," Lau invites a Eucharistic reading: the indefinite *this feast* could be Hamasaki's body of work on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, which viewers of the show can admire, or the sacrament of communion. Hamasaki, the New York drag queen who is part of the Chinese diaspora, grounds Lau and other communicants in the trans/nonbinary identity in Chinese history, one she traces back to her grandmother's re-enactment of nonbinary personas, which themselves date back to the theater of the Six Dynasties (220–589 AD), a theatrical troupe that also inspires Hamasaki's aesthetic.

Lau identifies with the diasporic history of nonbinary identity that has traveled a circumspect route from China to North America, and it leaves a molecular change in Lau's sense of self. Just like a priest who calls to the congregation to witness the eucharist, Lau summons a family through the act of sharing the "feast" of Yuhua Hamasaki. She creates and makes herself part of a trans/nonbinary family by proposing a toast to a sociality—a fraternal sorority.

Teaching mainstream white liberal culture that phở is the gastronomic language of care and that food is her immigrant parents' language of love, "Hamasaki" offers yet another translation: through her celebrity, Yuhua Hamasaki has become the *translated* signifier of Asian North American trans and nonbinary identity. To become Hamasaki is, in fact, part of Lau's journey of transition into North American culture. Her desire to belong to a trans and nonbinary community in North America specific to a Chinese and diasporic genealogy compels her to seek models, and Hamasaki jumps out because of the fame she attained on *Drag Race*. Hamasaki's Chinese performance repertoires further guided Lau to look into theatrical art, a field with a long history of cross-dressing in China.

As Hiu-ling Chou documents, women's cross-dressing in Chinese theater dates from the Tang Dynasty (617–908) to the eighteenth century, and men performed women's roles as recently as 1923. Lau grounds a newfound genealogy of queer, trans, and nonbinary Chinese diaspora in this history. She finds space for herself in "the translated text of her past" (Chan "Queerness as Translation") in her grandmother's hobby of singing Cantonese opera, where she sings and wields swords as a man.

> When a Chinese drag queen
> finally
> sashays into the Drag Race workroom
> our ancestors clutch their jade pendants
> but no one says anything
> because our men have been painting their faces and
> singing in soprano since
> the Six Dynasties.
> [. . .]
> when my grandma performed
> in 粵劇
> she swung a sword as man,
> sang as both.
> Shakespeare isn't the only.
> dragulous form of theater (1)

Lau translates her grandmother's dual identity on stage to explain her gender and sexual identity not as a deviation from but as a descendant of a Chinese tradition authentic to her family's history.

Lau consistently finds confidence in her family's history, even if that means identifying across the gender line. In "How to Get Over the Fear of Public Speaking," Lau-the-narrator confesses that she is not a good public speaker because she has "the shakes / and a fear / of crowds" (14). When she fought with her father during childhood, her "voice would get lost, never finds its way," and her voice betrays her the ways the apostle Peter "denies" Jesus (15). The epiphany she reaches by the end of "How" is to "call upon" her "voice," telling it: "Let them hear / Me, I am / My father's daughter" (14). This process of establishing a voice that inspires confidence is reminiscent of lip-synching. Her father's voice is the voice she hopes to channel as she speaks in public, in an effort to appease her anxiety because, as she writes in the first stanza, "My father is a good / Christian man who speaks with the kind / Of grace that can rouse / Three hundred souls, even during the pauses, even when he's taking a breath" (14).

This summoning of her father's powerful Chinese preaching voice to overcome her fear of public speaking in English follows the logic of translation: to produce the target text of confidence, Lau adopts the personae of her father preaching at church. Importantly, she is not her father—she's her father's daughter. The participle phrase *calls upon* recalls the queer, trans, and nonbinary logic of mistranslation, whereby the original text isn't present to dictate the meaning of the target text but to open up space for the translator to revisit and revise the past. Lau's mistranslation of her father's voice is a dubbed version of him, mediated by her body. Lau's consumption and production of her father creates a relation, a type of *beside-ness*—a "mimicking" and "identifying" that Sedgwick writes about in *Touching Feeling* (8). Lau maintains the distance between herself and her father but still acknowledges proximity. "How To," when read together with "Hamasaki," shows Lau's poetic effort to rebuild a relationship with a family that isn't supportive of her gender and sexuality. In other parts of the collection, Lau has to lie about her sexuality to her grandfather, and her mother is allegedly "excited" when Lau finally "acts like a girl" (43).

Informed by Summer Kim Lee's reading of Wu's "full body quotation," Lau's gastronomic poetics feast on Hamasaki's drag and absorb her father's preaching voice, but this lip-synching is far from cannibalistic: the introjection of drag performance and her grandmother's opera singing are acts of defiance in the face of her parents and grandparents' disapproving of her gender and sexuality. Lau discursively enlists the vocabulary of eating—a metaphor for translation that puts focus on the process—to describe the effects that voice and movement leave in her after she adopts aspects of Hamasaki and her father. Like food offers

nutrients, this introjection offers Lau emotions and feelings that transport her outside of herself, and these feelings of kinship, in turn, bring her to the history of nonbinary identity in Chinese theater via a very different route than, for instance, a Chinese history textbook. In a performative realm where the Western gender binary is suspended, under the affective aegis of Chinese diasporic history, Lau feels the safety of identifying with a drag queen, her father, and her grandmother without being accused of being ahistorical or inauthentic.

Sideways Development's Relational Politics

Relationship-building is a political act: that is what the translational techniques and aesthetics that characterize the queer and trans poetics of diasporic Hong Kong describes and the message they deliver. In the words of Sedgwick, the poems I discuss in this chapter *are* and depict periperformatives around the main stage of the major politics in Hong Kong, a site regarded by pundits and scholars as the latest battleground in the New Cold War between the US and China. Unlike the "negative response" of parental denunciation in Nicholas Wong's "Children of China," Wu Tsang, Mary Jean Chan, and Grace Lau's queer and trans poetics establish a periperformative space for their deft circumambulations around major politics.

As Sedgwick explains, one "reason the periperformative does not necessarily represent a diminution in force from the explicit performative to which it refers is that, unlike explicit performative, it can invoke the force of more than one illocutionary act" (79). She adds, "as a spatial register," the periperformative has so much more "aptitude for analogic representation, in contrast to the on/off, digital representation that seems to go with atemporal register" and hence "has more aptitude than the explicit performative for registering historical change" (79). As I have shown, the practice and metaphor of translation in these nonbinary and trans poems opens up the periperformative dimension of their speakers and autobiographical creators' poetic utterances. Their perlocutionary effects on readers are many: from the artists' accounts of their trans, queer, and nonbinary identities to the readers in their adopted homes and cultures to their discursive commentaries on the current political transition in Hong Kong, a topic many in the city and the diaspora don't feel comfortable talking about in the open anymore. This chapter has labored to draw out and read together the effects of Wu's, Chan's, and Lau's trans and nonbinary poetics on me as a queer scholar in the diaspora looking for decolonial, de-imperial, and de-Cold War approaches to imagining and bringing about a transformative future that sidesteps the ones charted out by this moment's powers-that-be.

Translation as a theme and a mode of knowledge production and circulation

has come up repeatedly as I comb through the anglophone archive of queer and trans poetics, and, epistemologically it clears the way for sideways relations like queer kin-making. Indeed, as a black feminist Cynthia Young discusses in *Soul Power*, building solidarity between the colonized at home and abroad requires conjuring an "imagined terrain," and making the vision of a queer and non-aligned counterpublic possible "involves multiple translations" (3). According to Sandra Bermann, translation "acts as a model for political and ethical relationality" because it forces a language to be receptive to the differences other languages will bring to it (294). Subsequently, my readings of Wu, Chan, and Lau have specified that queer (mis)translation is trans and nonbinary artists' discursive method of approximating a past that did not see them in order to resist disappearance in the present. Such personal attempts at self and collective discovery and healing can unexpectedly build complicated bridges.

Part II

4: Autobiographical Films at the Trans Tipping Point

Building on chapter 3's examination of transnational artists' sideways responses to Hong Kong's political transition, this chapter focuses on the local contexts where these interventions meet limitations. While I argued that queer and trans poetry and performance displace the developmental narrative of a postcolonial Hong Kong as a linear process of assimilation in the Chinese century in the previous chapter, here I examine how Hong Kong-based new trans visual culture emerges as a reflection of and response to the unique contradictions embodied by post-Handover Hong Kong. Unlike transnational artists who have the luxury to jet in and out of the city, local trans and nonbinary filmmakers negotiate daily with Hong Kong's Beijing-supervised Basic Law. As they do, these artists show that individual agency only goes so far. For their trans and nonbinary identities to flourish, they make strategic collaborations with their milieu, pursuing gender euphoria in intra-active engagement with their bodies and the systems that regulate them.

In my theorization thus far, I have shown how Wu Tsang, Mary Jean Chan, and Grace Lau's work helps to expand sideways development from a solely lateral relation to both a collateral and intra-active engagement. These poets and performers' self-determination as LGBTQ+ subjects in the US, UK, and Canada depends on a paradox: their compulsion toward maintaining a relationship with their (mythical) place of origin in Hong Kong and mainland China and their repulsion against complicity with neoliberal multiculturalism in their new adopted homes. In their cultural expressions, they find periperformative positions in transnational liminality. Also finding periperformative space in the contradictions of the socio-economy and law of Hong Kong are trans and nonbinary (short) filmmakers from the city: Siufung Law, Kaspar Wan, and Beatrice Wong, a cohort of new digital artists who have emerged since the Handover. Their autobiographical pieces seek to express gender differences against the complicated backdrop of postcolonial Hong Kong. In this chapter, I examine their artistic labors by putting gender and political concerns together.

The political situation in Hong Kong is a paradox. *De jure* Hong Kong's Basic Law—which adopted its framework from British colonial law—grants personal protection to Hong Kong citizens. That, along with the fifty years of transition that came with no change, was promised by the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984. *De facto*, the HKSAR government has diverged from these promises as they have introduced new laws explicitly marking Hong Kong's transition from British to Chinese governance: in 2012, the government attempted to introduce a national curriculum to schools, local reaction to which catapulted the then-student protester Joshua Wong to stardom; in 2014, it restricted the ways by which candidates for the city's chief executive were selected; in 2019 it introduced the ELAB bill allowing extradition of criminals to China (as I explained in the introduction); and in 2020 it curbed city-wide civil disobedience using COVID protocols.

While all of this was happening, the Hong Kong High Court has actively included trans people into the polity. The twenty-first century origins of trans rights in Hong Kong trace back to the landmark 2013 case, *W v. Registrar of Marriage*, in which Miss W (the post-operation transgender woman plaintiff) won the right to marry her opposite-sex partner. Despite the seeming progressive outcome, as I explore further below, gender studies scholars such as Howard Chiang have called the liberal framing of the legal briefs behind the *W* case "the political residuals of heteronormativity" which "figures the advancement of queer interests by perpetuating certain implicit forms of gender or sexual oppression" ("Intimate Equality" 166). Chiang's argument that the *W* case reifies medically transitioned trans women as ideal transgender citizens echoes the critique of homonormativity offered by earlier queer and trans scholars like Jasbir Puar. Trans studies scholar Ace Lehner furthers Puar's line of inquiry in the context of "trans Hollywood" (41): the emergence of a type of "trans-normativity" in the mainstream media reflects a set of "narrow ideals of race, class, [and] gender" through which institutions extend "fleeting invitations" to trans people "into nationalism" (42). Quoting Susan Stryker and micha cárdenas, Lehner continues, "neoliberalism incorporate[s] trans folks who uphold late-capitalist agendas while keeping other trans folks out of public view" (43). These insights shed light on the current Hong Kong legal system when it comes to its treatment of trans people: the system only recognizes trans people who have undergone both bottom and top surgery to "fully" transition. Compared to other trans people, post-op men and women have greater opportunities to obtain sex changes on their legal documents. As gender studies scholar Marco Wan points out, this exclusion creates "normative temporal structures and impose[s] tropes such as linearity, futurity, and finality onto the life scripts of trans subjects" (166).

How, then, should we make sense of these seemingly contradictory phenom-

ena, with increasingly restricted freedom of expression alongside expanded recognition of certain kinds of trans people?

I propose that Hong Kong's new trans-visual culture offers a cultural and periperformative space to figure it out. Indeed, Hong Kong culture, particularly Sinophone literature, has evoked the sign of transgenderism as a metaphor for Hong Kong's political transition. In Dung Kai-cheung's 雙身 (Double Body), written just a few years before the Handover, protagonist Lam San Yun (林山原) wakes up one day to find himself trapped inside a woman's body; in the ensuing story, he tries to locate where his prior male body has gone. Scholars have compared San Yun's overnight gender transition to the Handover and Hong Kong people's political transition the night of 30 June 1997. From this perspective, Lin's male-to-female experience maps onto Hong Kong's changing status from a British colony to a Chinese Special Administrative Region.

Dung wrote this story during a time of dissolving gender boundaries in popular culture and when Francis Fukuyama declared "the end of history" following the Soviet Union's collapse. Meanwhile, Hong Kong faced its own ending—British colonialism—seemingly opposite to Fukuyama's vision. Yet Chinese sovereignty in Hong Kong has manifested as something Jean Baudrillard might call an "illusion of an end" rather than a true ending. Instead of concluding, History rapidly disintegrates toward "disappearance" and "vanishing" (Baudrillard 5). As digital media overtook print at the end of the twentieth century, Baudrillard noted that signs of representation, like History, began recycling at unprecedented speeds. These rapidly circulating representations create an illusion of History's stillness while actually accelerating its disintegration—an outward-spinning force unraveling the fabric of History itself. The debate between Fukuyama and Baudrillard—and its feminist afterlife, which I will discuss below—provides a framework for understanding Hong Kong's transitional politics in trans productions like Dung's novel and the DIY videos examined in this chapter. In *Double Body*, specifically, Dung speculates about post-British colonialism: rather than a completely new system, he portrays a hybrid of old systems, paralleling his character San Yun, who doesn't simply awaken without gender but inhabits a duality. Dung conceptualizes transness as duality, depicting his protagonist with a man's mind and a womans body—an approach seemingly influenced by Baudrillard's post-culturalism, particularly his provocative statement "We are all transsexuals" (20–21) in *The Transparency of Evil*. For Baudrillard, transsexuality functions more as a metaphor for the breakdown of previously stable cultural signifiers like gender, where blending masculinity and femininity became commonplace as modernism gave way to postmodernism. Taking this concept further, Dung literalizes transgender experience as duality through Lam's character, creating a metaphor for Hong Kong's political transition—a

process representing neither capitalism's end nor communism's beginning, but rather capitalism's continuity with Chinese characteristics.

Feminist scholars such as Rita Felski have criticized Baudrillard's use of transgenderism as a metaphor to get at the crisis around representation in the twentieth century. Felski ultimately added that for most minoritized people, including women and trans people, history continues. Though for most, History supposedly ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the "triumph" of democratic development unifying world systems, this Western and phallocentric narrative excludes minoritized groups. Felski's intervention speaks to trans representation in Hong Kong: Hong Kong trans artists make embodied narratives that show capitalism and its twin, liberalism, persist in the city and demonstrate how capitalism and liberalism continue and morph into new iterations with Chinese characteristics. Dung uses his trans character as a discursive metaphor to understand Hong Kong's transition, but his fictional account in the 1990s regurgitates earlier gendered stereotypes, ending with a trans character who hates his female body and dismisses domestic chores by gendering them as women's work that is beneath him (49, 110). In contrast, the trans-visual autographical narratives of the twenty-first century engage with the living, socioeconomic, and legal realities of Hong Kong from Handover to the aftermath of the Umbrella Movement. Produced during intense conflict and contradiction in the city, these videos offer metaphorical and material responses to their milieu. Read through the intersectional lens of gender and politics, these narratives refuse easy assimilation to the chrononormative timelines of neoliberalism and nationalism.

Indeed, unlike Dung's trans character, whose transition experience is sudden and linear, the DIY videos of transition I study are more layered and incremental. They represent not just metaphors but the evolution of content and form: they diverge from simple teleology as they visualize the struggle for trans and nonbinary recognition and flourishing as an ongoing development that grows to the side. Here, sideways development names the non-trans(chrono)normative, nonunidirectional trajectory and sometimes nonbinary embodiments of Hong Kong artists. These videos present gendered identities as leaky and fluid—not essentialized—with body parts that ooze blood after gender-affirming surgery, as in Beatrice Wong's *Goodbye Mr. B, Hello Ms. B*; as skin shedding from anxiety-induced eczema, in Kaspar Wan's documentary *Kaspar X—If I Had a Soul*; and as androgynous and multiple, in Siufung Law's *Unfinished*. Sideways development, in this trans context, names the gender transition process while also acknowledging the materials, effects, and bodily realities that shape the gender transition experience.

In this chapter and the next, I situate the conditions of Hong Kong's current

transition in capitalist and neoliberal terms. In the HKSAR government's effort to create a competitive capitalist environment to attract global talent—what the Basic Law works to maintain—high court judges generate a trans(chrono)normative narrative of growth for trans subjects which I read, following Dung's metaphor in *Double Body*, as parallel to the chrononormativity of Hong Kong's transition from a British colonial to a Chinese city. In this chapter, I extrapolate from the gender transition narrative of a cohort of new Hong Kong visual artists for their political insights on their home, going through a transition of its own.

I call this trans visual era "new" not to suggest that transness was unpresentable before but because trans representation before 2013 was quite different from what it has become. Trans juridical rights in Hong Kong date to 2013, and since 2015 trans representation in Hong Kong entered a new era. That year, the organizers of the Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival awarded Michael Vidler, Miss W's lawyer, its Prism Award, recognizing his significant contribution to the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, the aforementioned local transgender documentary film *Kaspar X—If I Had a Soul*, by Kaspar Wan, was featured in the transgender category. This rise of the trans films in Hong Kong in 2015 was precipitated by trans celebrity exposure in national and global media: Laverne Cox starred in Netflix's hit *Orange is the New Black* (2013–2019), and China's transgender dancer Jing Xi debuted her talk show on national television (2015). These transgender tipping points in China and the US, in conjunction with the *W* case, contributed to the inauguration of new trans representation in Hong Kong.

Since 2015, there has been a noticeable shift in trans representation in the cinema, from a circumscribed aesthetic to a visible form of display. Prior to 2015, transness was not explicit content. For example, Raymond Yip, the director of 1998's *Portland Street Blues*, never names the androgynous gangster Sister Thirteen (Sandra Ng) as trans. Instead, according to Helen Leung, Yip's editing—his cuts and sutures—of Ng's scenes embodies Thirteen's gender ambiguity, a technique by which the director codes a character's transness for an audience actively looking to "see trans" onscreen ("Trans on Screen" 197). By contrast, the DIY transition videos (each of which has garnered local, national, and international attention and accolades) that this chapter examines stage the trans body front and center.

With intersectional formalism, an analytic that trains attention on narrative structure as it intersects with identity and materiality, I read trans autobiographical films here as sideways developments: the videos aesthetic, affective, and anatomical excesses mark the artists' paradoxical compliance with the rights-based discourse of Hong Kong as they expose how the discourse straitjackets them. Together, they bargain to expand existing state apparatuses, like the medical sys-

tem and the nuclear family, to negotiate for more heterogenous imaginations of identity development beyond the ableist and unidirectional injunction to grow up.

This tension between recognition and constraint gestures at the larger question of how transgender identities relate to cultural productions. While Baudrillard and Felski debated transgenderism as a metaphor for the end of history, literary scholar Jay Prosser of *second skins* argues that what he calls transsexuality—or what is called trans in twenty-first-century American English—is essentially a narrative process: "Transsexuality is always narrative work, a transformation of the body that requires the remolding of life into a particular narrative shape" (4). Hong Kong's medical system imposes on trans individuals therapeutic timelines and developmental milestones that some scholars have called trans(chrono)normative. Combining the key terms of *transnormativity* and *chrononormativity*, Garde uses trans(chrono)normativity as a shorthand to refer to that which "organizes individual human lives toward maximum productivity" (40). Garde adds that trans health care, like hormone replacement theory, is an example of state-sponsored technologies of "trans(chrono)normativity," as it is often imagined as a medical intervention that "propel[s] the body to move toward a different development [. . . .] to enable a better future and thus to hold trans subjects into normative temporalities" (41).

Hil Malatino points out that trans(chrono)normativity takes hold in the media, too. Typical transition films affectively frame "pre-transition" as "reductively bleak" and "post-transition" as "a bright-sided promise of social ease, domestic comfort, and existential peace"; these narratives, in turn, manufacture a "hormone time" that is "linear and teleological, directed toward the end of living full time in the desired gender" (639). Media studies scholar Laura Horak adds that "hormone time," as illustrated by the conventional, transnormative genre of transition videos, "borrows a Christian temporal structure" that "begins with a moment of rupture and points in a particular direction" (qtd. in Malatino 639). Horak further notes that "while hormone time is not as grandiose, it also points toward a utopian future, in which the subject experiences harmony between the felt and perceived body" (qtd. in Malatino 639–640).

Wong, Law, and Wan's DIY autobiographical videos tell the stories of their gender transition: they are—by the trans(chrono)normative nature of being part of the genre of transition video—legible narratives that appeal to mainstream film festivals, including and beyond the Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. Their inclusion and recognition by such festivals attests to how they embody a trans(chrono)normative aesthetic to a certain extent and are recognized by viewers because of it. But a contextual and theoretically informed reading of them, with special attention to their historical setting (in Hong Kong's transition period) and to their cinematography (including pacing, rhythm, and orien-

tations), throws into relief the ways in which they revise the linearity of Hong Kong transition narratives, including gender-based and non-gender-based ones.

Indeed, these artists by turn accepted and rejected linear narrative *tout court* as they revised the genre into a queer trans(non)chrononormativity. The unfoldment and enfoldment of their transition journeys show how their bodies and the systems that regulate them paradoxically undermine and make possible their trans subjecthood. Their compulsion toward and repulsion against a trans(chrono)normative trans subjecthood reveals their personal preoccupations as much as their city's constitutively contradictory transition, underwritten by the twin forces of Chinese nationalism and Western liberalism. To make this case, the first section of this chapter analyzes how the court positions itself as a gatekeeper arranging the paradigmatic life experiences and narratives of trans subjects. The second section of this chapter surveys the artists' films to consider how they conform with trans(chrono)normativity all the while discursively exceeding transnormative expectations and ideology.

Transgender Laws in Hong Kong

When the Court of Final Appeal granted Miss W the right to marry in 2013, many activists and academics engaged in social movements in the Sinophone world saw it as a harbinger of more progressive laws to come in one of China's Special Administrative Regions. Or at least the judges and justices who sided with Miss W made it seem so. In the final statement delivered by Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma and Mr. Justice Ribeiro PJ, the panel conjures a burgeoning multicultural Hong Kong with a future teeming with political progressiveness. In this Hong Kong, marriage between a transgender woman and a cisgender man will no longer be prohibited by the 1875 Matrimonial Causes Act, inherited from the UK and deeming procreation the sole condition for marriage. Invoked by generations of lawyers in the UK and more recently in Hong Kong, the condition barred post-op transgender women's right to marry because of their infertility. As the panel of justices put it, because the original version of the Basic Law had not prepared the city for trans inclusivity, it had to catch up. They write:

> In present-day multi-cultural Hong Kong where people profess many different religious faiths or none at all and where the social conditions described by Thorpe LJ by and large prevail, procreation is no longer regarded as essential to marriage. There is certainly no justification for regarding the ability to engage in procreative sexual intercourse as a *sine qua non* of marriage and thus as the premise for deducing purely biological criteria for ascertaining a person's sex for marriage purposes. (Chiang, "Intimate Equality" 172)

Thorpe LJ, whom the court cites, is the dissenting judge in the UK's 2003 *Bellinger v Bellinger*, in which the House of Lords denied Mrs. Bellinger, a transgender woman, the right to marry her husband based on the Matrimonial Causes Act. Notably, Ma's judgement borrowed not only Thorpe's liberal spirit to push back against Chinese cisgender-heteropatriarchy but also Thorpe's word choice. Echoing Thorpe's *multi* (short for multiple) claim to a "multi-faith" and "multi-racial" society, the decision depicts a multicultural Hong Kong that is trans-inclusive. The Hong Kong judges did not stop there: going beyond their British antecedent, Ma et al. touted the exceptionalism of the Basic Law as a flexible document able to accommodate changing realities.

Looking for positive precedents to legitimize their 2013 verdict, the judges of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal cited *Goodwin v. UK* (2002), a landmark case where the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in favor of Christine Goodwin against the British government. Goodwin had experienced workplace harassment after her employer discovered she was assigned male at birth by checking her unchanged National Insurance number. Before *Goodwin* was later affirmed by the European Convention of Human Rights, the British courts cited the 1970 case *Corbett v. Corbett* (which, like *W*, concerned marriage) to dismiss Goodwin's complaint. The *Corbett* decision, which granted a cisgender man's petition to nullify his marriage after discovering his wife was transgender, established that a person's legal sex is determined by their birth certificate. This ruling not only restricted marriage to opposite-sex couples but specifically to cisgender individuals. Building on *Corbett*, the United Kingdom opposed Goodwin's request to change her legal sex markers until the ECHR intervened in 1994, ultimately siding with her. The *Goodwin* ruling led to privacy protections and the UK's Gender Recognition Act of 2004, which allowed transgender people to change their legal documents after obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate. I detail this genealogy from *Corbett* to *Goodwin* because, despite *Corbett* being outdated and subsequently overturned, the Hong Kong Court of First Instance referenced it to side with the Registrar of Marriage, rejecting Miss W's application to marry her boyfriend in 2010. The Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal noted this, pointing out that the Registrar had effectively negated the appellant's gender transition despite her completed sex-reassignment surgeries.

The court writes:

> it is artificial to assert that post-operative transsexuals have not been deprived of the rights to marry as, according to law, they remain able to marry as a person of their former opposite sex. The applicant in this case lives as a woman, is in a relationship with a man and would only wish to marry a man. She has

> no possibility of doing so. In the Court's view, she may therefore claim that the very essence of her right to marry has been infringed. (par. 77)

Because W had been clinically diagnosed with gender dysphoria, had medically transitioned from male to female, and was living socially as a woman, the court overturned the Registrar's decision, concluding that the appellant and her boyfriend should be issued a marriage license. Justices and judges refer to Miss W as "transsexual" throughout the case and its appeals, which (despite being considered an antiquated and pathologizing term) in Hong Kong specifies people who have undergone *both* bottom and top surgeries—those deemed most deserving of protection (among other trans people at different points in their medical journey) in the court's view. This constriction eventually changes with the recent verdict of the *Tse* case, which forced the Commissioner of Registration to loosen the medical requirements for trans people who wish to change the sex marker on their identification. The requirement changed from full bottom and top surgeries to just double mastectomy for trans men and penectomy and orchiectomy for trans women. Despite these changes, local organizations like PrideLab and Quarks have argued that requiring trans women to undergo bottom surgery, which is more invasive compared to the double mastectomy required of trans men, creates an unequal burden. Even with the changes, as they opine, trans identity remains fundamentally pathological and gatekept by medical and legal professionals, with trans people living at the authorities' discretion (Beth, *InMediaHK*).

Though the court eventually overturned his verdict, Justice Thomas Au's initial opposition and the court's rejoinder to him are worth examining, as they still represent the legal system's position that upholds the irreversibility of surgeries as the gold standard for gender transitions. He stated that "sex-reassignment surgery" is that which will give transgender people a "clear and irreversible resemblance closest to the preferred sex" (*The Standard*). Referencing Justice Au, the judges said that while they sympathize with the plaintiffs' hardship, "leaving it up to the individual cannot be a workable rule as it leads to uncertainty and arbitrariness, and in effect, there would be no rule as a change of gender entry can be made simply by the person declaring so" (*The Standard*). Despite its less stringent requirements, the Court of Final Appeal still upholds partial post-operative transgender men or women as the city's trans individuals. By maintaining a medically narrow view of transsexuality, the court has positioned itself and the medical industry as the arbiters of trans identity to ensure that gender remains fixed and bounded. Considering the 2013 case and the 2022 one with its recent 2024 update together demonstrates how the Hong Kong court's treatment of trans plaintiffs relies on a decidedly transnormative logic that presumes gender

transition to be a purely medical process marking a person's unilateral move from one gender to another. As Marco Wan analyzes in a recent article on the *W* case, the courts' legal judgements "entrench normative temporal structures and impose tropes such as linearity, futurity, and finality onto the life scripts of trans subjects" (563), and the *W* case inscribes "a linearity at the core of the formation of the transgender subject by making full sex reassignment surgery a prerequisite for legal recognition of one's new gender" (568). Such transnormative life scripts proliferate in cultural productions like trans films that receive mainstream attention and government subsidy. As a cluster of trans films produced during and after 2013, among them Beatrice Wong's *Goodbye Mr. B, Hello Ms. B* show, the dominant medical narrative of post-op women, typical of the linearity of Miss W's transnormative life, suggests that the normative vision of trans identity set forth in the case has trickled down into Hong Kong trans culture.

Contemporary Hong Kong Trans Films

Goodbye Mr. B, Hello Ms. B is a fifteen-minute short film produced in 2015 by Beatrice Suet-ling Wong, a trans LGBTQ+ advocate, DJ, stand-up comedian, filmmaker, and writer in Hong Kong. Wong's short film is an autobiographical account of her own pre- and post-operation experiences. As suggested by the "Mr." and then "Ms." in the film's title, it ostensibly tells a typical trans story aligned with the transnormative life script the Hong Kong court has imagined for the city's trans subjects. The film is comprised of bits and pieces of the filmmaker's interviews and photographs from the past and footage of her more recent stand-up comedy performances. From these, the audience can more or less piece together a linear story that goes like this: Beavis, assigned male at birth, feels that he was born into the wrong body and therefore seeks and undergoes top and bottom surgeries, speech coaching, and hormone replacement therapies during his adolescence. With this medical intervention, Beavis becomes Beatrice, who then lives happily ever after as a transwoman.

In fact, the opening sequence of the film announces the unidirectional trajectory of Beatrice's linear sex-change experience with a time lapse of Beatrice's ID card, gradually morphing gender and date of issue from "Wong, Pak Fai Beavis/ M/ 28-03-06" to "Wong, Suet Ling Beatrice/F/ 01-09-15." The time in between—exactly nine and a half years—is a process of physical transition that the rest of the film explains and rationalizes. In the first diegetic shot of the film dated "Summer 2015," a pre-op femme-presenting Beatrice—with long hair parted all on one side, wearing a grey pencil skirt and a matching top, showcasing a pair of black tights and high heels—click-clacks down a hallway back to her childhood home for a trip down memory lane. Filmed inside a closet, she

ruminates on multiple images. As if looking for early signs of a trans childhood, Beatrice holds a picture taken when she was a toddler, in which she squats in a field with a cluster of grapes or olives in hand: "I thought I already have a feminine side when I was young." As Beatrice scrutinizes the photo further, she utters, "[Look at] how I support my cheeks using my hands" here and "the way I wriggled my waist there." She then comments on another image. In this picture, she appears older, wearing a pair of glasses standing with folded arms: "But as I grew . . . I started to feel uncomfortable in front of the camera. You can see here that my shoulders were tensing. It's ugly." The scene ends with her saying, "But I was not too self-aware about it at that time because I did not like looking at myself in the mirror." Beatrice's confession of her past dislike of the mirror is typical of people who experience gender dysphoria; to Beatrice and many others, standing in front of the mirror can be a de-subjugating experience because the reflection potentially estranges the self inside from what they see reflecting back on the outside. Offering a sharp contrast to the shy unsure child in the picture is the voice from the confident filmmaker herself in August 2015, immediately before gender affirmation surgery. If Wong's comfort level with her femme presenting pre-op appearance in the film is any indication of what a female appearance in public can do to mitigate her gender dysphoria, the then-forthcoming medical procedure will only be a transformative experience for the better.

Just these first four to five minutes of Wong's short film—especially the effective pandering to the transnormative expectation that centers medical intervention as the end point that promises a good trans life granted by the eligibility to marry—make it easy to imagine why Wong's film received a grant from the governmental Hong Kong Arts Center to participate in the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival in 2016. In her remarks after the film festival, she praised Canadian "hospitality" as "exceptionally heartwarming in such a cold weather" and observed that the country has "a growing appreciation for Asian cinema." Beatrice also noted that "filmmakers" in Canada "are given more free rein," as reflected in short films that Wong described as "more universal and less localized than those in HK" (Wong). Her last comment is worth unpacking: it indicates her self-awareness of the contradiction that her presence at the Canadian film festival embodied. On the one hand, her presence as a transgender woman from Hong Kong, sponsored by the SAR government no less, shows that her film's content matters to Hong Kong's neoliberal cultural stakeholders; she is flesh-and-blood proof that Hong Kong is an inclusive metropole that is just as progressive and conducive to business successes as Western mega cities like Toronto. On the other hand, Beatrice's comment about the wide range of Toronto Reel implies that there is a limit to what can be represented in Hong Kong trans cinema, that there are other Hong Kong trans films that did not

make it to Toronto simply because they fell outside of the appropriate range as deemed by government officials.

Beatrice's awareness of the local and international cultural politics of trans representation suggests that there is something extra, something more universal, to her Hong Kong film. Indeed, I argue that we should take the cinematography of Wong's autobiographical work seriously, particularly the interruption of the film's diegetic presence by Wong's funny re-narrations of key moments in her life, including her formative years as a gender dysphoric boy and her days of recovery in the hospital and then at home. In doing so, we appreciate the humor that lends her much-needed levity when going through the trials and tribulations of being a trans woman, which could otherwise feel heavy in Hong Kong. Hilarity in *Goodbye* may seem to be secondary, if not auxiliary, to Wong's delivery of her transnormative story; however, when we listen closely to what Wong's humor says and how it interrupts the film, we come to understand that the documentary's aesthetic and message are more complicated. These humorous narrations are extracted from Wong's stand-up performances; they are vignettes that disrupt the film's smooth unfolding, dragging its linear progression back with past images of Wong's body—sometimes but not always explicit—that give context to the pre- and post-op trans embodiment. Before I discuss Wong's strategic use of her stand-up comedy vignettes, I want to discuss the relationship between the genre of comedy in relation to trans studies and visual culture.

Comedy in general does not have a good reputation in transgender politics and understandably so. As trans theorist Julia Serano has noted, mainstream media traditionally relies on the "deceptive transsexual" (mostly in horror films), tricking others into believing in a gender that they do not anatomically possess, and the "pathetic transsexual," failing to perform successfully their gender, becomes the source of other characters' jokes (36–41). This comedy history has led "trans culture to eschew comedy in favor of a more paranoid interpretive sensibility" that opts for positive characters—or what trans media studies scholar Cáel M. Keegan calls the "good" trans subject—to right past wrongs (30). But as Keegan says in "On the Necessity of Bad Trans Objects," there is trans humor in "bad" trans objects—like the 1994 film *It's Pat*—that offers critiques of the binary upholding the systems of heteronormative sex and cis-genderism. Though Wong has displayed herself unequivocally as woman in public, Keegan's theorization of bad trans objects offers a model for understanding Wong's "bad" humor in her interrupting vignettes. These asides are playful, but they are also bad because they do not always tell the most appropriate jokes and definitely always serve a political purpose: her bad body humor criticizes the gender binary that espouses the ideal femininity under which trans and cisgender women suffer.

An early example of Wong's bad humor comes from a vignette of her doing her stand-up skit two years before her medical transition. This scene comes directly after Wong's earlier confession of childhood gender dysphoria that caused her avoidance of the mirror. With a wavy, shoulder-length hairdo, Wong specifies an exception to her mirror avoidance: "the only time that I looked up and admired myself in the mirror was when I was wearing my mother's dresses and I don't care my mom's dresses make me look like somebody's grandmother." Beatrice's grin assures the audience that it is okay to laugh with her since the butt of her joke is not so much her, a trans child in a dress, but the idealized femininity that adjudicates how a pretty woman and an aging grandmother should look.

Wong's critiques of gender ideals imbedded in bad humor do not stop after her medical transition, as becomes apparent in the latter half of the film, made up of scenes from her performance after operation. This half begins with Wong recounting her excitement on the day she was pushed into the surgical theater: mimicking her position on the operational bed, she raises her arms and extends her leg on stage, saying "yes, give it to me"—and that is the only thing she remembered from that day because she was soon anesthetized. She adds that the next thing she recalled was that she was bedridden and had to stay in the hospital for ten days. On the day of her discharge, Wong was surprised by the amount of pain that the bottom surgery still caused her, which she enacts on stage. Striking a pageant pose, she announces, "I was about to be a woman." But her first step splinters this fantasy: left hand covering her crotch area, she exclaims, "Ouch ouch ouch." Impersonating her mother's question of "So, are you ready to be a lady yet?," Wong recalled herself snapping back: "Mom, I have a wound that is the size of a face [which was obviously the exaggeration to solicit the round of laughter off stage]! Can you cut me some slack?"

In addition to re-learning how to walk, Wong attended a vocal training workshop but found herself struggling in it. Performing that struggle on stage, Wong goes right for the note below the middle C on the piano (which, according to vocal trainers for trans women, is the lowest note the typical female voice typically hits). After holding that note for a second, Wong goes out of tune. Sounding defeated and frustrated, she confesses, "I just can't do it. It is like if someone can't sing, they just can't."

On top of vocal and gestural adjustments, what makes Wong's post-op life challenging is her friend group's cisnormative and transphobic attitudes, which really reflect attitudes that still persist in everyday life for trans people in Hong Kong. As she elaborates, "My girlfriends don't take me seriously as a woman because I do not menstruate" and adds that "they sometimes avoid me because they don't want men to think that they are transgender like me" by association.

But as Wong explains in her recent short autobiographical story, the chances of running into bad people and things are just as probable as running into good ones: "I guess that is what happens when you live in a crowded city like Hong Kong; it's so dense that it's hard to not bump into hope" (Ho and Schroeder 108). The person who kindled hope in Beatrice's post-op life is her mother, offering her unwavering support and sage advice. Her mother makes a cameo by the end of the film: looking at the camera, she says to Wong, "Those who are friendly will be friendly, don't care the naysayers [. . .] Keep your self-respect, feel worthy. And don't get out of your way to please others. The past has passed. For now. Face the future and accept what comes." Following that footage, Wong appears on stage for one last time in the film. Borrowing her style from Jay-Z in his 2003 hit "Public Service Announcement," Wong announced, "Allow me to re-introduce myself. My name is Beatrice. I am the CEO of my L-I-F-E life. Love me or leave me alone."

For the rest of this chapter, I want to offer an overture by thinking about what trans films would look like if cultural producers didn't have to observe the financial apparatus of the Hong Kong state and could work in an entirely uncircumscribed way. How would their politics and representations be different? And what of their lessons? To answer, my second analysis focuses on visual representations of and by Siufung Law, the genderqueer artist and prominent trans rights and LGBTQ+ sports activist who now resides in Atlanta where they are pursuing their PhD at Emory University.

Against my analysis of how Wong's film of transgender womanhood is constrained by material and social forces to focus on a linear medical narrative, transmasculine Law's short film and their visual oeuvre demonstrate that gender is a wandering journey. As Law said to me in personal correspondence over the years, their process of gender recognition was not straightforward: they first identified as a lesbian, then as a transman, and now as a genderqueer person who publicly presents with a goatee. Instead of the scalpel, Law's process of non-medical transition relies on exercise and their bodybuilding routine to achieve their gender embodiment. In a 2017 talk, Law recalled when they found out that men and women have the same number of muscles in their bodies, despite differences in muscle mass. It suddenly occurred to them that they could look like a muscular butch too if they wanted to, so long as they worked hard to achieve the same kind of muscle thickness that a strongman has. And Law has indeed put in the hard work to achieve their desired physique: Hong Kong American photographer Ka-Man Tse's 2018 album *narrow distances* captures them as a Greek Olympian about to throw a discus. In a follow-up chat about this photograph, I asked Law about their feelings about posing topless in public. They said that they are comfortable doing it and added that they started going topless at pub-

Fig. 7. Siufung Law as Discobolus in Ka-Man Tse's *narrow distances*. © Ka-Man Tse.

lic beaches since people thought that their well-sculpted breasts were chests. Though Tse is technically the photographer of this image who captures Law's limbs and torso as they extend, compress, and contort, Law too is an artist, especially given the latter's sculpting of their own physique (see Figure 7).

Law applies this artistry to their 2013 filmic creation *Unfinished*, a multimodal piece fusing poetry and video art to stage an episode of psychic drama. Condensed for portability, the short film toured global film festivals, including the 2014 New York Fresh Fruit Festival, the 2015 KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival, and the 2015 Shanghai PRIDE Film Festival. Capturing Law's experience with their gender vis-à-vis the body, *Unfinished* is a spectacle that Law stages for the audience to witness the psychic and physical labor

that goes into Law's making and unmaking of their gender representation. What the film tells about the spectacle of Law's muscular body is a narrative about the filmmaker's flesh, standing as a testimony that bears witness to their genders, both at present and in the past.

Law's poetic treatment of gender embodiment as a narrative of multiplicity (instead of singularity) calls to mind trans studies theorist Eva Hayward's discussion of the lessons she learned from observing starfish. As I mentioned in the analysis of Larissa Lai's sci-fi *The Tiger Flu* in chapter 2, Hayward argues that starfishes' regenerative abilities offer trans people a new way of talking about the changing materiality of their body, as an alternative to the ways in which legal recognition and medical transition have been exclusively tied to the concept and practice of "containment" (73). As Hayward further expounds, "to be comfortable in one's own body is not only to be [. . .] restricted as whole and complete. It is to be able to embody the body's multiplicities, its vicissitudes, and its ongoing process of materialization" (73). Hayward postulates that a more expansive way to think of bodily change in the trans context is to conceive of it like starfish: similar to a starfish that regrows, trans people create their "embodiment by not jumping out of bodies, but by folding (or cutting), and creating a transformative scar of themselves." "There is no absolute division," as she continues, "but continuity between the physiological and affective responses of [one's] different historical bodies" (73).

Hayward and Law have had quite different transition journeys: the former identifies as a trans woman and the latter a male-presenting genderqueer person, and Law does not have the scar that Hayward describes. In fact, in a conversation with journalist Laurie Chen in 2018, Law confessed that they were drawn to bodybuilding in the beginning because they saw the sport as an alternative to a double mastectomy, a process that leaves scars—"is something that they don't like" (L. Chen). Despite these personal differences, Hayward's interpretative affordance remains relevant to my understanding of Law's meandering poem and its accompanying short film. Though not about a specific scar, cut, or fold, Law's autobiographical piece very much centers on the body writ large, and it too highlights the continuity between the past and present in the changing and unchanging materiality of the trans and gender-nonconforming body.

In the first stanza spoken over the video, the speaker (the implied "I" of the piece) awakens a "you" that they are trying to reason with. In their conversation, "I" introduces "you" to Aristophanes's story of the origin of love. In this legend, what we call male and female are two halves of a bigger being which has "two heads, two sets of arms, and legs" (00:34-00:36). These nameless organisms "face back-to-back" and their "two pairs of eyes have never seen each other" (00:39-00:40); but, since Zeus does not like the nameless organisms, he even-

tually breaks them into splits for the rest of their lives, leaving each half forever running around in pursuit of the other.

This narrative of love that the character "you" tells the narrator "I" suggests that *Unfinished* can be read as a love poem: "you" and "I" appear to be engaged in a type of partnership, and the narrator disapprovingly complains that, after Zeus's punishment, "we only have male and female [. . .]/ We are not who we are, always inattentive" (1:53–2:00). They are inattentive because each of them is always busy, looking for the other half to complete them. Aristophanes's origin of love offers a metaphor to interpret how Law articulates their gender dysphoric feeling: the feeling of incompleteness that is pining to be fulfilled by embodying "you" whom "I've" awakened.

Supporting this interpretation, the video companion of the poem shows footage from the song "The Origin of Love," as sung by Hedwig (famously played by John Cameron Mitchell) in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. The narrator "I" is clearly not Hedwig, and the poet appropriates the footage here, just as they evoke the classical tale about the origin of love as metaphor to tell stories of their own conflictual selves. This specific second metaphor nonetheless provides us with the possibility that "you" is the foil of "I," symbolic of the man that "I" was not assigned at birth. This reading becomes more plausible when the narrator "redecorates [themselves], steals the oversized shirt, and [wears the] oversized pants, look[ing] at 'you' in front of the mirror secretly" but only to find out that "may be you have never existed in my body" (3:16–3:33). This line appears to upend Aristophanes's myth as a possible lens to comprehend the complementary relationship between the poet's split halves. By the end of the fourth stanza, the narrator goes so far as to say, "maybe we have never faced back and back" (3:35). With this line, the poet departs from the legend of love in order, I argue, to philosophize what love—particularly trans love—means. With the split halves now positioned facing the same rather than the opposite sides, the relation between "I" and "you" changes accordingly: it is no longer structured by the former's desire for and dependence on the latter for completion. Instead, it becomes a matter of co-existence, with "I's" self in the diegetic presence of the poem existing alongside a past who they just woke up (see Figure 8).

Law's poem thus offers a trans redux of Aristophanes with a twist: it turns the legend of love to a parable of trans self-love. It eventually teaches readers trans lessons of co-existence between the past and the present, between the somatic and sensorial and the mind. These lessons about the trans body echo Hayward's starfish-derived insights, which emphasize "continuity between the physiological and affective responses of [one's] different historical bodies" (73). Like a starfish's self-reliance in the process of regeneration, in order for Law to articulate anew a sense of self-determination, they need to wake up and make

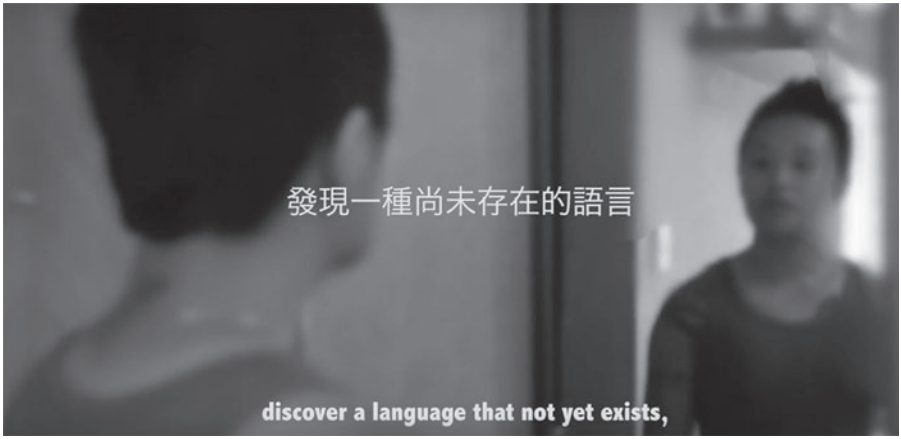


Fig. 8. The genderqueer mirror image stares back in the autobiographical short film *Unfinished* by the artist and bodybuilder Siufung Law on Vimeo. Image courtesy of Siufung Law.

peace with "you" (rather than neglect and hate them) because "it turns out that you were my skin, cells, and feelings" (5:38)—all crucial parts of the physiological and affective materiality that make up who they are now.

Animating the poem's psychic drama is a range of gender play in the film, from Law's constriction of their breasts with a gauze pad to stripping them entirely, from blindfolding themselves with the same gauze pad to drawing a mustache on their face that they later shave off. Law's enactment of these gendered behaviors and practices, as well as their undoing, visualize what Hayward calls the multiplicities and vicissitudes of the transgender body. In their process of becoming a genderqueer person by donning a mustache and some men's clothes in front of the mirror in the bedroom and bathroom and then reversing it all, Law mobilizes what Susan Stryker, Paisley Currah, and Lisa Jean Moore call the "spatio-temporal" imagining of the "trans" in "transgender" (13). Law's perambulations around the different spaces of their apartment and in front of different lenses reflecting their myriad gender images makes noticeable the type of "territorializing and de-territorializing" that Law's trans poetic describes in the poetic component of the film: "I" was initially subjugated by and then desubjugated from the more masculine apparition of "you."

Taken as a whole, and given the film's exposé of the multiple geographical and temporal valances of the word *trans*, Law's autobiographical account is not so much about the trans cultural producer's achievement of a new and fixed gender identity, opposite to one that they were assigned at birth like most transnormative narratives, but instead itself a feat of a trans aesthetic whereby to cross, or

to trans-, is what Stryker and others characterize as "an improvisational, creative, and essential poetic practice through which radically new possibilities for being in the world can emerge" (Stryker et al. 14).

The last two lines of the poem gesture at Law's new possibility: proclaiming "from then on/they are just who they are," the lines imply their narrator's untethering from the containment of one fixed gender (5:52). Visualizing that new possibility, the last shot of the film shows Law, relaxed, unperturbed, looking out of the window, simply enjoying a cigarette. Malatino would call Law's ease with the diegetic present of the film an "interregnum"—"sense of now-ness that shuttles transversally between different imaginaries of pasts and futures and remains malleable and differentially molded by these imaginaries" (644). In this scene, Law's body shows gender markers from the past while staying pliable to their future. As they sit topless with their bare breasts that pass as a man's chest, donning yet again the mustache that they have supposedly wiped off, Law's body is an assemblage of gendered embodiments, indexing the genders that they have crossed and the one that they are heading toward.

So far, this chapter has discussed how trans cultural producers in Hong Kong and its diaspora harness the genre of gender transition videos to imagine life courses that deviate from the constricting formula of trans(chrono)normativity, which the HKSAR government has manufactured through the *W* case and upheld as the legal standard to regulate transness. At the beginning of the chapter, my visual and affective analysis of Wong's film showed how the acerbic humor in her text jolts viewers out of the narrative linearity that trans(chrono) normativity invites them to expect from trans people's experiences of transition. Providing a nonunidirectional alternative to the linearity of trans(chrono)normativity, Law's *Unfinished* captures the artist's self-undoing visuals and poetics to re-reframe transness from a straightforward crossing from one gender to another to a meandering process of self-discovery.

Further problematizing the neoliberal pace and purpose of gender transitioning is Kaspar Wan's *If I Had A Soul*, a twenty-three-minute video available on *YouTube*. Similar to *Unfinished*, *Soul* does not resolve neatly, with the medical transition as the cure-all for trans people's life. The film's deliberate de-emphasis of the medical procedure is quantifiable: only around seven minutes are set in the hospital on the days before and after his double-mastectomy. Even in the hospital vignettes, Wan's body is entirely wrapped up: *Soul* does not display any of Wan's scars or flaunt his surgically sculpted chest after the procedure, further distinguishing it from other YouTube transition videos. Because of these filmic and sartorial choices, the audience can't see much of the change in Wan's post-op physique.

As I argue, this de-emphasis of Wan's anatomical transformation indexes the trans activist's ambition to embody the genre of DIY transition video

while simultaneously telling a nontransnormative story about the trans experience. This nontransnormative narrative zooms out from the medical procedure and widens the timeframe of transition to include the *longue durée* of the protagonist's social transition. *Soul* gives nuance to the challenges of Wan's post-op everyday life. From the dinner table conversations with his church-going mother about religion and transness, to the time he sits on his couch waiting for the flaring eczema on his legs to heal, to his self-exile in France, Wan's narrative decision to de-emphasize his medically altered body and focus instead on his relationship with his church-going family and the ongoing embodied discomfort of his skin condition challenges the audience's expectations of transition videos as a genre that habitually spectacularizes the medical transformation of trans anatomy. Indeed, juxtaposed against Law's and Wong's autobiographical work, Wan's *Soul* feels more public and collaborative. Like how Tsang collaborated with Boychild and the local Mutual Love Society to produce *Duilian*, Wan co-produced *Soul* with Sophia Shek, aided by associate producer Anshuman Das and film editor Alan Wai-Lun Cheng. The teamwork in the film's production process reflects Wan's wide network as the founder of Gender Empowerment (性別空間), an NGO that supports the trans community of Hong Kong. More overtly political than the other two projects, *Soul* offers an open and explicit comment about Hong Kong politics and specifically about the relationship between trans inclusion and religion.

Soul takes place from the winter of 2012 to the spring of 2013, a period in which anti-LGBTQ+ events organized by Christian groups took place. Religion and LGBTQ+ issues are historically seen as incompatible in the SAR. A case in point is the "Inclusive Love Praying Concert" that took place in Tamar Park. Arranged by the Evangelical Free Church of China Yan Fook Church (or 恩福堂) on 11 January 2012, the event attracted more than 50,000 Christian participants to protest the government's plan to roll out consultation to gauge opinion on legislation that would recognize LGBTQ+ identities and protect the community from discrimination. Reflecting such conservatism, the convenor of this concert, Jayson Tam, expressed the church's concern over what he calls "reverse homophobia," saying that "if this [anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination] becomes law, those who oppose homosexuality will have their freedom of speech stripped" (Tam). Importantly, Wan's mother and sister attend 一成團契 (One City Fellowship), a fellowship group under Yan Fook.

Because of his intimate ties with his family, Wan does not perpetuate the false binary of Christianity versus the LGBTQ+ community. Instead, he contin-

ues to engage with religion as a trans man, making his DIY work a rare narrative to think with in examining the temporality of social transition. In the remainder of this chapter, I show how the Wan's process of arriving at reconciliation with his family post-op isn't a linear recapacitating process: his social transition has slips and detours which ultimately make it a long journey. *Soul* takes pains to capture the way Wan explains and reexplains the difference between trans identity and homosexuality to his mother and how his chronic battle with eczema periodically disables him. My analysis homes in on the temporal dimension of Wan's navigation of the simultaneous issues related to his family, religion, and debilitation.

In his seminal "Transness as Debility: Rethinking Intersections Between Trans and Disabled Embodiments," trans and disabled theorist Alexandre Baril notes that vocabularies from disability studies—particularly the concept of "debility" by Julie Livingston—provide him with analogies to describe how his gender transition isn't only a process in which he undergoes bodily changes but also an interpersonal experience in which his "social relations" are "trouble[ed], mobilize[d], and intensifie[d]" (72). Baril's analytic, like his cohort of disability studies scholars, can help viewers interpret *Soul*'s nontransnormative temporality. The film establishes Wan as a trans, religious, and family-oriented man with a skin illness whose identity chronically obstructs him from recapacitation according to neoliberal standards. In doing so, *Soul* throws into relief what trans and disabled theologian Max Thornton calls "trans-crip time," a nontransnormative pace of transitioning that asks for the recognition and acceptance of difference rather than normative, capacitated trans embodiment (358).

As part of the film's nontransnormative pacing, time in *Soul* does not flow in a straight line: the story is told *in medias res*, starting with a post-op scene when Wan re-introduces himself as a "grown man." Set on the eighth day of the 2013 Lunar New Year, the first few minutes portray Wan's visit with a group of old colleagues. Before going in to meet his friends, he tells the camera that he will "做大個仔做嘅嘢" (do what a grown man would do) (1:07-1:09): give out red pockets, a Chinese New Year custom traditionally only observed by married couples. Though Wan is ineligible for marriage since he has not undergone bottom surgery, he carries out the tradition untraditionally regardless. Indeed, in the absence of a physical change that registers visually after his operation, Wan's acts of financial generosity become a ceremonial practice to mark his gender change to people who knew him pre-op. In addition to his colleagues, Wan reacquaints himself with his high school friends. *Soul* shows that being

recognized as a man is crucial to Wan's social transition: he expresses notable satisfaction after being added to a boys-only message group. In a later conversation with a former church fellowship leader in an LGBTQ+ friendly congregation, Wan says "做手術或者用荷爾蒙就好似一個發育嘅階段" (going through surgery or using hormones is a developmental stage) (8:36-8:38), comparing re-introducing himself to old acquaintances to revisiting an old schoolteacher after going through puberty. When asked whether he would consider this re-encounter with the church leader his first time presenting himself as a man to her, Wan becomes cautious, qualifying that he would not describe it as such; rather, he frames his current status as a more complete version of who he has always been. Wan's comparison of his post-op self to a post-puberty man reveals that he does not see his identity as a trans man as a new identity. Instead, as he goes onto explain, it is more an alignment with his soul, which he gendered as a man, closer to his anatomy that was assigned female at birth. Explaining why he did not start this biological process of gender alignment earlier, Wan identifies one reason explicitly and hints at the other implicitly throughout: First, his butch appearance conferred him a masculinity that was not entirely detached from his soul; in turn, this masculine appearance lessened the urgency of his medical transition. However, Wan does say that his breasts have been a site of consternation since puberty: he was constantly vexed by whether he should wear a bra or bind his breasts. The language of transgender identity came to him after puberty, and the identity retroactively fit with how he felt about his breasts. The second reason for his delayed transition is not named directly but is suggested throughout the film: his relationship with his family. Wan and his family's piety is worth lingering on and I will do so below, as it partially explains why Wan's transition process does not end with his double-mastectomy. His mother's and her church's concerns take time for him to reason with, and *Soul* explores these conversations to make viewers realize that, even when medical transitioning affirms gender, complicated social problems often remain.

Soul characterizes Wan's mother as a pious woman whose life is entirely structured by Christianity. On the day before his surgery, Wan and his mother hear Steven Conway's "Good Luck, Good Health, God Bless You" play, and both he and his mother take it as a sign of God's blessing. In the next scene we see them together again at their home's side dinner table. This time, his mother says that her church's pastor required each of them to verbally express their support of the anti-LGBTQ+ gathering, "Inclusive Love Praying Concert," before taking the eucharist. To that, Wan asks if the pastor said anything related to trans issues. His mother says no, because the church thinks that transness is "

美其名" (glorifying something bad) (12:49), a euphemism for same-sex desire to make it more normative sounding. Triggered by the conflation, Wan quizzes his mother, demanding that she define homosexuality for him. His mother says, "男同男女同女" ([homosexuality] means men being with men, women with women) (12:28). Wan follows up by asking, "你究竟覺得我係咪同性戀" ("how about me? Am I a homosexual")? (13:01) His mother hesitates and says, "你未完全改晒" (you have only gone through the top procedure) (13:07) before trailing into silence.

Unwilling to let the remark pass, Wan presses his mother, asking whether he is a homosexual to her, regardless of whether he has a relationship with a man or woman, since he has only undergone half of the gender-affirming surgery. With self-righteous indignation, Wan then asserts that he is trans, which eventually prompts his mother to say, "即係你係錯配" (Right, so that essentially means that you are a mis-match) (13:19). Proud of his mother's eventual understanding, Wan comments, "我阿媽真係聰明, 搞咗兩年終於明白我" (Bingo, mom, you got smarter. After two years, my mom finally figured me out) (13:30). The amount of time that Wan spends educating his mother is important: it extends well before and beyond his process of preparing for and healing from his medical procedure, demonstrating that transition is not a simple and personal process. In order to make space for himself to remain part of the family, he has to change the rest of the family. *Soul* visualizes for viewers Wan's Sisyphean efforts in the many dinner table conversations.

One more dinner table scene is worth mentioning, on 4 January 2013. This time, Wan's mother is feeding his father, who uses a wheelchair and is unable to take care of himself. While his mother is spoon-feeding his father, Wan asks whether she would be excommunicated from the church. To which his mother responds, "做乜趕我出教會呀?" (why would I be excommunicated) (17:25)? Wan answers, "因為你支持我囉!" (because you support me) (17:27). Implied in this terse exchange is that Wan's mother has finally told the church about him being trans, an issue that the filmmaker has acknowledged as one that had pitted his mother against the church.

To take the stress off of his mother's shoulders, Wan writes to the pastor of her congregation. Rationalizing to his mother that, though Christian orthodoxy says that being LGBTQ+ is unbiblical, it is also unbiblical that Jesus worked on Sunday. Wan reiterates that Christians can't ignore that the Bible is written by people but not God. Marshalling support for his theological position, Wan seeks out a clergyman who spent time in the US. In the last dinner table conversation in the film, Wan tells his mother that the pastor showed him empathy as he had

worked with intersex people in the US. Knowing that the Hong Kong medical system is not as advanced as that in the US, the pastor tells Wan that the path forward for him could be difficult.

Through these small exchanges at the dinner table—moments that would not otherwise be considered productive by neoliberalism—Wan's mother becomes more accepting of him. Despite this partial acceptance, she keeps trying to fit Wan's identity into existing narratives of homosexuality. Thornton calls those processes "temporal misfitting" where trans and crip's "inefficient, flexible, and waste time" are subject to "the cis and abled norms of neoliberal capitalism" for "contain[ment], suppress[ion], and eliminat[ion]" (358). The film shows that type of temporal misfitting over and over, and again when Wan's family and their church try to shuffle him into familiar identity narratives, essentially mislabeling his transness as homosexuality for quick and easy categorization because they don't know transness.

To resist misfitting, Wan—as a misfit himself—engages in what Thornton, after the theologian Jean-Yves Lacoste, calls "little-rituals of trans and crip life" (359): "micro-tactics that embody resistance to the coercions of neoliberal capitalism" and, more specifically, their "capacitating imperatives of normative time." Wan labors to undo the narratives imposed on him and in turn transforms his "frustration" and "difficulty" at home and with the church into "sites of possibility for true liturgical experience" (358–359).

Wan never abandons religion. Even in his worst moments, the film shows him asking the higher power questions, inquiring why he would embody an impossible identity, one that is full of God's grace and subject to eternal damnation at the same time. As he confesses to the camera toward the end of the film, Wan admits that he considered suicide before finding out that he is trans. To distract himself from this sense of helplessness, Wan self-exiled to France in 2008—prior to the timeframe of the film. The visual accompaniment to his voiceover of his time in France is a series of pictures, including images of stained-glass windows taken at the Église Saint-Étienne-du-Mont at Paris as well as a set of statues' re-enactments of *La Mise au Tombeau* (The Entombment of Christ). Following the disappearance of those images, Wan says that "神冇答我呢啲問題, 但係, 喺呢幾個月嘅流浪, 我覺得神好愛我, 我執返自己條命" (though God has not answered my set of questions about my identity, I realize that I am intensely loved by God) (19:57-20:10). This self-exile is unproductive by neoliberal standards because it takes him out of work in Hong Kong; however, it eventually saved his life. This, together with the dinner table conversations with his mother, are the mini rituals that open necessary ruptures to bring about change in Wan's life and the lives of those around him.

Despite these changes, Wan's post-transition life remains difficult. His eczema persists and breaks out severely before the "Inclusive Love Praying Con-

cert." Without conflating transness with disability, the film suggests that being trans in a society hostile to nontransnormative trans identity has contributed to Wan's debilitation.

Fear is just one of the many self-regulations that Wan has to undo as he embraces his trans identity. He courageously decides to embody a misfit identity (even after surgery) in his family and church. By documenting the "transcrip" time it took for Wan to recapacitate himself from dysphoria, depression, and eczema, *Soul* turns the trans protagonist in the DIY video genre from a traditionally passive recipient of trans-affirming medical transition to an agent who transforms systems. Despite Wan's courage, being an out and proud nontransnormative trans person in Hong Kong takes a toll; the emotional stress in addition to the reality of transphobia in the society leave him with exfoliative dermatitis. Though this skin illness does not permanently damage his mobility, his periodic flare-ups ravage his legs to the point where he has to lie flat, leaving him temporarily couch-ridden whenever he is triggered by external stressors.

The political charge of *Soul*'s "trans-crip time" is "coalitional" (Thornton 358); the film's embodiment of family solidarity points to the value of persistence and patience as tools for effecting local political transformation while also advocating for large-scale social progress. *Soul* exposes Wan's slow and recursive process of gender transition as extending before and after his double-mastectomy. The film's ending shows that a reconciliatory alterity emerges for Wan in transcrip temporality through the relationality between the protagonist's transness and his family, in addition to their church. His unflagging belief in the Christian god—despite the ostracization of trans people by his mother's church—informs the stirring line he utters at the film's conclusion: "如果我有靈魂嘅話, 咁我個靈魂喺神面前一定係個男仔嚟嘅" (if there is a god, he will see that my soul is that of a man on Judgement Day) (23:05-11).

Conclusion

Goodbye, *Unfinished*, and *Soul* bring alive the experience of transition in Hong Kong to a global audience who would not otherwise have access to information or stories about social and medical transition. These expansive accounts of transition complicate overly simplistic, emotionally and physically tidy versions of the process: even as they illustrate how trans bodies can look—whether through the sculpting process of bodybuilding or the medical intervention of a double mastectomy—they caution viewers against assuming that there is ever a finality to transition.

Goodbye, unlike the many videos by trans vloggers, was first uploaded to DTube, a decentralized video sharing network that lacks the algorithms and guidelines on YouTube. The film traffics in a transnormative framework, but

it does not posit a transnormative ideology: Wong's bad body humor constantly undercuts the transnormative trajectory of *Goodbye*. The filmmaker's self-deprecation allows Wong to critique idealized gender tropes while hewing to the narrative parameters of the traditional transition story. She carefully packages her zingers as funny antics and frivolous details that appear secondary to her transition story. In contrast to Wong's medicalized, pre-to-post-op account, Law's life narrative depicts a more changeable and fluid transition journey. In the six minutes of *Unfinished* available on Vimeo, Law reads from their poem that bears the film's namesake in Chinese, a reading accompanied by English subtitles and a visual narrative. The multiplicity of the film's voices and Law's shifting gender embodiment bypass the dominant theme of medical intervention that characterizes the genre of transnormative narrative. With their nonnormative trans life story, Law manages to reroute the experience of bodily transformation from a linear itinerary and unidirectional progression to a journey that resembles a more leisurely perambulation, moving between and eventually getting betwixt the binary poles of gender. Like Wong's *Goodbye*, Wan's *Soul* presents a brisk account of medical transition that strategically de-emphasizes the medical process itself, in turn giving space for the portrayal of the *longue durée* of social transition. For Wan, the long process involves not his own journey but also those of the people and institutions around him. In order to truly harness the transformative potential in the prefix of *trans* in transgender, *Soul*'s trans-crip temporality painfully points to the need for more accessible and accommodating infrastructure and laws in Hong Kong, all to allow more trans people to truly flourish in their families, communities, and places of employment.

Juxtaposed with the linear progressive imagination of a trans subject that is well institutionalized by the Hong Kong law, Wong, Law, and Wan's sideways developments offer nonchronological and nonprogressive imaginations of life courses. Close attention to their queer temporality reveals that linear growth is but one path toward trans flourishing. Perhaps that is why Kadji Amin says that attention to "temporality" as "social patterning of experiences and understanding of times" "may open the way toward a more transformative politics of justice" (219). Indeed, the films here are less institutionalized imaginations and records of going through gender transitions. Particularly as demonstrated by Wan's autobiographical film, a nontrans(chrono)normativity life course is not only trans-affirming but can also be anti-ableist. Though with a different genre focus (the speculative), the next chapter continues to explore the radical potential of global Hong Kong transness. Building on the preceding discussion of realist film, I mine trans visual culture's intersectionality with trans justice's imbrication with class and environmental justice.

5: Molecular Critiques in Trans Speculative Media

What is queer about trans politics now, in the wake of what seems like a trans tipping point in Hong Kong? After fighting a seven-year-long battle, the Court of Final Appeal handed trans man Henry Tse a legal victory in 2024. Tse had undergone hormone replacement therapy and a double mastectomy but not the hysterectomy required by Hong Kong authority. When he returned to Hong Kong and submitted paperwork for an identification card that listed him as male, the Commission rejected the application, explaining that his gender-affirming care was not complete per its policy. Tse appealed the decision, and it ultimately landed in the Court of Final Appeal. In his decision, Justice Andrew Cheung says, "The Commission's policy's consequence is to place persons like the appellants in the dilemma of having to choose whether to suffer regular violations of their privacy rights or to undergo highly invasive medical surgery" (Pang). As a result, Tse and others can change their sex on legal documents without completing all of the previously required steps of gender-affirming care. With his eyes on a more inclusive future, Tse said in an interview after the victory that his activism going forward is devoted to removing everyday life barriers for trans people living with multiple minority identity markers, such as "disabled individuals" and "ethnic minority groups" ("My Pride Story").

In conversation with this trans tipping point, this chapter looks at speculative trans media in the recent visual oeuvre of global Hong Kong for intersectional insights. Here, sideways development figures are a (de)evolution story, in which the decay and constitution of the human form are tied to the ecology and/or economy around them. I read how trans artists use the coalescence and disintegration of the human form as part of their media performance in telling fantastical stories about the interrelatedness of trans individuals and the peoples, objects, and environment around them. This chapter examines three sets of visual cultural productions that feature trans-identifying artists in the diaspora: the 2019 Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) show *Alpha Maria*, in which the

French Hong Kong comedian Sony Chan plays the role of a reincarnated domestic worker who returns from the dead to an apartment complex rumored to be polluted by cell phone radiation; the science fictional drag of multimedia Canadian artist Sin Wai Kin—born to a Hong Kong father and a British mother—in their video collaborations with the Qatari American artist Sophia Al-Maria titled *BCE* and *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* (2019); and the video *Viscera*, by sculptor Jes Fan as part of his Sigg Prize 2023 exhibition in M+ of Hong Kong (2023).

Alongside Henry Tse and these artists, I contemplate the next steps to bring about a more inclusive future. Such a project requires speculation to think beyond what Muñoz calls the "quagmire of the present" (1)—the twin problems of neoliberal co-optation and epistemological colonization—in the trans politics of Hong Kong. And as Keegan asserts, the speculative is the portal for us to contemplate what "could be," as it draws out "the hidden possibilities" and "occluded horizons" ("WE'RE CHANGING GENDER"). To do this, cultural critics must heed the critical potential available in the subjunctive's aesthetic as afforded by fantasy and speculative media, which aren't easily captured by realist depictions. Not to diminish the importance of realist trans representation, but advancing Tse's intersectional vision for trans Hong Kong takes a utopian hermeneutic to imagine trans embodiments, theories, and praxis that "does not fit present logics perceptible, even if not recognizable" (Keeling 570). Indeed, the trans visual culture I consider in this chapter gives us that utopian edge. These works resemble what Eliza Steinbock calls "riotous": "the unruly personages in series," "unrestrained storylines in film," and "the vivid and varied appearances" in "art houses" epitomize untamable trans visual culture in the face of the mainstream co-optation of transness in the United States ("Riotous State" 172).

These trans visual cultural productions all go beyond mere representation. To access the epistemology of identity—and more fundamentally, the figure of the human—they enlist the fantastical, the science fictional, and simply the scientific as cognitive estranging devices to challenge our usual thinking associated with transness and, in so doing, to expand our purview of what transness and trans critique might look like. In these works, queer and trans politics are identity politics, but they are also sites where environmental sustainability, economic justice, and bodily autonomy converge. To put it differently, trans Hong Kong's speculative embodiments reframe trans and queer politics from identity-based to intra-active, whereby trans (and queer) lives are tied to their milieu communally, regionally, and globally.

I apply intersectional formalism—the approach of examining how aesthetic forms intersect with social categories I articulated in the Introduction—to analyze these sideways developments. This methodology allows me to identify what Eng and Puar call subjectless critiques: critiques conveyed through stories in

which normative development has gone askew. In the TV episodes and moving images I discuss below, the molecular motif recursively represents the porousness between what we traditionally call subjects (often figured by humans) and objects (usually referring to the nonhuman other).

I turn to the molecular because discourses on identities like race and gender are writ in larger terms, and only molar units like the body count as bearers of subjectivities and, therefore, rights. However, according to science and technology studies theorists like Michelle N. Huang, focusing on the molecular—cells, nuclei, and particles—as objects of investigation reveals the science of human evolution, particularly the racist and sexist cultural assumptions behind eugenic thought rooted in Continental philosophies and the Enlightenment tradition. As Sylvia Wynter pointed out, this Eurocentric school of thought exclusively takes property-owning cisgender heterosexual white men as the epitome of Man, individual and bounded, while others are dehumanized and treated as less human, predisposed to being possessed. Investigating other para- and nonhuman figures (like Alexander G. Weheliye's *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*) has become a mainstay in critics' attempts to decolonize the figure of the Man.

In Hong Kong's British-based legal system, the privileged figure has shifted from white men to the cisgender heteronormative Hong Kong citizen, while minorities, including trans people of Han origin, especially the pre-op ones, and of non-Han origin and noncitizens, remain marginalized. Indeed, records show that the city's laws are not kind to trans migrant workers—as in the case of the Filipino trans man Marrz Balaoro, who, while on trial advocating for gay marriage in the city, was specified in the hearing by the court as a "pre-operative trans man" and whose gender is "F" as stated in the Hong Kong identity card (*Balaoro Marietta S. v The Secretary for Justice*)—and noncitizens, for example Xiran, a Chinese activist detained by the Hong Kong government on her way to Canada in 2023 (*Radio Free Asia*)—all testifying to the fact that trans lives with multiple identities markers are complex. Creating a more inclusive future means taking seriously the utopian impulse behind Tse's stance as a principle for praxis that not only garners rights to protect trans citizens in Hong Kong but also makes systematic transformations to ensure all lives (citizen or not) are livable.

While chapter 4 focused on bodily representation, the speculative media here take a broader perspective. These works suggest that institutional changes, especially economic ones, not only benefit queer and trans citizens but are also better for *all* peoples and the current world we live in as characterized by environmental and public health crises. By narrating how trans performers' and characters' lives go sideways, these speculative stories of reincarnation, disintegration, and wounding reveal the harm inflicted by global economies on (trans)

Hong Kong as well as by the international art market on trans (diasporic) Hong Kong artists.

The previous chapter examined how trans and nonbinary artists make anti-trans(chrono)normative critiques with their bodies: the artists put front and center the material concerns and embodiment of their flesh that exceed the imagination of chrononormativity. Curiously, in this chapter, the trans body—that which has made trans subjectivity legible—evanesces and, in some cases, is missing here. Instead, with their performative repertoire and artistic labor, Sony Chan, Sin Wai Kin, and Jes Fan stage nontrans(chrono)normative narratives that are, by turns, comic, cyclical, apocalyptic, and analogic. As they visualize alternative transitional developments, challenging both heteronormative and homonormative progress, they aesthetically and emotionally compel us—the audience—to see ourselves as participants who hold stakes in their journeys of regeneration and rebirth.

My examination begins with the reincarnated title character in *Alpha Maria*, played by Sony Chan, a para-ontological figure resurrected from the cemetery yard to serve a disabled and debilitated family as a foreign domestic worker (see Figure 9). My reading highlights how the figure of the ghost (which some artists say is a cloud of "ghost particles")—as a non-rights-bearing, nonsubjective entity—facilitates what trans studies scholars like Marquis Bey and Jules Gill-Peterson, in a roundtable with Aizura and others, call a "subjectless critique" of the status quo. I trace out how systems like neoliberalism that grant subjectivity to some people remain negligent of others, whose uneven distribution of life chances still makes the lives of the underprivileged unlivable. Then, my reading of Sin's sci-fi drag builds on this trans subjectless critique, charting how the drag queen's performance summons and appeals to a new postapocalyptic world order instead of the law to legitimate gender-expansive lifeways and nonanthropogenic transformation. My concluding reading of Fan's *Viscera* provides further detail on trans development by looking at the aesthetics of wounding and regeneration. With it, I propose a type of Hong Kong transness, a symbiotic transformation process endemic to the city's natural history since it was named.

Alpha Particles and Subjectless Critiques in *Alpha Maria*

First broadcast in 2019, the six-episode TV drama series *Alpha Maria* centers around a domestic helper, Maria, hired by Lilith, the matriarch of the Lai family, to repair rifts in her household (Leung and Wong). The death of the Lais' first-born son, Enoch, is the immediate cause of the family's dysfunction, but a range of other factors contribute, including Lilith's extramarital relationship, her husband Saul's disability and religious fanaticism that prompts the rest of

Fig. 9. Opening credits of the show *Alpha Maria*, featuring Maria, played by Sony Chan, walking out of the cemetery yard each morning to report for work. Image courtesy of Radio Television Hong Kong.

the family to move away from Christianity, her young son Jonah's homosexuality, and her daughter Elizabeth's secret job as a part-time girlfriend. Actor Sony Chan draws from her comedic repertoire, playing the role of what trans comedian James MacDonald calls the "trickster" who "push[es]" at "the boundaries of social behavior [. . .] at the physical and psychological limits" (28). As Maria devises sly tricks that sometimes lead to painful conflicts that result in reconciliations, she breathes new life into the Lais. By addressing the challenges in each family member's life, Maria guides them to realize what their hearts truly desire.

Maria is an enigma who comes out of nowhere at the beginning of the series: viewers first see her nonchalantly prancing in high heels and a pink pantsuit behind a battered and bruised teenage Jonah Lai, who is about to jump off a bridge. His left arm is in a cast, and his white uniform has "變態" (pervert) scrawled on it, indicating that he just survived school bullies. Instead of stopping him from suicide with the urgency that the occasion seems to call for, Maria gracefully stops him with her words: she appeals to his logic by asking, "Are you trying to commit suicide?" She adds, "You won't die from this height, but it will paralyze you for the rest of your life" (Ep. 1).

As the camera follows Jonah's gaze back to Maria, she gives him a silk scarf as a token of her sympathy before bidding him goodbye in French: "*Que Dieu te benisse*" (God bless you). This French-speaking lady's coordinated outfit, designer sunglasses, and straw handbag all mark her as out of place. Maria's

foreignness is already implied by her name, which is almost synonymous with domestic helpers since it is the most common name among Filipinas working in the city. Her outsider status becomes even more noticeable for an audience who recognizes the canals in the background of this scene. These waterways are part of the Lam Tsuen River (林村河) that flows through Mui Shue Hang Park (梅樹坑遊樂場). This location is close to the public housing project Tai Wo Estate (太和邨) in the Tai Po district, which rarely sees non-local residents. Chan's whimsical approach to this otherwise heavy scene renders her fabulous presence otherworldly: she enters this working-class neighborhood like an alien who just happens upon the suicidal high schooler.

Similar to RTHK's other programming, *Alpha Maria* distinguishes itself by its edgy subject matter and its engagement with rhetorical flares like polysemy, a feature that Hong Kong television scholar Eric Kit-wai Ma uses to characterize the channel's bright and sly programming aesthetic. The first prominent device is the show's title, which is a play on words: in Chinese, 萬輻瑪利亞 (alpha Maria) is a homonym of "萬福瑪利亞" (hail Mary). 萬輻瑪利亞 (alpha Maria) is not an idiomatic saying in Cantonese; it roughly translates into "one thousand radiation Maria." Ma correctly predicted the reaction of audience members: just like any other polysemy, the title's play on words seems random initially, but it makes sense to close watchers over time. Indeed, 輻 (radiation) is more than a linguistic play: it winks at the unsafe level of electromagnetic waves emitted by the cell phone antennas installed on the rooftops of public housing projects—radiation to which the people living in nearby units are exposed. In *Alpha Maria*, the Lai family occupies such a unit, impacting their health. Multiple episodes suggest that Enoch was killed by exposure to excessive radiation before Maria's arrival.

Episode three, for instance, gives credence to this speculation. At a meeting of a community group concerned about radiation, Maria tells the members that she is being exposed to dangerous levels of radiation in the Lai home and that it isn't right. An old friend of daughter Elizabeth is at the meeting and thinks Maria is Enoch. Later, she asks Elizabeth if her brother Enoch is back. Elizabeth says no. That Elizabeth's friend mistakes Maria for Enoch suggests that the two characters look alike to the people around them—and that the former might be a reincarnation of the latter. This interpretation may be far-fetched, but it is the most plausible one, especially when we peel back the layers of the show's intertextuality. The name Maria can also be read as a homage to the 1993 song 萬福瑪利亞 (Hail Mary), a collaboration between the gay pop star 黃耀明 (Anthony Wong) and 關淑怡 (Shirley Kwan), the lyrics of which offer clues about where the mysterious Maria comes from. Riffing on the story of the Virgin Mary, the duet is an ode to a diva who possesses otherworldly beauty, sung as a conversa-

tion between a worshipper (Wong) and the glamorous goddess (Kwan). Kwan's lines describe a Mary reborn, a fabulous diva who walks out of death:

> 願每天青春 直到不能 無論有沒有發生 (May I be young every day until I can't, no matter if that happens or not)
> 願每一分鐘 奪魄銷魂 隨日與夜我變身 (May every minute be ecstatic, I transform with the day and night)
> 如像馬利亞再生 懷日與夜結的孕 (Like Mary reborn, be bearing the fruit of the day and the night)

Mary sounds like Maria, who sashays out of a cemetery in the beginning credits of each episode. Moreover, the song's Mary embodies both day and night, suggesting a person who is not necessarily a mixture of opposites but whose presentation evolves from one to the other as time passes. This mutability echoes Maria's gender self-identification. In the first episode, when religiously fanatical Saul first sees Maria, he asks her how she would like him to address her. Maria, with humor, says, "Call me *sir* on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; *miss* on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday; and I am off on Sundays." These similar characteristics shared by the reborn Mary in Wong and Kwan's song and Maria in the television show are not coincidences: they are paratextual clues that the producers 夏桂昌 (Kwai-Cheung Ha) and 羅志華 (Luo Zhihua) discursively employ to index Maria as an otherworldly figure. Indeed, when viewers begin to interpret *Alpha Maria* not as a strictly realist show but as a realist show with fantastical elements that suspend the gravity of the cisnormative and heterosexual order, they can set aside confusion over Maria's origins.

TV critic 游大東 (Yau Taitung) faulted the show for having rough transitions and plot holes—who Maria is and where she comes from are not directly addressed, and her gender identity alternates by day. Instead of interpreting these as shortcomings, I see them as intentional discursive choices that imbue the show with transness. As Helen Leung says, in the context of Sinophone trans cinema, trans issues "can be more fruitfully considered as an exercise in locating moving targets" ("Trans" 185). I argue that the same applies in Hong Kong trans television: the bits and pieces of Maria's identity sustain a fantasy for the audience, positioned to perform some guesswork about who the domestic worker is on their own. Or, to use the words of the trans film theorist Eliza Steinbock in *Shimmering Images*, the audience is primed by the show's producers to "suture" the "cuts" between "frames" (2). Indeed, the show never clarifies whether Maria is a human or a walking ghost that takes on flesh. Although Maria prances back to the cemetery yard at the end of the show's last episode, the French-speaking transgender domestic helper's identity remains vague.

Maria's resistance to legibility, ironically, renders legible the opacity of "transness outside of white contexts" (Aizura et al. 130). As Jules Gill-Peterson explained in a round table for a special issue of *Social Text*, a subjectless discourse in trans studies may seem counterintuitive—mainly because the insistence on trans people's subjectivity is what distinguishes the field from neighboring fields like queer studies. Traditional trans subjects considered legible by the US nation-state are often white and bourgeoise; hence, a trans subjectless critique may account for the forces which often throw trans Black, Brown, and colonized populations under the bus that make lives possible for *specific* populations. Gill-Peterson documents this dynamic extensively in *Histories of the Transgender Child*: when hospitals began to perform gender-affirming care for trans healthcare seekers in the '60s and '70s, those who could afford it were often wealthy and white. In contrast, trans and nonbinary people of color who could not afford medical care would usually fall victim to the "self-appointed authority" of medicine since law enforcement would enlist it to gatekeep and indict poor trans people of color who could not afford surgery for violating anti-cross-dressing laws (*Histories* 20).

Echoing Gill-Peterson's injunction that the field focus on racial and class differences, Marquis Bey invites us to think about "materialization" as an analysis for trans-BIPOC communities (Aizura et al. 131): rather than thinking about it as an aggregation of solidity, Bey uses trans identity materialization to "denote an opening of a sedimented notion of matter," a beginning of "loosening" "the normative, hegemonic, and ontological holds" over trans lives, which are—at bottom—the same biopolitical holds that sort populations' worthiness and unworthiness (141). Such loosening prompted Bey to deepen the sketch of Gill-Peterson's trans subjectless critique with a focus not on subjectivity but subjectivization as a process in which an ontic subject coalesces into life or relegates to nonlife. In substantiating his claim, Bey refers to Fred Moten's *Black and Blur*, from which they borrow the term "the para-ontological" to refer to Black or/and trans people who were rejected by and refused the subjectivization of myriad institutions (127).

Bey's subjectless critique, theorized for the contemporary purpose of discussing trans Black lives in the past, gives us a tool to engage with the apparitional trans character of Maria, who comes to postcolonial Hong Kong from the dead. By positioning Maria as a para-ontological being, the show makes itself about transness and more. Maria is not a proper human subject—potentially a reincarnation of Enoch, who had been keeping an eye on the unusual radiofrequency level in the apartment (see Figure 10)—and her nonnormativity becomes what Eng and Puar call "a mobile reference" to her transness (2). Together, by designing the protagonist of their show, Maria, as a trans spectral figure who reincarnates from being a man to coming back to life as a domestic helper in

Fig. 10. Enoch, the character portrayed by Sony Chan as a trans reincarnation, confesses to the camera his fear of developing glioblastoma due to his family's proximity to a cell phone antenna. His helmet and mask, which resemble aluminum-wrapped protective gear, are part of his precautionary equipment. Image from *Alpha Maria* (2020). Courtesy of Radio Television Hong Kong.

the body of trans actress Sony Chan, Leung and Wong expose and critique the institutional enforcement of binaries such as woman/man and life/death. As a spectral trans woman, Maria does not enjoy the benefits of being a Hong Kong citizen, and her status further marginalizes her as an outsider who dresses and carries herself as though she is from an alien place of origin, not from the neighborhood. The show underscores how Maria's marginal identities exacerbate her transness. In episode five, for example, Maria is the subject of homophobic jabs at school when she confronts Jonah's teacher for ignoring his classmates who bully him because of his crush on a boy named Lucifer. In episode one, Maria experiences religious homophobia when Saul orders a group of Christian friends to touch her head to summon God so that he can "forgive her sin"; this blessing goes on despite Maria's protests against it. She complains to the crowd that their blessing is a curse because their hands collapse her impeccably coiffed hair. This type of religious fanaticism also causes Saul's self-alienation; as we come to learn in episode six, his childhood crush, Ah Yun, is now a pastor, and *he* pressured Saul to join the church, planting the seed for his debilitating striving toward normalcy. Though the show is not clear about what caused Saul to become a wheelchair user, it suggests that depression is one piece of it (since he is always at home allegedly praying) and radiation another.

Indeed, if radioactive nuclei don't outright kill the residents, they rob subjects of the autonomy health affords. Since Lilith, who works both morning and night shifts, isn't always at home, she has to hire Maria to take care of the family. Beyond Maria's employment contract, the unsafe level of radioactive frequency that debilitates Saul is the exact cause that connects the shared experiences between the past and current lives of the domestic helper and the patriarch. Enoch, after radiation exposure causes his death, comes back to life as Maria, a domestic worker, who now works where she once lived as a man, taking care of her wheelchair-bound father, who remains debilitated after losing his first son. Their shared fate prompts Maria to fight against the complex's air pollution that impacts higher-level residents, like Saul and possibly the rest of the Lai family, who are actively avoiding home for fear that it is contaminated. In episode three, Maria interrupts a building-wide meeting about renewing the lease of the rooftop antennas, demonstrating that—counter to how LGBTQ+ people are often stereotyped as the antithesis of family—she holds domestic space as worth defending (see Figure 11). When she requests a microphone, the homeowners association (HOA) chair brushes her objection aside, sneering and saying, "I respect women the most" and cackling. This jab jolts the audience back from sci-fi to reality, reminding us that Hong Kong society's acceptance of transgender people remains low despite all the legal progress underway when the show was filmed and continues today. The realism of this supposed fantasy intensifies as the scene continues, with the crowd remaining excited about the contract because the profit would cover the entire complex's management fee, putting ugly human greed on full display. One resident adds, "The harm won't be my issue because I don't live in the higher levels." Another adds to the chorus of approval of the contract, "There is an increasing number of suspicious strangers loitering in the complex claiming to educate us about the harms of radiation emitting from the cell phone antennas." In contrast, a silence hangs in the air when an advocate suggests the mid-level residents consider renting their window space for the cell phone antennas so that the housing project's exposure to radiofrequency can be shared more equitably. This tension between those for and against the antennas on the rooftop is the show's social commentary: It encapsulates a microcosm of a capitalist society, where a minority bears the disproportionate amount of waste produced by a resource that benefits the majority.

Despite the HOA director's insistence that there is no official proof of harm from cell phone antennas, the show emphasizes the alleged health impacts on a cast of nonnormative characters who are either diseased or debilitated, living in a home that is wrapped in aluminum for protection against radiation. Maria's appearance in this scene, therefore, exposes how the HOA, in cahoots

Fig. 11. Maria, played by Sony Chan, complains at the homeowner association forum about the unfairness of the Lai family's proximity to a cell phone antenna, which may be the cause of health issues experienced by many in the family—while the rest of the residents benefit from renting out rooftop spaces to cell phone companies. Image from *Alpha Maria* (2020). Courtesy of Radio Television Hong Kong.

with telecom companies, diminishes the life chances of the Lais and discriminates against trans people. As life-depleting as it is, Maria's shared disenfranchisement with the Lais—especially Saul—has one upside: it creates a condition for what Bey calls the "impossible possibility of inhabiting sociality," all the while "elud[ing] the tenets of subjective legibility" (Aizura et al. 132). The trans-cis alliance that Maria and Saul share by the end of the show would not otherwise be possible if the radiation from the antennae had not killed Enoch. As I mentioned, a neighbor once remarked that Enoch was different and thought Enoch came home when it was Maria. That remark opens the possibility to read Enoch as a man-passing pre-op trans woman. Given that Saul had shown himself to be transphobic toward Maria when they first met, it would be highly unlikely that Saul would accept Enoch if the latter were alive. However, in the slightly estranged form of a trans and foreign domestic worker who comes to work every day from the cemetery yard—a form that "elud[es]" not only the subjective tenets of being a Hong Kong citizen but also likely that of a human—Maria (as Enoch's reincarnation) is able to enter this otherwise "impossible" sociality with Saul, pushing him as if she was his prodigal first daughter. With patience, care, and ingenuity, Maria eventually transforms the Lais' apartment from a site of harm or what Bey might call the "non-subjective" ground into a place of queer kin-

ship for the oppressed (132). Maria turns the once-demonic ground of the Lais' household, where no human subjects and things (like plants), for that matter, can survive without being debilitated and wilted, into a fertile ground for familial love again. As the last episode shows, though Saul dies, Maria's care leaves an indelible mark on the family—as the remaining members appear to be getting along as they embark on what appears to be a bright future.

Reading Maria as a para-ontological force of a subjectless critique reveals that institutions that look as if they may (the church) or may not (HOA, telecom industry) have anything to do with transgender people equally enforce a type of biopolitical sorting that discriminates against lives marginalized by gender, class, and citizenship.

In the microcosm of the housing project, in which there are limited apartments without contamination, we see that the disabled and the debilitated take the brunt of austerity, as the majority of the HOA votes for continuing the estate's contract with the telecom company to offset management fees for all despite some residents among them airing concerns about radiation. Against this backdrop, the show sets Maria as a counterforce against austerity by embodying abundance. Typically, the global division of labor puts racial and gendered minorities in debt (Guérin, Kumar, and Venkatasubramanian), and many foreign domestic helpers came to Hong Kong in payment. In *Alpha Maria*, Maria essentially does unpayable kin work twenty-four hours a day, well beyond the labor expected from "domestic helpers"; by telling her story, the show's directors and screenwriters, Leung and Wong, flip the script of neoliberalism. Maria—as a trans domestic helper—is lowest in the pecking order, but the position does not stop her from acting like she is at the top and able to hand out mercies. She manifests abundance by way of embodying mysterious pasts. The show does not confirm if Maria is a reincarnation of Enoch—rumored to be "different," and held up by his religious father as a cautionary tale for his siblings—or a ghost who just happens upon the family. The show allows her to be both. This abundance translates into her energy assisting Enoch's family to escape a depressive spiral. While Maria offers palliative care to Saul, she helps Saul reconnect to his childhood love so that he can confess his queer passion for him before his death, and she assists Lilith in finding a new husband. She protects Jonah from bullies at school and saves Elizabeth from being a part-time girlfriend for predatory adult men. In other words, the trans domestic helper salvages the family. Her altruism provides a framework of abundance, particularly juxtaposed against a housing project where everything—including clean air—is scarce.

According to Anjali Arondekar in *Abundance*, the "heuristic" of "abundance works against the imperative to fix sexuality within wider historical structures of vulnerability, damage, and loss" (6, 3). In *Alpha Maria*, abundance takes the

shape of kin work. According to labor theorist Jenny B. White, "women's identity is largely expressed through complex sets of relations that involve giving and receiving labor," an exchange that "maintains membership in social groups such as the family and neighborhood that are crucial to their economic and social survival" (17). As an outsider and a newcomer to the Tai Wo Estate, domestic labor earns Maria a sense of rare belonging in Enoch's family as a trans woman and legal alien. Further, if she is Enoch's ghost, she comes back to earn the family's approval by performing kin work as a sexual and gendered deviant (130). In kin networks, according to White, "indebtedness" is at the center of its root paradigm and cultivates a "disposition" or a habit for mutual obligations among group members (130). This indebtedness is obvious by the end of the show: Enoch's surviving family feels indebted to Maria, and Maria feels indebted to the family for their inclusion. As such, Maria—a bundle of ghost particles—becomes an autotelic figure in the show. She enlivens others as her obligations energize her character (an abundance that continues in the next section, this time in molecular and gender multitudes).

Maria's reincarnation breaks down what Katherine McKittrick describes as the "demonic ground" on which the Lai family stands, revealing the toxic, uninhabitable environment in which the trans domestic helper works, as well as those in her (employing) family live (xxv). Maria's trickster-like character exposes that the neighbors who spread the rumors about Saul's apartment as cursed are the same people who vote against the termination of the antenna lease that affects his family the most. The molecular in *Alpha Maria* is the radiofrequency that radiates out from the antennas. As a plot device, the dangerous frequencies contribute to the show's cognitive estranging effect, amounting to a satire of the social ills and neurosis that neoliberalism breeds. However, the radiating energies also eventually bind the individual family members who drift apart back into one intersubjective unit by the end of the show.

The molecular element in Sin's sci-fi drag takes up an equally central role, but it is more visible and rhetorically realized than the radiofrequency in *Alpha Maria*. In the two videos by Al-Maria and Sin that I study below, ontologies or molar items that take the shape of identities disintegrate, but (very much like Enoch returning in the shape of Maria) they come back in style as they recompose and recombine in and during metamorphosis. To borrow Gill-Peterson's words, postcolonial Hong Kong appears to be going through a trans tipping point, and these tiny particles are part of a trans embodiment that "outthink[s] [the] emergencies and inertias that characterize the present world" (Aizura et al. 146). In subjectless forms, the visual embodiment and poetics of the molecular push up against a universalized trans identity slotted into a "narrative of binary transition" (146). In the following, I examine *BCE*, a film screened at the

Blindspot Gallery in Hong Kong in August 2020, and its companion piece *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* The two videos prompt us to conceptualize developmental thinking, particularly in terms of human evolution, in more decolonial and trans-affirming ways. I do so with attention to the speculative mode in these videos, mainly to analyze how Sin's drag offers an alternative by which the artist demands more than just the allure of inclusion by the citizenry.

The Molecular Aesthetics of Transness in Sin Wai Kin's Sci-Fi Drag

In the context of the West, particularly in the United States, Steinbock asks, "If the state is ready to kill to define itself from the black, sexual trans body brought before it, do we want to be somebody before the state or no-body against it?" ("Riotous State" 173). This rhetorical question offers entry to the relations between Hong Kong and transness. In the face of the government's co-optation of trans identities into the law, the immigration department detained the trans activist Xiran from China on her way out to Canada; Xiran's "requested access to hormone medication" was repeatedly "denied on various pretexts" as the Xiran Global Concern Group wrote in a statement dated 27 February 2024 (*Radio Free Asia*). Like Steinbock and others, I wonder what the politics of "the no-body" look like in the face of the region's uneven distribution of life chances for both trans citizens—like Henry Tse—and trans noncitizens—like Xiran. In some rather unexpected ways, the videos of Sin's drag performance help answer that question.

Understanding Sin's drag performance requires us to situate it in the context of Sin's life and its oeuvre. As the artist has reiterated in one interview after another, the two bleed into each other. Sin Wai Kin, formerly Victoria Kin, was born to a Hong Kong father and a British mother. In a 2022 interview with Tiffany Leung following the release of *A Dream of Wholeness in Parts*, the artist discussed their reversion to 單慧乾, a name they were given during childbirth, which connotes wisdom (慧) and one of the Eight Trigrams in Taoist philosophy (乾, usually given to a boy). Sin added that during COVID quarantine and after a bitter breakup, they came to a different perception of their body, which ultimately contributed to their change in gender and performance personae after COVID. More recently, Sin's performance has been chiefly his embodiment of a boyband persona. In 2022, Sin, who usually goes by *they* to represent their nonbinary identity, asked to be represented by the pronoun "他" (he) in the Chinese version of his interview (T. Leung). At the time of the interview, they were in character, promoting *It's Always You*, a dual-channel video featuring multiple Sins playing a boyband, so they used *he* to reflect their gender status in the moment, while also being mindful of the fact that there isn't a tradition of using *they* in China.

Their masculine persona now does not invalidate their past drag queen performances. As they reminded us in an interview with *Art Basel*, "Going forward, 'Victoria Sin' will still exist in relationship to my drag and my work inevitably." *BCE* and *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* were made when Sin still identified as Victoria, a self-described "femme-presenting cis-girl," essentially a "female" drag queen (Sherwin). Reading these two pieces together also makes evident that Sin does not just impersonate any woman on stage: it is specifically white women. As I show below, drag gives Sin a medium to speak politically about their past experience as a mixed-race Canadian with white femininity, which is often upheld by consumerist society as the ideal beauty. As Sin explains:

> Within capitalism, extreme representations are always going to be more successful because they're unattainable, and more polarised representations of things like gender become normalized. Drag is a purposeful doing of that, which also undoes it. [For example] How Lepore literally (an impersonator of Marilyn Monroe) blows [gender] up is very attractive to me. Like, "You want me to do this?" Here it is. (Sherwin)

Following Sin's anticapitalist philosophy about drag as a deconstructive and constructive art practice meant to expose to their audience how "identities and desire are constructed within capitalism" (Sin, Tate Gallery), my reading extrapolates from Sin's drag a narrative of disintegration and recombination in which the identity of popular cultural icons dissolve and then re-emerge. In *BCE* and *Astral Bodies*, molecular forms, including the cells that Sin speaks of and the particles rubbing off their image, visualize the fiber and the minutiae that go into transformations, like gender transition and human evolution.

Sin's drag, which they describe as a "kind of embodied speculative fiction," is a provocation of a different world (*White Artnet News*). The cosmologies and yogic traditions in *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* and the abiogenesis in *BCE* variously propose nonunidirectional, symbiotic, and nonanthropocentric transmogrifying developments as legitimate lifeways. In both of Sin's videos, the molecular aesthetic of reassembly provides a unique case in point that illustrates such lifeways.

Sin's molecular aesthetic is most visible in *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* In the two-channel, twenty-minute-long piece, what looks like stardust twirls around the drag queen's body, as she stands still on a rotating platform in the middle of the frame, like a statue. *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* challenges the fantasy about the boundedness of the Man by inserting visual effects of flying particles around Sin—a mixed-race Hong Kong and British femme-presenting Canadian impersonating ideal white and Asian femininities—to make visible the constructedness and porousness of human bodies and gender identities,

including those of the white men in the audience watching the video. The video makes this point by showcasing how Sin, the drag performer, is a mediated spectacle constructed by make-up and framing. The queen is completely styled with a powdered face reminiscent of white marble and granite Greek statues, complemented by a white wig and white gloves. Their presence—framed as a mid-shot from head to toe by the camera—occupies the entire screen (00:01–00:10) as they stand statically while being rotated on a moving stage like a statue in a museum presented on screen. The camera's width and distance from Sin change in the second half of the video as it frames them through a close-up shot (00:12–00:13), which then pans out and in again as they inhale and exhale (00:13–00:18). Remaining consistent throughout these two parts is that Sin is the center of attention in their revealing two-piece swimsuit, manufactured out of sheer yellow fabric, which exposes the artist's bare thighs, inked with an octopus-like tattoo. Sin's exposed tattoo is emblematic of what Donna Haraway calls the Cthulhu, a figure that conjures an apocalyptic scenario as the symbol of the destroyer of the capitalist and human-centric epoch of the Anthropocene. The molecules make Sin's otherwise tough image less solid and less bounded, eventually dissolving into the visual effects of particles.

Although Sin appears to be posed as a statue, as video progresses, it becomes evident they do not aspire to look like a Greek god or goddess, representing a gender ideal. Instead, Sin resembles the Japanese anime character Sailor Moon, as suggested by their gravity-defying hairstyle of a pair of buns and two long pigtails. Referencing Sailor Moon's mesmerizing transformation in anime, Sin's drag illustrates that identities aren't fixed but are constantly changing. Narratively, Sin's voice-over brings that message home. Following the format of a guided meditation, they walk the audience through a breathing exercise, widely believed to bring positive psychological and physiological changes.

At first, *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* seems as though it only invites passive consumption, but the performance becomes interactive when Sin breaks the fourth wall, with a speech that insinuates that they are touching us through their energy, the stardust. They continue with a smirk, "I am always already touching. I will always already be touched" (10:10-10:11). With this logic, humans always touch each other because we are all boundless, incessantly exchanging particles. The artist adds, "We are not really solid / We are fussy quantum probability clouds / Spread out into waving orbitals / Like cumuli in the sky" (13:07-13:14). More jarringly, by the end of the second segment of the video, the drag queen disintegrates into a million pixels, seemingly floating toward the way of the viewers (see Figure 12). By visually representing the break of the human anatomy in this way, Sin first and foremost makes a molecular subjectless critique of the racism and sexism Wynter identifies in the figure of Man; more-

Fig. 12. Sin Wai Kin. *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* 2019, two-channel digital video (color, sound), duration: 20 min. 07 sec . . . © Sin Wai Kin. Image courtesy of Project Native Informant.

over, they initiate a subjectless subjectivization that goes by the name of intersubjective being, a process that makes us realize that the universe is but one aggregate set into motion by collisions of desires.

To understand how this subjectless subjectivization and its attendant pedagogy work, we have to dig deeper into Sin's guided meditation: it starts with them gathering energy around the sacral chakra, an energy point where their scrotum is. As they say, "Open your orifices and let the void fall in," visual effects arrive: an atomic orbital begins to form with bright, colorful electrons orbiting around an atom. Afterward, the artist instructs the audience to feel the other openings in the "nostril," "mouth," and "ears," encouraging us to welcome the "void" (00:19-00:58). Sin cues our breath, enabling us to do the same when they say, "Breath. Ha" (1:43) Sin repeats the same drill up the spine, stopping at every energy point from the "solar plexus" (3:30) to the eyes' mind between the eyebrows in the forehead. As they reach the last point of energy, the crown, they say,

> Now, lift up your crown. A unit of light. A photon. Fling it into the void [as they say this, they throw a bundle of light out from their forehead, similar to how Sailor Moon makes her attack Moon Tiara Action]. Unconditional infinity. Watch it come apart from you. Before again becoming a part, as you reabsorb it, an excited state. Charged with yearning, watch it come apart from you and transform into a positron-electron pair, which annihilates again into

> a photon. Before again, becoming a part, as you re-absorb it, before it comes apart, and then coming apart, and becoming a part, so I can become a part, so I would come apart and coming apart, becoming a part, coming apart, coming, becoming [. . .] (8:26-9:27)

In Sin's seemingly endless loop of chants, they repeat and emphasize how particles "come apart" and "become a part" when the audience is supposed to follow them, inhale and exhale. Sin inserts themselves into this constant process, making breathing an intimate exercise that breaks and makes who we—the spectator and the spectacle—are, and the audience collectively expands as Sin's astral body splits into molecules onscreen. Sin makes us aware of the collective nature of the astral body by connecting ours to theirs. Visually, the drag queen's embodiment, augmented by the stardust, compares the changing of energies before and after breathing to the transformation of Sailor Moon from a girl next door into a superheroine; rhetorically, they draw out breathing with a detailed description in biochemical terms. Sin invites us to imagine how two sub-atomic particles of the opposite charges, namely positron and electron, annihilate each other and emit energy, releasing themselves in the most basic form of a photon, or a wave, of excitation. The audience cannot normally see this energy, and it is through Sin's graphics of molecules and guided meditation that we realize this explosive energy. By illustrating the behavior of small particles, *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* makes palpable that large-scale transformational processes like gender transition are just as natural as yogic breathing exercises.

The astral body, an entity not as bound as our physical body, is the medium through which Sin visualizes that our spirits are always in touch. Our spirit is not an empty void; it is an energy. In physics and chemistry classes, as Sin reminds us, we call that unmarked energy a photon, which results from a positron and an electron combining. That sub-atom, too, has the potential to undergo status change again to become a pair of particles. This process of infinite transmogrification characterizes the lives of trans people, a process that comes as naturally to all humans as our breathing, just like how the video has painstakingly shown us with molecular aesthetics. In conferring ethos and legitimacy to this claim, Sin resorts to yogic tradition and its supporting physics and the biochemistry behind breathing. Their evocation, ultimately, suggests an alternative world order that looks at identities in molecular terms that make fewer molar differences between people. This alternative is different from Eurocentric and Christian religions (ones that made up the British law, after which the Hong Kong law followed), which are more prone to make hierarchies between peoples based on big categories like race and gender. In the following, I explain how Sin continues to make natural transness, qua transmogrification, for the benefit of trans

people by using the aesthetic and poetic of the molecular in a renarration of the beginning of human history. This story sidesteps social Darwinism, which typically encourages competition and assimilation into the fittest, but presents a process of coexistence where collective transformation is part of a queer reproduction by which non-human organic matters collide and evolve into humans out of nothing.

BCE begins with a few flickers that light up the three letters of the video's title; together, they hint at the setting of the video, a space-time different from our reality. Sin, the drag queen, is the narrator whose story demystifies the when and where of *BCE*. At first glance, Sin looks like Amanda Lepore, an American drag queen. Like Lepore, the Canadian Sin's bejeweled face is decorated with fake moles, faux eyelashes, and a drawn-in second eyebrow on the right side. Their face is powdered white except for a small circular patch around the left eye. The camera positions the audience to look up to Sin as an immortal being from a time before Christ: Sin speaks like a goddess, addressing the audience as if they are mortals on earth, supposed to trust everything that comes out of their hot red lips. A thick black line marks their periphery. Drawing upon a vast repertoire of drag conventions, Sin performs a narrative of human evolution with queer and trans twists. This story reframes evolution into a symbiotic process made possible by a collective, requiring reciprocity and transformation among all parties involved.

In *BCE*, the content and the style of Sin's drag are influenced by science fiction writers like Octavia Butler and Ursula K. Le Guin. The story's narrative form, for example, draws on Le Guin's article "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction," in which she theorizes that stories that "avoid the linear progressive time-killing arrow mode of techno-heroic" better represent the natural history of hominids evolving into human beings. Rather than leading a heroic life, hominids were everyday hunters and gatherers; the heroes, as such, in hominids' lives were their containers, the "shell, net, bag, sling, sack, or bottle" that our ancestors used to collect meat and fruits obtained from foraging. From that, Le Guin rationalizes that for her science fiction to better reflect reality, her narratives should take after the shape of the carrier bag: in a bag-shaped story, "conflicts, competition, stress, or struggle" don't define the narrative arc. Rather, continuity does, like the way the inside of a bag has no beginning or end. Le Guin's theory explains Sin's science fictional drag: the performance narrates a story of evolution devoid of war and violence. There isn't an identifiable protagonist overcoming the opponent. If anything, *BCE* is all about dissolving binaries between opposing units and making space for collective continuity. Following this formula, Sin's three acts don't follow the typical setting, climax, and resolution roles. Each act in *BCE* delivers a version of the same story: a sideways evo-

lutionary process that splinters off from the traditional one in the Bible, which upholds Adam and Eve as the progenitors of all human beings.

In the first act, which is essentially the first cut of the video, Sin delivers a queer revision of the first line of the Bible. Instead of saying, "In the beginning, God created heaven and the earth," Sin utters, "And in the beginning, there was refusal" (00:52). They then qualify the great refusal as a process of "great unlearning" (00:54). The first thing that Sin wants us to unlearn is binary thinking. In the Bible, the first binary separates heaven from the earth, but in *BCE* lives on earth emulate the stars in the sky, essentially transforming the world into heaven. According to Sin's logic, emulating the stars is a more pious way of living because the multitude there (as opposed to binary) is closer to how god has shown themselves in the constellations.

Writing on behalf of "we," Sin notes in the handout accompanied the video that our kind abolishes all binaries, proclaiming that "mind is the body" (line 59) and "that man is a woman" (line 61). Not only are the hierarchies of gender and Cartesian dualism thrown asunder, but also the hierarchy of human and nonhuman organisms are dismantled as well. Sin says in the video, "We created ourselves from nothing. / An abiogenesis" (00:57-00:58). Abiogenesis, a theory that explains how humans came into being, suggests nonliving organisms are the precursors of organic life. According to the proto-metabolism hypothesis, amino acids—protein constituents—can be found even in inorganic compounds, as created by the 1952 Miller-Urey experiment, which emulated the conditions of early Earth. The hypothesis concludes that organic life—including that of humans—resulted from a molecular catalyst by external energy sources, such as lightning or meteoric activities. In other words, the entanglement of nonorganic matter is brought to life by those external forces, which then evolve into organic matter. Sin's campy tone heightens their delivery of the evolutionary story. Sin says, "And then there is heat / coming from me. / My cells. / My selves. / Them. / Their atoms. / Their very core / starting from our nuclei" (3:32-3:49). Sin's repetition emphasizes the molecular—from the atoms to the nuclei—and suggests that all beings in the universe come from the same source. If our molecules are the biochemistry of life, then the constant transformation showcased in *BCE* demonstrates the physics that undergirds our continued living. These theories of evolution are markedly different from the heteronormative belief in Adam and Eve being the father and mother of human genealogy. By presenting how the aleatory entanglement of non-organic matter is the progenitor of our lives, Sin does not necessarily abandon the concept of god entirely—rather, they introduce another order of religion. This order is that of the Earth Seed in *Parable of the Sower*, evoked by a cameo by the novel's author, Octavia Butler, in Sin's video.

Fig. 13. Sophia Al-Maria and Sin Wai Kin. *BCE*, 2019, single-channel digital video (color, sound), duration: 9 min. 43 sec. Whitechapel Gallery, London. © Sophia Al-Maria and Sin Wai Kin. Image courtesy of Project Native Informant.

Sin's reference to Butler becomes visually explicit when Butler's face shows up at 1:59, and black-and-white images of her flash in and out like lightning (Figure 13). In Butler's novel, Lauren Olamina, the protagonist who can feel other people's pain, leads a crowd out of a post-apocalyptic California devastated by the effects of climate change and social injustice. She eventually forms the order of Earth Seed and comes up with the dictum "god is change, change is god." To transform and evolve, per Olamina—and for Butler and Sin—is not blasphemous: to change is to live after the image of god. Sin's story revises Butler's: *BCE* has no human protagonist and puts the concept of the molecular at center stage. In Sin's tale, the cells are the ever-changing para-ontological units that result from catalysis and are ready for more disintegration and recombination.

In act two, or the second cut of the video, the backdrop changes from astral blackness to a redness that indicates a volcanic eruption. Given the shakiness of the camera and the ominous low humming in the audio track, this act depicts abiogenesis's catalytic event. Worth noting in this segment is its rhetoric: "cells" and "selves" become exchangeable to the point where the self is the impersonation of the cell. A self/cell repeatedly disintegrates and coalesces as a reintegration, forming a new cell/self with the other cell/self. As Sin expounds upon that story, they—as they do in *Astral Bodies*—break the fourth wall and talk to the audience directly:

> Oh! I want to look at you. So I can pick your body apart and pick your beliefs apart. Open you up and open myself up. And push our wounds together and create ourselves. There is the warmth from our open flesh, creat[ing] more warmth and spreads like that feeling when you're fucking me real slow when I'm about to come. Like that. But there's no climax. We just keep rising and rising and recombining and growing and colliding until I don't know who I am, until you don't know who you are, because our selves, our cells, have been ripped open. [B]lown apart in our nuclear collision. (4:00-5:08)

In common parlance, Sin talks dirty to the audience here. Sin's sex scene is queer in that it is devoid of coital climax or consummation; instead of the ejaculation of semen that augurs the usual narrative of reproductive futurity that begins with the insemination and fertilization of an egg and ends with the birthing of a baby, "you" (a role that the audience is invited to take up) and "I" (Sin) keep rising and rising. This indefinite rise illustrates another version of what I have been calling a sideways growth: this queer reproduction anticipates "nuclear collision." *Collision* typically implies destructiveness. However, in *BCE*, binary terms are not oppositional but, rather, synonymous. In other words, collision is as destructive as it is generative. This productive reframing of something with negative connotations calls into mind Grandmother Chan Ling's invention of the "partho pop" in Larissa Lai's *The Tiger Flu*. Enacting the feminist technology of womanist splitting and self-mutation, Kirilow's ancestor, Chan Ling, began her line of the Grist Sisters by experimenting with single-sex reproductive technology on her eggs, which resulted in the creation of future generations without men. The collision between Sin's "I" and "you" is similar in that it is a queer reproductive process foundational to further disintegration, combination, duplication, and transmogrification.

BCE is here to change minds with science and science fiction. Sin's hypermediated hybrid embodiments are partly white, partly Asian, partly themselves, partly performance, partly Marilyn Monroe, and partly Amanda Lepore. The hybridity of this performance and its molecular aesthetic makes us aware of the constructedness of identities, including the identities (e.g., cisgender and heterosexual) that heteronormative society has taken for granted as natural and those taken to be unnatural (e.g., non-binary and mixed race). Embedding this pedagogical embodiment into an evolutionary myth with a carrier bag narrative shape, Sin's drag has a pedagogical mission: to inculcate a new message about identity in the audience's minds in the hopes of changing their perspective. Particularly for the straight-male audience, Sin's body in the last act is shot through with desire. The third act pans Sin's body, from their painted toes to their silicon breasts. It's charged with sexual desire, and the camera angle suggests the

drag queen wants the attention of the beholder. Primed by these ostensibly salacious visuals, a cisgender heterosexual male audience member would likely be aroused and respond to Sin when they extend the invitation, "I want to see your veins / Your brain / Your neural pathways / Your nervous system and your internal organs / I want to see the biological infrastructure that makes you up /I want to really see you / [. . .] I want to see that you were really human before we / disintegrate." (6:50-7:44).

However, *BCE* is not pornographic; it uses the genre only to deconstruct and reconstruct an audience's perception of gender, race, identity, and desire writ large. The video's emphasis on the trans aesthetic of re-assembly reiterates the constructedness of Sin's own body. From their lip-synching and faux eyelashes to fake breasts and silver wig—*BCE* emphasizes the minutia and the molecular that generate the fantasy and desire around ontological entities, such as racial and gender identities. Summoning cells and the images of the body, Sin's drag makes the case that we—and our ancestors—are all the same, emerging from the same evolutionary process, coming from nuclei, surviving apocalyptic scenarios by taking in the external force as a catalyst to evolve with one another. Identities, however, become different in human civilization because of the mediation of cis-het binary systems, such as capitalism. When *BCE* aired in August 2020 at the Blindspot Gallery of Hong Kong—before the trans plaintiff Henry Tse won his case and amid opposition to trans rights—the show stood as a challenge to the Hong Kong public to think about transformations like transition as a natural process of survival. Even after Tse's victory (which superficially confirmed binary transness and unidirectional transition), *BCE*'s critical edge remains, insisting that multitudes—not binaries—are closer to who god is and what humans have experienced in natural evolution.

BCE and *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* both invoke a majestic system—a religious or cosmic order wherein metamorphosis is constant and expected. This higher order, in turn, validates and legitimizes the transmogrification of Sin's identities, making temporal space for identitarian multitudes when molecules shed and split from their ontology of the artist's model. Indeed, the durational nature of Al-Maria and Sin's work evokes a postapocalyptic new world order as a living foundation that gives power to and by transformation. In that process, the solidity and knowability of identities disintegrate into pieces and, more remarkably, into molecules. The breaking and unbreaking of binaries and boundaries—sometimes between women and men, "you" and "me," and the spectacle and the spectator—delivers the message that transformation is an identity-making and world-building exercise condoned by higher orders. As such, Sin's transness demonstrates an aesthetic with the logic to outthink the law that tethers transness to the Christian tradition on which British, and sub-

sequently Hong Kong law, rest. Sin's particles and stardust convey an alternative politic: these para-ontological units aren't legible subjects in the gaze of a state, a region, or a government because they do not rise to the threshold of becoming a "somebody" or a molar aggregate that immediately warrants subjectivity—such as whether a trans person gets a marriage license or ID card in Hong Kong. Still, their movements—by turn, coming apart and becoming a part of something bigger—symbolize a Sisyphean push for a broader level of gender inclusion and an even more comprehensive conceptualization of transition that would protect trans people from legal and medical violence in the process of being turned into a subject and instead opens them to intergalactic and inter-subjective possibilities and energies. In other words, Sin's drag performance on screen makes imaginative space for those who don't live comfortably with or don't feel validated and legitimized by the cisgender and heterosexual order as afforded by the law now.

Literalizing and De-literalizing Transness in Jes Fan's *Viscera*: Notes Toward a Trans Hong Kong Indigeneity

Jes Fan, a trans-identifying artist living in New York, takes Sin's provocative stance to the next level in a six-minute video titled *Viscera*. Made as part of his multimodal project *Sites of Wounding*, the whole project debuted in Hong Kong's Museum M+. With a more realist setting that is nonetheless equally cognitively estranging as Sin and Al-Maria's collaborations, *Viscera* desublimates the transness in Sin's drag by disembedding it from the postapocalyptic realm and bringing it to bear on a decidedly Hong Kong context. In *Viscera*, a title that calls to mind internal organs near the abdomen, transness is rendered an organic process of arboreal development in response to the violence inflicted on trees by the history of incense trading in Hong Kong. Transness in the film is a symbiotic process of scarring, turning inward, and regenerating. Fan's video follows the life cycle of incense. As the video fast-forwards and unwinds, *Viscera* takes us back to the harvesting of scented wood in nature and its post-harvest life as a piece of agarwood. The choice of agarwood is worth noting because of its history; it gives the city the name Hong Kong, where "香" (pronounced Hong) means fragrant and "港" (Kong) harbor. The fragrant scent of the wood—biochemically speaking—comes from an incense tree's secretion of resin, a rarity in nature. For the resin to emerge requires—most of the time—heavily wounding the tree. To stay true to a trans aesthetic that refuses conclusion, in the following, I will not offer a summation of the chapter but instead consider one more manifestation of transness in global Hong Kong trans visual culture, namely in *Viscera*, with an eye toward how Fan tells the narrative of resin.

Parts of Fan's video invite us to imagine the process of inducing resin from

an incense tree. Extreme close-ups of the trees' wounds, bandages, and the tubes that stick out from them appear with soundtracks of the noise made by suction from a surgical tub and the ringing noise of tinnitus. Combined, the film's cuts are what Steinbock calls the "cinematic bodies" that give voice to and illustrate the sights of the biochemical transformation of otherwise quiet incense trees, anthropomorphizing the inner lives of the trees endemic to Southern China (24). I speculate a type of transness that is indigenous to Hong Kong's history and landscape with Fan's video, one that—I further argue—the artist specifies as an analogy to his identity as a non-white trans artist who grew up in Hong Kong and now labors in the diaspora as an art and knowledge producer. Maria delivers the concept of unpayable debt through her portrayal of the trans domestic who goes above her pay grade to mend the Enoch family's radiation-debilitated lives, creating an obligation they can never fully repay. Building on this foundation, Sin's sci-fi drag performances in *Alpha Maria* transform the motif of indebtedness into a productive ethic—suggesting that unpayable debts are best addressed by paying forward through reciprocal human relationships. Fan further develops this ethical framework in his video work by expanding reciprocity beyond human interactions to encompass environmental responsibility. Through his strategic use of resin and self-portraiture in *Viscera*, Fan crafts a multilayered critique of Hong Kong's historical and contemporary extractive economic systems, extending personal debt to collective ecological obligation. In an interview, Fan has admitted that "the molecular" fascinates him because of its contradiction: it is both the "most literal" and the "figural representation of the ultimate matter we are, and yet, paradoxically, it's so abstract" (Blidaru). Working with the mucous-like resin, a polymer that is both figural and abstract, Fan's use of agarwood turns on a contradiction. While he participates in the scene of wood harvesting, he prompts us to imagine a (peri)economic practice in which the artist accumulates salvaged materials not to produce surplus profits but to recoup them as scraps to make educational arts that advance trans and environmental causes.

Fan is trained as a glass artist, and his attention to the elasticity of raw materials is characteristic of his deft treatment of matter. How he morphs organic and inorganic matter is crucial to his gendered critique and comment. For instance, in his 2018 work, *Mother Is a Woman*, which catapulted him to fame globally, Fan used estrogen from his mother's urine to make a lotion that the show's audience can apply to their face. Satirical in nature, Fan's interdisciplinary art works to disembody biological markers that define gender, such as by separating estrogen from a woman, to comment on the cultural construction of femininity and masculinity. Simultaneously, his art exposes the consumerist nature of museum culture and makes the audience aware of the ubiquity of hormones

in unexpected places and objects beyond the sexed body. Another example of Fan's bold experimentation with art and sex is *Animacy Arrangement*. There, Fan uses soybean, carefully packed into a bite-size cube, to parody the chemical phytosterol, which is often extracted from soybeans and found in testosterone and estrogen pills. By literalizing the biochemicals—estrogen and testosterone, more precisely—which mainstream society measures and idealizes as the *sine qua non* of gender and sex, Fan disassociates these so-called sex markers from sexed bodies. By doing so, his art mistranslates, intentionally revealing the slippages between "the vessel and the interior," as he explains in an interview (Blidaru). The same is true in *Viscera*: transness is and is not a process attached to the sexed body; it is a natural response of an Aquilaria *sinensis* (agar tree) that the trans artist happens to identify with as a cultural worker.

With a discomforting high-pitched noise akin to tinnitus, *Viscera* begins with a piece of agarwood burning, its visuals appealing to the audience's olfactory sense. Combined, the audio and the visual liken the burning piece of agarwood to a body suffering, a comparison that emotionally prepares the audience for more stories about the hurt behind the productivity, resilience, and ingenuity of (in)organic matters from Hong Kong. Indeed, as forestry and chemistry literature documents, incense production is a violent process. To induce the fragrant molecules from an *Aquilaria* tree, the tree requires wounding through infection or natural disaster. Given that the probability of such natural wounding is low, poachers from mainland China have overharvested the *Aquilaria* tree in the outlying islands of Hong Kong (like Lantau) (Jim 423–24). This type of overharvesting is goaded by the continuing cultural belief that the tree's fragrance comes from heaven, a myth held close to heart since the Song Dynasty (960–1279) when, according to historical records, people began wounding evergreen trees indigenous to Southern China as an attempt to bring heaven to earth (421). Fan does not shy away from showing us scenes of bacteria being inoculated into the tree to coax an infection that will eventually invade the tree's immune system and scar it for it to regenerate, congeal, change, grow inward, and morph. Scenes illustrating the process include a wide shot of a warehouse full of different sizes of cut wood as well as some establishing shots of the greeneries and waterways in which the trees grew.

Fan's video refuses to stay a documentary, however: stitched into the narrative about the incense trade, two additional narratives' connection to the throughline of the video is not immediately apparent. The first narrative navigates Fan's body. As Figure 14 shows, he stands with a hunchback. The image is a CT scan of a wooden consecrated Buddha statue with scrolls and other sacred ornaments hidden inside the body (see Figure 15). As these side narratives unfold, cuts of the biomedical equipment and their accompanying cyberpunk music give the film an aura of mystique and a science-fiction veneer.

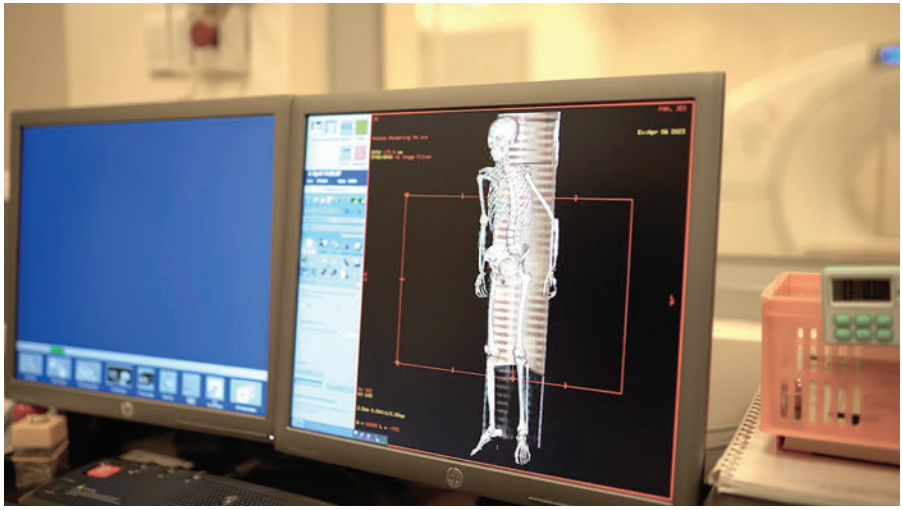


Fig. 14. Jes Fan. *Viscera*, 2023, two-channel digital video (color, sound), duration: 12 min. Empty Gallery, Hong Kong. © Jes Fan. Image courtesy of Empty Gallery, Hong Kong.

Fig. 15. Jes Fan. *Viscera*, 2023, two-channel digital video (color, sound), duration: 12 min. Empty Gallery, Hong Kong. © Jes Fan. Image courtesy of Empty Gallery, Hong Kong.

What Fan accomplishes in *Viscera* extends beyond merely retelling an obscure Hong Kong story; the scientific elements in his video provide a fresh perspective through which to view reality. Taken together with its documentary and biomedical threads, the film's disparate stories of agarwood's material transformation offer a narrative basis for Fan to theorize the kind of figurative transness he claims as someone from Hong Kong, like the wood. Tracing the prelife and afterlife of resin, *Viscera* homes in on the different phases the commodity goes through—from raw material to being chopped up, sitting in a storage room, and stuck in the supply chain until it's finally burned to ashes. Transness is deliteralized from the sexed body and transposed into the life cycle of an *Aquilaria* tree.

Then, transness is literalized again when Fan inserts himself back into the film as a trans diasporic artist. In a sense, Fan uses the story of agarwood as a parable of his gender transition. The latter process is just as transformative and overdetermined by various kinds of capitalist logic as the former. To exist in these systems (the medical industrial complex or international trade), Fan, just like the agarwood (and perhaps Hong Kong itself), must endure wounds and cuts in capitalism's abstraction, circulation, and consumption process. Fan's account is by no means rationalizing violence but throwing into relief the sad fact that extractive practices make money. Like the agarwood that secretes profit-making resin, Fan, in a way, extracts value out of his Hong Kong heritage and trans Asian body by including himself and his hometown as an object of the voyeuristic gaze of the audience. *Viscera*'s navel-gazing moments (like those with the CT scanner and scan images) are Fan's critique of neoliberalism. In the global art world, artists with identity markers of differences like transness and Asian-ness are expected to talk about themselves in the art, whether they want it or not. Fan "is not as suspicious of this identity politics movement as [he is] of the signifiers of identity" (Blidaru). He specifies that he has some "reservations about" "the available spaces carved within American politics." To find himself in "spaces" of identity articulation not afforded to him by American identity politics and its cultural coordinates, Fan turns to Eastern religion (like Buddhism) and Hong Kong histories (such as the city's being a hub for trading incense). In these narrative spaces, Fan finds an identificatory entry point for himself to, in turn, project his own experience as an Asian trans man in a white art world, an experience that he likens to what the objects have gone through.

In *Viscera*, Fan—first and foremost—advances the cause of environmentalism by exposing the overharvesting of resin in Hong Kong. He simultaneously advances the cause of trans justice by representing transness (as the transformation that incense trees go through) and his trans body next to it on the screen. With his images specifically, he mounts a neoliberal critique of the extractive

economy. But his work goes beyond critique: instead of abandoning capitalism altogether, he—as a producer of art—initiates an alternative economic system that makes knowledge out of salvaged resin and agarwood. Education is a state apparatus that inculcates knowledge in everyday citizens to serve the hegemony. But that is not its only outcome. Collaborating with nonhuman actants, Fan illustrates to the audience in Hong Kong and around the world that value production is a painful process, a transformative process that, for example, he and the incense trees native to Hong Kong have historically experienced. The former, as such, becomes a metonym of the latter as they are passed down from one system to another.

Because of its foundation in the English common law system, trans rights in the city after the Handover are mostly still built on a Western legal framework, relying on precedents from British law and the European Convention on Human Rights. With the Court of Final Appeal consistently referencing these bodies when handing victories to trans plaintiffs over the years, the judges—in a sense—have carved a trans citizenship in Hong Kong. Through this citational practice, the Hong Kong court has built on and caught up with the neoliberal framework of transnormativity in the UK. With it, the HKSAR writ large has established its linear developmental timeline for trans rights and trans people in the Chinese century on the grounds of Western trans law and trans medicine. But that linear model isn't the only way to grow. Chan's, Sin's, and Fan's trans visual culture, by turn, "provincialize" and "decolonize" "the category and practice of trans" (Chiang et al. 299) as afforded by the British law and the law that cites it: their speculative life courses and unusual embodiments reorient the public's conceptualization and narrativization of "trans embodiments" without forgetting the capitalist history of the city's colonial past and its ongoing presence.

Capitalism sustains queer and trans legal progress within Hong Kong's otherwise heteronormative Confucian culture. Most LGBTQ+ advancements in the city have emerged through efforts to maintain Hong Kong's competitive neoliberal status. The court case *QT v. Director of Immigration* (2018) illustrates this dynamic by establishing a precedent for recognizing same-sex marriages—but exclusively for granting spousal visas to foreign professionals employed in the city.

Given Hong Kong's ambivalent, codependent relationship with capitalism, I conduct my intersectional reading—as inspired by Henry Tse's interview—with an eye toward how scientific, science fictional, and speculative art genres work on, through, and within the capitalist system to maximize trans (even better, all) life chances. As such, I take concerns of class in tandem with gender and sexuality, all to envision more inclusive trans and queer futures and transforma-

tive politics that go beyond or to the side to bypass the capitalist West. Again, provided the intricately linked relationship between trans and queer progress and capitalism, it is only natural that the praxis and epistemological transformations gleaned from these trans media do not necessarily "assume opposition to normalizing regimes" like capitalism (Chiang et al. 299); instead, they help conceptualize a set of trans-centric economic systems and praxis that exist to the side of neoliberalism—including *Alpha Maria*'s abundance and indebtedness, the reciprocity in Sin's *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up!* and *BCE*, and the salvage accumulation in *Sites of Wounding*. Acknowledging that the present is what we have without forgetting the possibilities and potentialities afforded by the subjunctive, my reading has sketched out trans futures, or an alternative present, that has gone sideways for trans people, with trans subjects—by turns—coming apart and disintegrating into molecules only to regenerate, grow, and find new lifeways that deviate from the linear *telos* of neoliberal transnormativity.

Coda

Braided Justices in Two Special Administrative Regions

What does a trans subjectless embodiment look like when manifested beyond speculative media? At the frontier of global China, it takes up a lateral shape as a relational bond between trans-focused organizations enabled by new trans-regional infrastructure. Given the perduring nature of the sideways development of global Hong Kong, it may be more suitable to offer a coda than a conclusion. By the nature of a coda, rather than summarizing the book's key points or pinning sideways development's milestones like a conclusion would, I am offering another perspective that builds on—or sometimes upends—the preceding pages.

In this coda, I provide a trans-regional lens to look at the question of global LGBTQ+ Hong Kong for one last time. This perspective includes my place of birth, Macau. As I mention in the preface, I was born in Macau and still have relationships with the city, including an LGBTQ+ group that I have come to work with in recent years. Unlike Hong Kong, which has reached the trans tipping point in the sense that I discussed in the last chapter, Macau, a former Portuguese colony that stands just thirty-eight miles away from Hong Kong, has made no legal progress for trans people (not to speak of its lack of legal protection for gay couples after the city's official decriminalization of same-sex acts in 1996). In 2020, the United Nations even issued an exhortation to the Macau SAR to provide it with any information that the government has taken steps to recognize trans people legally. The Macau SAR has not taken many steps since then other than allocating a small amount of funding to a group I am part of, the Gender Diversity Community (GDC). Due to its relative lack of resources and experience in trans advocacy, the group looks for support from gay and lesbian volunteers in the city and overseas. More recently, as the volunteers hope to offer trans-focused support to the local community, the group benefited from some t4t (trans for trans) groups and trans community members in Hong Kong; among them is the group, Quarks, which I discuss in the introduction. For this coda, I

analyze two distinct contexts: first, trans Hong Kong, focusing on how t4t organizations like Quarks mobilize trans and disability rights in their public-facing programming; second, trans Macau, examining how a trans member frames his post-op future in relational terms to Hong Kong due to Macau's meager trans healthcare system in a presentation. Through this analysis, I consider whether the "impossible possibility" of a transtopia, which I described as a chimera earlier, is already here in Hong Kong and Macau.

Though far from perfect, these groups—each in their own way and together—show the emergence of lateral minoritarian coalitions that provide essential support to trans individuals who, in the eyes of mainstream society, have grown sideways. These groups creatively work with and through the resources available to them and the systems around them; with them, they intra-actively bring about a trans-regional LGBTQ+ community in the Chinese century through braided networks.

I figure sideways development as braided development here, observing how trans and disability rights in Hong Kong, along with trans rights in Hong Kong and Macau, are intertwined. By examining two sets of visual materials created by trans organizations for educational presentations, I investigate these parallel yet interwoven developments. Methodologically, I approach these groups and their visual materials through feminist digital ethnography. As a field of study, as Ingrid Brudvig defines it, feminist virtual ethnography "centrally positions the role of the virtual spaces in mediating how agency, power, and social norms are produced on and through the internet as well as through the human body." Taking her lead but with a slight bend, my approach here is that of a feminist virtual (auto)ethnographer. I apply that framework in analyzing how materials, made available by the Deaf Classroom and Quarks' Facebook pages in 2021 and by a member from the Macau LGBTQ+ group GDC in 2024, demonstrate the way the virtual is a repository for shaping transformative coalition (especially in the face of COVID restrictions, when face-to-face meetings were impossible) and transnational networking (particularly when geographical distance poses as an organizational hurdle). As queer, trans, and disabled people craft their presence online, they reframe the stereotypical images of their bodies as sick and disempowered into depictions of wholesome and capable agents. The beside-ness in these virtual materials and the geographical adjacency between the Macau and Hong Kong LGBTQ+ groups indexes the sideways *shi* unique to Hong Kong's post-Handover development. These forms of braided connections represent the momentum that rides on and, in turn, spurs on other developments.

As a whole, this coda applies the concept of global Hong Kong's trans subjectless critique that I develop in chapter 5. The major lesson this mode of critique offers is that it is necessary to track the materials that go into the processes

of subjectivization. In the context of trans Hong Kong, as Jes Fan's *Viscera* lays bare, advancing trans rights in the age of global China requires a reflection on the material ground on which Hong Kong trans subjects stand, which would include being mindful of the materials that "make or break" trans Hong Kong subjects—including the oppression and privileges that Hong Kong trans people face and enjoy. This reflection reveals a contradiction within chrononormativity in the Chinese century. The legal progress established for disabled people before the Handover—originally presented as evidence of colonial Britain's liberal progress and later preserved in the HKSAR's Basic Law—now serves as an unexpected legal ground protecting not only disabled people but also trans people's career development in the workplace. Macau is interwoven into this sideways development. The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, designed as a symbol of chrononormative consolidation integrating Zhuhai and Macau to Hong Kong's fast-paced capitalist time, has created an unintended opportunity for Macau trans youth to grow sideways, outside of Macau, together with the progressive development of trans medicine in Hong Kong—albeit with a price.

The Deaf Classroom, a hybrid platform organized by Hong Kong sign language users to distribute information for and about their community, organized the panel 與跨青對話—如何在生活中自我倡議? (In Conversation with Quarks: How to Self-Advocate in Everyday Life?). The cross-over Zoom panel includes four speakers: Liam and Ah Ming, representatives from the trans youth organization Quarks; 海仔 (Hoi Zai), a chef, trans man, and deaf person from Deaf Classroom; and Kim, the moderator. Themed around the idea of self-advocacy, each speaker addresses the limitations of the existing models of disability in society, including the charity model that holds disabled people as objects of pity and the supercrip model, which idolizes disabled people as superhumans who fight against their impairment to achieve unlikely success. Organized to teach the disabled community about trans justice and trans people about disability justice, Liam's argument for trans people's humanity is evident in his opening comment: the DSM-5 and the latest version of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) have declassified gender identity disorder as a disability. Still, in Hong Kong, for trans people to receive the legal protection and medical care they deserve, individuals may consider—just as the Equal Opportunities Commission in Hong Kong has advised—claiming what the ICD calls "gender incongruence," a diagnosis that confers disability status as a ground for protection and redress if they are denied service or meet with discrimination in governmental units and private businesses. Out of necessity—like most trans people in Hong Kong—Liam claims disability as a strategic concession to receive gender-affirming surgery. What Liam wants, however, is to be treated like a human, like anybody else, without pity and extra scrutiny. He adds explicitly that he would

feel the most human if everyone in Hong Kong treated him as his advisor in culinary school treated him, arranging for him to use the men's locker room and the men's changing room without extra questions after his initial coming out to him as trans. That luck, however, does not apply to all trans folx (see W. Yiu).

As Ah Ming—a trans student at a medical school in Hong Kong—recounts, when it came to her turn to learn her skills in the operation room, she was told to use the men's prep room to clean her hands before entering the operating theater. Livid, she wrote to the school to complain. In her letter, as she confesses in the panel, she had to be rhetorically expansive, doing whatever it would take to use the prep room aligned with her gender; she enumerates that she has, by turn, used aggression, flattery, and what she calls "類比法" (analogy). On the last strategy, she says she has to use it to remind the school of their hypocrisy: if they are committed to being gender-affirming, which her school counselor told her they are, putting a trans woman doctor's apprentice in a man's prep room is the opposite of such inclusion. Per the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, it is illegal for a school to trigger gender dysphoria in a trans person that could result in harm. Ah Ming's school eventually permitted her to use the women's prep room with the accompaniment of a woman classmate. As Ah Ming concludes in the Q&A, she asserts: "而家唔係有個大壞蛋, 有個衰人喺度針對你。而係有人唔知道你有呢個需要, 唔知道你嘅情況。加埋加埋成為咗個壓迫。" (It is my view that there is not an obvious antagonist going after trans people. But it is just that not everyone is aware of our existence, and the combination of the lack of awareness in multiple situations can cause the feeling of oppression). Further refuting the supercrip and charity models, she ends her remarks by putting some of the responsibility for trans social progress on the trans community, saying, "我哋要做好每一個環節。去溝通。咁樣嘅社會先會慢慢變得更好更和諧。" (Better social cohesion can result from better communication at each "link in the chain").

Deaf Classroom invited Quarks' Liam and Ah Ming as guests precisely because the organization wanted to link the disabled community with trans people, especially after the rift between the two groups over the increasingly common practice in the city whereby disabled bathrooms are redesignated as "non-barrier bathrooms" to include trans people. Some disabled people in the community expressed discomfort with the practice (Mingguang Society Information Room). Some trans folx refused to identify with disability. Hoi Zai and the moderator made the case that more connects the communities than separates them. Indeed, in addition to the legal protection they share in the eyes of the law, the trans and disabled communities in Hong Kong also share the same views on self-advocacy. Liam and Ah Ming are intent on being treated as any other human invested with agency (not pity and fantasy), just like Hoi Zai.

Hoi Zai delves into the transformative work of self-advocacy as advocacy for others. He argues that trans people, just like disabled people, need to be that

change that they want to see in Hong Kong, where there are not many positive representations. Given that, Hoi Zai says he often advocates for his rights and freedom as hard as he advocates for others, since those who come after him, younger than him and looking up to him, may as well depend on the precedents he will set. As he remarks, "冇今日就冇聽日" (there will be no tomorrow if it has not been today). This message acknowledges that trans people wouldn't be enjoying their legal protections today if not for the Disability Discrimination Ordinance in 1995, which itself was the result of advocacy work done by organizations like the Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities, beginning in 1964 in colonial Hong Kong (RI Global).

Hoi Zai's theory that self-advocacy equals group advocacy finds a visual echo in the Zoom split screen—the four-person panel on the left, the sign language interpreter amplifying and making accessible their message on the right. Together, they offer a trans-affirming meaning of splitting. Splitting—as Mary Jean Chan's poetry actively reclaims as a psychic ground for integration and reparation—often has a negative connotation in trans discourse. The image of a trans person in the mirror can cause schisms in the perceived self of a trans person in transition. In Hoi Zai's framing, however, the splitting of treating the self as an advocate is positive, if not a requirement, in Hong Kong. For him, splitting as a mental exercise—just as it is a form of visual layout for vocal and sign language broadcasting of the panel—is instrumental to advocating for what the LGBTQ+ and disabled communities need. As of September 2024, trans people in Hong Kong still lack the LGBTQ+-specific legal protection they deserve in the workplace, even though Hong Kong law's misrecognition of them as disabled unexpectedly grants them a legal shield. As such, trans people in the workplace are what Bey (via Fred Moten) calls "para-subjects" (Aizura et al. 132) of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance in Hong Kong. The law protects trans people by associating them with the disabled community, whether they want it or not. Quarks and Deaf Classroom unequivocally embraced this legal association during this panel—enacting Berlant's lateral agency as laid out in the introduction, in my discussion of Michael Tsang's gay characters Ah Po and Ah Suen. Here, as Liam, Ah Ming, Hoi Zai, and Kim present their positive rhetoric, images, and lived experiences side-by-side with each other, they bring trans and disabled people to public consciousness, further initiating mainstream Hong Kong society to the world of identity groups, all the while making intersectional changes to it.

To conclude, I want to reflect on an actual, not a metaphorical, bridge: the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge that connects trans people in Macau with the resources of Hong Kong. Macau is a city lacking in trans medicine and infrastructure, according to GDC's presentation on 10 August 2024, as prepared by a trans college freshman from Macau who goes by the pseudonym of X. Hong Kong, by contrast, has been pivotal in his coming-of-age experience. GDC—a

group primarily made up of gays and lesbians (including myself) who came together with a transtopian vision—labors to make change through public education (like X's lecture) and collaborations with trans-serving organizations in neighboring regions (like connecting X to Quarks). Formatted like an autobiographical timeline, X's presentation testifies to the difficulty trans people in Macau face, an issue unknown to cisgender people in the city. As X is well aware, Macau has no trans legal progress to speak of in comparison to Hong Kong. At one point in his slides, he forthrightly states that if trans youths in Macau—like himself—want to pursue medical transition, their only path forward is to seek help from hospitals in mainland China or Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, the Gender Identity Clinic in Hong Kong's Prince of Wales Hospital is the only public option for one-stop gender-affirming care. Though private care is available, it is significantly more expensive, according to X (slide 17). X finds out everything personally through trials and tribulations. When he came out to his counselor at his school as trans, the counselor was no help. Rather than giving him psychological support and information about gender and sexuality, the counselor reacted with ignorance and fear and immediately forwarded him to the sole public hospital in Macau. Not only was X denied access to medical documentation of his gender dysphoria in Macau, he wasn't even given referrals to private practices for support. As he complains, he even had to pay to get his hormonal level checked, which should be the free first step toward establishing trans medical care—a step that wasn't extended to X in Macau (slide 18).

Because of the lack of care in Macau, X went to Hong Kong to seek medical help; only after being connected to Quarks did he find out that minors under age eighteen cannot go through the transition process; instead, minors receive puberty blockers, supposedly to buy the trans youth more time to explore their gender and delay potential feelings of gender dysphoria caused by secondary sex characteristics that develop with puberty, like breasts or an Adam's apple. This perspective, according to some, is condescending to trans youths who have made up their minds and would prefer to have gender-affirming surgeries performed before the age of eighteen. Quarks, for instance, is at the frontline fighting for the Gender Identity Clinic to scrap the age limit for gender-affirming care.

For minors and individuals without Hong Kong citizenship, gender affirming care is largely out of reach. Although some trans youth like Yuki Liu, whom the *South China Morning Post* interviewed, can afford care with her parents' support, maintenance medical visits are an exorbitant HKD 1000 per quarter and HKD 200,000 for top and bottom surgeries. In comparison, gender-affirming medical care for individuals eighteen or older *with* Hong Kong identity cards is only HKD 135 for the first visit and HKD 80 for subsequent ones, and the surgeries are less than HKD 2000 out of the patient's pocket (Transgender Resource

Center). Regardless of whether X wishes to pursue a medical path, it is vital that trans youth like him have the option to receive the care that they need. As a trans youth in Macau, X is multiply marginalized by his citizenship status (non-Hong Kong), class, and gender. Yet the region-to-region connection between Macau and Hong Kong means that gender euphoria is within reach. Its pursuit constantly keeps him on the move, moving outside of Macau to Hong Kong. His rapid discursive pivot from one slide about Macau's lack of trans care to multiple slides about the wealth of information about the medical procedures in Hong Kong, their prices, and wait times hints at his literal sideways moves in life. Hong Kong remains one of the places in China on which X's future identity depends, relegating him to something akin to what Marquis Bey—after Saidiya Hartman—would call a "transsubject": a transient transgender individual characterized by mobility who exists outside the protection of Hong Kong law as a Macau citizen seeking gender-affirming care in Hong Kong (Aizura et al. 132). Through proximity to Hong Kong, X gains access to a potential sideways pathway for bottom and top surgeries through the city's medical system and the Greater Bay Area's interregional infrastructure. Hong Kong offers the transitive potential to transform him. However, as a non-Hong Kong citizen, X is ineligible for benefits like financial subsidies. Exorbitant medical expenses and constant travel are the steep costs X must bear for being trans and working-class in Macau—a city lacking trans recognition and healthcare. By the time I wrapped up my virtual (auto)ethnographic work in the summer of 2024, X's trans subjectivity remained transient—elusive—in the face of Special Administrative Region laws, if not entirely subjunctive, due to unaffordable medical costs in Hong Kong and insufficient recognition of trans people in Macau.

The experiences of X, Liam, Ah Ming, and Hoi Zai highlight how braided community development and side-by-side peer support offer temporary remedies to trans and (queer) crip demands in Macau and Hong Kong. Despite these fixes being short-term, the relationships built among community members in the two SARs create a sideways momentum toward transtopia. But the path forward is long. X, who went by the pseudonym Bryanson in an interview with a local online newspaper, told the reporter that testosterone recently became available in Macau's black market, but cautioned that its underground status means questionable quality (*AAMacau Media*). Safe access to testosterone remains unmet. Just as the nursing master's student Yang Xinlei noted in her 2023 thesis, "inadequacies in the medical care system in Macau" exist, and there is a need to "improve transgender diagnostic and treatment protocols."

While Hong Kong's trans medical infrastructure is more advanced than Macau's, it too can only go so far in ensuring trans flourishing. Legal victories remain fragile and institutional support incomplete. In 2025, a trans man

using the pseudonym K, who had been diagnosed with gender dysphoria and possessed proper documentation, sued the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for criminalizing misuse of public restrooms—and won. The judge ordered the department to strike down the Public Conveniences Regulation, which fined anyone over age five HK$2,000 (US$254) for using the bathroom opposite their assigned sex. K celebrated the victory, congratulating fellow "transgender friends who are still in the process of gender transition" for finally being able to use "public toilets openly without fear of being rejected" (Wong and Mycroft). This legal development—though suspended for a year while the government formulates a response—promised relief not only for trans people but also for the disabled community, given that some disabled community members had expressed a preference for trans people to use able-bodied bathrooms rather than accessible ones. Yet the victory's precarity quickly became apparent: the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department indicated it may appeal the decision, casting K's hard-won achievement into uncertainty.

Progress toward transtopia moves slowly in the Special Administrative Regions. Every milestone is hard-won—from legal victories constantly threatened with reversal to rare trans-inclusive publications like X's interview and Yang's thesis in otherwise conservative Macau academia. These achievements reveal both the resilience of trans and (queer) crip organizing and the precarity that defines life in the SARs, where community-built infrastructure must compensate for what governments fail to provide. Until more permanent and meaningful changes are secured—comprehensive healthcare access, legal protections that cannot be appealed away, educational systems that affirm rather than erase—trans and (queer) crip communities in both SARs will continue organizing toward that vision. They will continue creating spaces where flourishing becomes possible even under constraint, where transtopia exists not as a distant horizon but as a living experience. For now, and perhaps always, they have each other.

Works Cited

1966 年反天星加價騷亂 [1966 Riots against star ferry fare increase] (8)—第一晚騷亂 九龍宵禁 [8, The first night of riot, Kowloon curfew]. Accessed 20 Sep. 2024. elevenstrokes.blogspot.com/2014/09/1966-8.html

"人人期望可達到? 在澳性小眾難展真實自我" [Can Everybody Reach Their Expectation? Minorities in Macau Find It Hard to Express Themselves] 論盡媒體 [AAMacau Media]. 24 Jan. 2025.

Abbas, Ackbar. *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Aizura, Aren. "Unrecognizable: On Trans Recognition in 2017." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 116, no. 3, 2017, pp. 606–632, https://read.dukeupress.edu/south-atlantic-quarterly/article-abstract/116/3/606/129743/Introduction?redirectedFrom=PDF

Aizura, Aren Z., Marquis Bey, Toby Beauchamp, Treva Ellison, Jules Gill-Peterson, and Eliza Steinbock. "Thinking with Trans Now." *Left of Queer*, special issue of *Social Text*, vol. 38, no. 4 (145), 2020, pp. 125–147, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-8680478

Amin, Kadji. "Temporality." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1–2, 2014, pp. 219–222, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2400073

Amnesty International Canada. "Hong Kong: Transgender Activist Lai Ke Must Not Be Deported to Mainland China." *Amnesty International Canada*, 1 Mar. 2024, https://amnesty.ca/human-rights-news/hong-kong-transgender-activist-lai-ke-must-not-be-deported-to-mainland-china/

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Arondekar, Anjali. *Abundance: Sexuality's History*. Duke University Press, 2023.

Arunima, G., Patricia Hayes, and Premesh Lalu. "Love and Revolution: An Introduction." In *Love and Revolution in the Twentieth-Century Colonial and Postcolonial World: Perspectives from South Asia and Southern Africa*, edited by G. Arunima, Patricia Hayes, and Premesh Lalu. Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, pp. 1–29.

Aryal, Yubraj. "Affective Politics and Non-Sovereign Identity." *Textual Practice*, vol. 34, no. 1, Sep. 2018, pp. 67–85, https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236x.2018.1508059

Ba Jin [巴金]. 滅亡 [Destruction]. 上海人民出版社 [Shanghai People's Publishing House], 2008.

Bakara, Hadji. "The Ends of Entanglement: Conjectures on a Future Politics for Global Anglophone Literature." *Post45*, 22 February 2019, post45.org/2019/02/the-ends-of-entanglement-conjectures-on-a-future-politics-for-global-anglophone-literature/

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism: Mikhail Bakhtin*. Parasitic Ventures Press, 2007.

Baldwin, James. "Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind." In *The Fire Next Time*. 1962. Modern Library ed. Random House, 1995, pp. 14–106.

Baldwin, James. *Nothing Personal*. 1964. Beacon Press, 2021.

Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Duke University Press, 2007.

Barget, Jade. "Interview with Wu Tsang." *The White Review*, 12 June 2022, www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-with-wu-tsang/

Baril, Alexandre. "Transness as Debility: Rethinking Intersections between Trans and Disabled Embodiments." *Feminist Review*, vol. 111, no. 1, 2015, pp. 59–74, https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2015.21

Barnstone, Willis. *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice*. Yale University Press, 1993.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*. Translated by James Benedict. Verso, 1993.

Benanav, Aaron, and John Clegg. "Misery and debt: on the logic and history of surplus populations and surplus capital." In *Contemporary Marxist Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Andrew Pendakis et al., Continuum, 2014, pp. 585–608.

Bendorf, Oliver. "Poetics Statement." In *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*, edited by TC Tolbert and Trace Peterson. Nightboat Books, 2013, pp. 416–423.

Berlant, Lauren Gail. *Cruel Optimism*. Duke University Press, 2012.

Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Hardt. "No One is Sovereign in Love." Coalition.org.mk,5 Dec. 2011, https://coalition.org.mk/archives/646lang=en"coalition.org.mk/archives/646?lang=en

Berlant, Lauren, and Sianne Ngai, editors. "Humorlessness (Three Monologues and a Hairpiece)." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 43, no. 2, Winter 2017, pp. 233–596, doi:10.1086/689657.

Bermann, Sandra. "Performing Translation." In *A Companion to Translation Studies*, edited by Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter. John Wiley & Sons, 2014, pp. 285–297.

Blidaru, Adriana. Interview with Jes Fan. *Living Content*, no. 42, 29 May 2020, https://www.livingcontent.online/interviews/jes-fan

Blussé, Léonard. "Chinese Century. The Eighteenth Century in the China Sea Region." *Archipel*, vol. 58, no. 3, 1999, pp. 107–129, https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.1999.3537

Bradway, Tyler, and E. L. McCallum. "Introduction: Thinking Sideways, or an Untoward Genealogy of Queer Reading." In *After Queer Studies: Literature, Theory and Sexuality in the 21st Century*, edited by Tyler Bradway and E. L. McCallum. Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 1–18.

Brown, Brandon. "Gastrointestinal Effluvia and Translation." *Poetry Foundation*, 14 Nov. 2012. Accessed 29 Sep. 2024. www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2012/11/gastrointestinal-effluvia-and-translation

Brudvig, Ingrid. "Towards a Feminist Digital Ethnography." *Medium*, 15 Feb. 2021. Accessed 18 Sep. 2024. https://ingrid-brudvig.medium.com/towards-a-feminist-digital-ethnography-bb3e907e97af

Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower*. Warner Books, 1993.

Campling, Liam, and Alejandro Colás. *Capitalism and the Sea: The Maritime Factor in the Making of the Modern World*. Verso, 2021.

Cao, Juren. [曹聚仁]. 酒店 [Hotel]. 三聯書店 [Joint Publishing], 2023.

Carroll, John. "A Historical Perspective: The 1967 Riots and the Strike-Boycott of 1925–26." In *May Days in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967*, edited by Robert Bickers and Ray Yep. Hong Kong University Press, 2009, pp. 69–86.

Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham. Monthly Review Press, 2000.

Chan, Roy. "Dreaming as Representation: Wild Grass and Realism's Responsibility = 夢的表意 :《野草》與現實主義的責任." *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese*, vol. 11, no. 2, Summer 2014, pp. 13–38.

Chan, Kwok-bun. *Hybrid Hong Kong*. Routledge, 2014.

Chan, Mary Jean. *Bright Fear*. Faber & Faber, 2023.

Chan, Mary Jean. *Flèche*. Faber & Faber, 2019.

Chan, Mary Jean. "Queerness as Translation: From Linear Time to Playtime." *Modern Poetry in Translation*, n.d. [2022]. Accessed 29 Sep. 2024. modernpoetryintranslation.com/queerness-as-translation-from-linear-time-to-playtime/

Chang, Eileen. *Love in a Fallen City*. Translated by Karen S. Kingsbury and Eileen Chang. Penguin Random House, 2022.

Cheang, Kai Hang. "Queering 'The Children's Movement': A Sideways Look at Political Infantilization in the (Post-)2014 Global Imaginary of Hong Kong Protesters." *GLQ*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2021, pp. 629–654, https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-9316882

Chen, Kuan-Hsing. *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*. Duke University Press, 2010.

Chen, Kuan-Hsing. "Introduction: The Decolonization Question." In *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, edited by Kuan-Hsing Chen. Routledge, 2005, pp. 1–48.

Chen, Laurie. "How a Hong Kong 'Genderqueer' Bodybuilder Is Fighting Discrimination – with Compassion." *South China Morning Post*, 20 Jan. 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2129530/how-hong-kong-transgender-bodybuilder-fighting

Chen, Zifei, and Jojo Man. "Hong Kong Residents March to Protest Plans for High-Rise Towers in Town Center." Radio Free Asia, 7 Mar. 2023, www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hongkong-march-03072023145117.html

Cheng, Han, and Weidong Liu. "Temporality and the Geopolitical Enframing of Chinese International Development Thinking." *Geopolitics*, vol. 28, no. 5, 2022, pp. 1942–1966, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2022.2089563

Cheung, Gary. "50 Years On, Hong Kong Protest Pioneer Has No Regrets (but He's Got No Time for Today's Radicals)." *South China Morning Post*, 3 Apr. 2016, www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1933412/50-years-hong-kong-protest-pioneer-has-no-regrets-hes-got-no-time

Cheung, Karen. "Why Nicholas Wong Is 'Resigned' about Hong Kong Poetry." *Still / Loud*, 4 Nov. 2017, still-loud.com/2017/11/04/why-nicholas-wong-is-resigned-about-hong-kong-poetry/

Cheung, Yuen Man [張婉雯]. "拘捕" [Arrest]. 微塵記 [Memories of Dust]. 匯智出版有限公司 [Huizhi Publishing Company], 2017, pp. 30–42.

Chiang, Howard. "Intimate Equality and Transparent Selves: Legalising Transgender Marriage in Hong Kong." *Culture, Theory and Critique*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2017, pp. 166–181, https://doi.org/10.1080/14735784.2016.1257357

Chiang, Howard. *Transtopia in the Sinophone Pacific*. Columbia University Press, 2021.

Chiang, Howard, Todd A. Henry, and Helen Hok-Sze Leung. "Trans-in-Asia, Asia-in-Trans: An Introduction." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2018, pp. 298–303, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-6900682

Choi, Don Mee. *Translation is a Mode=Translation is an Anti-neocolonial Mode*. Asterism Books, 2020.

Chou, Hui-ling. "Striking Their Own Poses: The History of Cross-Dressing on the Chinese Stage." *TDR*, vol. 41, no. 2, 1997, pp. 130–152, https://doi.org/10.2307/1146629

Chow, Rey. "Between Colonizers: Hong Kong's Postcolonial Self-Writing in the 1990s." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1992, pp. 151–170, https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1992.0011

Chow, Rey. *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Chow, Rey. "The Elusive Material, What the Dog Doesn't Understand." In *New Materialisms*, edited by Diana Coole and Samantha Frost. Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 221–233, https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822392996-010

Chu, Yiu-Wai. *Found in Transition: Hong Kong Studies in the Age of China*. State University of New York Press, 2018.

Concilio, Arielle A. "Pedro Lemebel and the Translatxrsation: On a Genderqueer Translation Praxis." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 3–4, 2016, pp. 462–484, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-3545167

Connery, Christopher Leigh. "The World Sixties." In *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization*, edited by Christopher Leigh Connery and Rob Wilson, 2007, pp. 77–108.

Copenhaver, John. "Queering Crime Stories: Establishing a New Order in Mysteries and Thrillers." *CrimeReads*, 11 June 2024. Accessed 3 June 2025. crimereads.com/queering-crime-stories-establishing-a-new-order-in-mysteries-and-thrillers/

Courage, Cara. *Arts in Place: The Arts, the Urban and Social Practice*. Routledge, 2019.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, July 1991, pp. 1241–1299, https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Dapiran, Antony. *City of Protest: A Recent History of Dissent in Hong Kong*. Penguin Books, 2017.

Day, Iyko. *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Deaf Classroom. 與跨青對話——如何在生活中自我倡議? [In Conversation with Quarks: How to Self-Advocate in Everyday Life?]. *Facebook*, 14 Jan. 2021. Accessed 1 Aug. 2024. https://www.facebook.com/deafclassroomhk/videos/4391847038912 53/

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Dirlik, Arif. "Globalization and National Development: The Perspective of the Chinese Revolution." In *Asia and Europe in Globalization*, edited by Göran Therborn and Habibul Khondker. Brill, 2006, pp. 123–150, https://doi.org/10.1163/97890474110812_009

Doyle, Laura. *Inter-Imperiality: Vying Empires, Gendered Labor, and the Literary Arts of Alliance*. Duke University Press, 2020.

Duara, Prasenjit. "Hong Kong as a Global Frontier: Interface of China, Asia, and the World." In *Hong Kong in the Cold War*, edited by Priscilla Mary Roberts and John M. Carroll. Hong Kong University Press, 2016, pp. 211–230.

Dun, Mao [茅盾]. 虹 [Rainbow]. 人民文学出版社 [The People's Literature Publishing House], 1983.

Dung, Kai-cheung [董啟章]. 安卓珍尼 [Androgyny]. 聯合文學 [UNITAS Publishing Co.], 1996.

Dung, Kai-cheung [董啟章]. 雙身 [Double Body]. 聯經出版事業股份有限公司 [Lianjing Publishing], 2010.

Dung, Kai-cheung [董啟章]. 物種源始·貝貝重生之學習年代 [The Origin of Species: Baybeat's Formative Years]. 麥田出版 [Maitian Publishing], 2010.

Edelman, Lee. *No Future*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Edwards, Rebekah. "Trans-Poetics." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1–2, 2014, pp. 252–253, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2400109

Eng, David, and Jasbir K. Puar. "Introduction: Left of Queer." *Left of Queer*, special issue of *Social Text*, vol. 38, no. 4 (145), 2020, pp. 1–24, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-8680414

Equal Opportunities Commission. "Disability Discrimination: Transgender Customer Denied Access to Fitting Room." Casebook, Equal Opportunities Commission, Sep 18, 2024, https://www.eoc.org.hk/Upload/casebook/book_FA_eng_new1-39-41_6074.pdf

Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press, 2012.

Esty, Jed. *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Fan, Jes. *Animacy Arrangement (Poke)*. Empty Gallery, Hong Kong, 2017.

Fan, Jes. *Mother Is a Woman*. HD video, 4:44, 2018. MutualArt, Aberdeen/Hong Kong, 27 Mar.–2 Jun. 2018, https://www.mutualart.com/Exhibition/Jes-Fan--Mother-Is-A-Woman/B39AFA990775C459

Fan, Jes. *Sites of Wounding*. Sigg Prize 2023 exhibition, M+ Museum, Hong Kong, 2023.

Fan, Jes. *Viscera*. 4K color video, 6:00. Sigg Prize 2023 exhibition, M+ Museum, Hong Kong, 2023.

Fan, Kit. *Diamond Hill*. Dialogue Books, 2022.

Felski, Rita. "Fin de siècle, Fin de sexe: Transsexuality, Postmodernism, and the Death of History." *New Literary History*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1996, pp. 337–349, www.jstor.org/stable/20057357

Ferguson, James. "Decomposing Modernity: History and Hierarchy after Development." In *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*, edited by Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton, and Jed Esty. Duke University Press, 2005, pp. 166–181, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822386650-009

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Vintage Books, 1995.

Freeman, Elizabeth. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Duke University Press, 2010.

Frye, Northrop. "The Mythos of Summer: Romance." In *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, edited by David Damrosch. Princeton University Press, 2020, pp. 186–206.

Fuxian, Yi. "The Chinese Century Is Already Over." *Project Syndicate*, 22 Feb. 2023, www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-population-decline-will-mean-economic-geopolitical-decline-by-yi-fuxian-2023-02

Garde, Jonah I. "Temporalities of Becoming. Trans(Chrono)Normativity and Imagined Hormone Time." *Crip Magazine #3*, edited by Eva Egermann, 2019, pp. 40–43.

Ghiabi, Maziyar. "Critique of Everyday Narco-Capitalism." *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 11, 2022, pp. 2557–2576, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2053776

Gill-Peterson, Jules. *Histories of the Transgender Child*. University of Minnesota Press, 2023.

Global Property Guide. "Hong Kong's Property Market: Price History." *Global Property Guide*. Accessed 2 Apr. 2025. www.globalpropertyguide.com/asia/hong-kong/price-history

Gopinath, Gayatri. *Impossible Desires*. Duke University Press, 2005.

Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Press Releases. "CE Unveils Visionary Northern Metropolis Plan in Policy Address." *Hong Kong*, 6 Oct. 2021, https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202110/06/P2021100600466.htm

Goyal, Yogita. "National Allegory and Beyond: Postcolonial Critique Now." *PMLA*, vol. 137, no. 3, 2022, pp. 521–528, https://doi.org/10.1632/s0030812922000414

Greater Bay Area. "Outline Development Plan: Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area." *Greater Bay Area*, 18 Feb. 2019. Accessed 2 April 2025. https://www.bayarea.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/pdf/Outline_Development_Plan.pdf

Green, Mark A. *Debt Distress on the Road to "Belt and Road."* Wilson Center, 16 Jan. 2024. Accessed 28 Sep. 2024. www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/debt-distress-road-belt-and-road

Grosz, Elizabeth A. *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Grosz, Elizabeth A., and Peter Eisenman. *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. MIT Press, 2006.

Guérin, Isabelle, Santosh Kumar, and G. Venkatasubramanian. *The Indebted Woman: Kinship, Sexuality, and Capitalism*. Stanford University Press, 2023.

Halberstam, Jack. *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*. University of California Press, 2018.

Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke University Press, 2011.

Halperin, David M. "Queer Love." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2019, pp. 396–419.

Haraway, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Hayward, Eva. "More Lessons from a Starfish: Prefixial Flesh and Transspeciated Selves." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 3–4, 2008, pp. 64–85, https://doi.org/10.1353/wsq.0.0099

Ho, Elaine. *Timothy Mo: Contemporary World Writers*. Manchester University Press, 2000.

Ho, Petula Sik Ying. "Queering the Valiant—An Alternative Perspective on the Hong Kong Protest Movement." *Feminista Journal*, 8 March 2020, feministajournal.com/queering-the-valiant-an-alternative-perspective-on-the-hong-kong-protest-movement/

Hoad, Neville. "Arrested Development or the Queerness of Savages: Resisting Evolutionary Narratives of Difference." *Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2000, pp. 133–158, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790050115277

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. Hysan *Development Company v. Town Planning Board*. Hong Kong Judiciary, 26 Sep. 2016. Legal Reference System, https://legalref.judiciary.hk/lrs/common/ju/ju_frame.jsp?DIS=106007&currpage=T

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. *Infinger, Nick v. The Hong Kong Housing Authority*. 4 Mar. 2020, https://vlex.hk/vid/infinger-nick-v-the-862557034

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. *Leung Chun Kwong v. Secretary for the Civil Service and Commissioner of Inland Revenue*. 2019. Accessed 2023. https://www.tannerdewitt.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Angus-CFA-Press-Summary.pdf

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. *Ng Hon Lam Edgar v. Secretary for Justice*. Hong Kong Judiciary, 24 Oct. 2023. Legal Reference System. Accessed 2024. https://legalref.judiciary.hk/lrs/common/ju/ju_frame.jsp?DIS=155764&currpage=T

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. *Sham Tsz Kit v Secretary for Justice*. 5 Sept. 2023, https://vlex.hk/vid/sham-tsz-kit-972877451

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. *Tse Henry Edward and Commissioner of Registration*. Hong Kong Judiciary, 6 Feb. 2022. Legal Reference System. Accessed 2024. https://legalref.judiciary.hk/lrs/common/search/search_result_detail_frame.jsp?DIS=150362&QS=%24%28FACV%2C8%2F2022%29&TP=JU&ILAN=en

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. *W v. Registrar of Marriages*. Hong Kong Judiciary, 25 Nov. 2011. *The International Commission of Jurists*, https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/W-v.-Registrar-of-Marriages-Hong-Kong-Court-of-Appeal.pdf

Hong Kong Tourism Board. [Landing page.] *Hong Kong Tourism Board*. Hong Kong Tourism Board, n.d. Accessed 30 Aug. 2024. https://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/index.html

Huang, Erin Y. *Urban Horror: Neoliberal Post-Socialism and the Limits of Visibility*. Duke University Press, 2020.

Huang, Michelle Nancy. *Molecular Aesthetics: Race, Form, and Matter in Contemporary Asian American Literature*. Pennsylvania State University, 2017.

Huang, Mingwei. *Reconfiguring Racial Capitalism: South Africa in the Chinese Century*. Duke University Press, 2024.

Huang, Nicole. "Introduction." In *Written on Water*, by Eileen Chang, translated by Andrew F. Jones. Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. ix–xxvii.

Hungry Wolf, Adolf. *The Blood People: A Division of the Blackfoot Confederacy: An Illustrated Interpretation of the Old Ways*. Harper & Row, 1977, p. 228.

Iwabuchi, Koichi. "De-Westernisation, Inter-Asian Referencing and Beyond." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2014, pp. 44–57.

Jaleel, Rana M., and Evren Savcı. "Transnational Queer Materialism." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 123, no. 1, 2024, pp. 1–31, https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-10920741

Jameson, Fredric. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text*, no. 15, Autumn 1986, pp. 65–88, https://www.jstor.org/stable/466493

Jim, C. Y. "Cross-Border Itinerant Poaching of Agarwood in Hong Kong's Peri-Urban Forests." *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2015, pp. 420–431, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1618866715000485

Jones, Andrew F. *Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture*. Harvard University Press, 2011.

Jurkevics, Anna. "Hannah Arendt Reads Carl Schmitt's *The Nomos of the Earth*: A Dialogue on Law and Geopolitics from the Margins." *European Journal of Political Theory*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2017, pp. 345–366, https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885115572837

Kalliney, Peter J. *The Aesthetic Cold War: Decolonization and Global Literature*. Princeton University Press, 2022.

Kam, Lucetta. "Return, Come Out: Queer Lives in Postcolonial Hong Kong." In *Hong Kong Culture and Society in the New Millennium: Hong Kong as Method*, edited by Yiu-Wai Chu. Springer, 2017, pp. 165–178.

Kapadia, Ronak K. *Insurgent Aesthetics: Security and the Queer Life of the Forever War*. Duke University Press, 2019.

Keegan, Cáel M. "WE'RE CHANGING GENDER." *Feminist Research Institute* at The University of New Mexico, n.d. Accessed 29 Sep. 2024. femresin.unm.edu/transgender-studies-quarterly/index.html

Keegan, Cáel M. "On the Necessity of Bad Trans Objects." *Film Quarterly*, vol. 75, no. 3, 2022, pp. 26–37, https://doi.org/10.1525/fq.2022.75.3.26

Keeling, Kara. *Queer Times, Black Futures*. New York University Press, 2020.

Koshy, Susan. "Neoliberal Family Matters." *American Literary History*, vol. 25, no. 2, Summer 2013, pp. 344–380, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43817573

Ku, Agnes Shuk-mei. "In Search of a New Political Subjectivity in Hong Kong: The Umbrella Movement as a Street Theater of Generational Change." *The China Journal*, vol. 82, July 2019, pp. 111–132, https://doi.org/10.1086/703449

Kuhn, Robert Lawrence. "Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream." *New York Times*, 4 June 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/opinion/global/xi-jinpings-chinese-dream.html

Kwan, WY. *P.S. It's an Emergency—Dancer. Unruly Visions*, 21 Jan. 2021–26 Feb. 2021, WMA Space, Hong Kong.

Lai, Larissa. *The Tiger Flu: A Novel*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018.

Lai, Larissa. "The Tiger Flu." *Larissa Lai*, n.d. Accessed 25 Aug. 2024. https://larissalai.com/fiction/the-tiger-flu/

Lau, Grace. *The Language We Were Never Taught to Speak*. Guernica Editions, 2021.

Lau, Grace. "Letter to Longing." *Verse*, April 2020, https://verse.press/playlist/april-2020-799831269444432791#4-letter-to-longing-7628730884557857672

Law, Siufung. *Unfinished*, 6 min., 2013.

Le Guin, Ursula K. "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction" (excerpt from *Dancing at the*

Edge of the World, Grove Atlantic Press, 1989). *Still Moving*, n.d., https://stillmoving.org/resources/the-carrier-bag-theory-of-fiction

Lee, Summer Kim. "Borrowed Speech: Giving an Account of Another with Wu Tsang's Full Body Quotation." *ASAP/Journal*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2021, pp. 679–706, https://doi.org/10.1353/asa.2021.0036

Lee, Gregory B., and Patrick Poon. "Hong Kong: The Decolonization That Never Happened." *Postcolonial Politics*, 4 Sep. 2021, https://postcolonialpolitics.org/hong-kong-the-decolonization-that-never-happened/

Lehner, Ace. "Critical Questions and Embodied Reflections: Trans Visual Culture Today—A Roundtable." *Art Journal*, vol. 80, no. 4, 2021, pp. 38–52, https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2021.1947702

Leung, Helen Hok-Sze. "Trans on Screen." In *Transgender China*, edited by Howard Chiang. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 183–198.

Leung Kin-Pong, and Wong Wan-Sze, dirs. *Alpha Maria*. Electric Diamond Production. RTHK, 2020. 6 episodes.

Leung, Tiffany. "Sin Wai Kin: Self, World, Universe." *ArtAsiaPacific*, 27 June 2022, https://artasiapacific.com/issue/sin-wai-kin-self-world-universe?locale=en

Levenson, Joseph R. *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*. Harvard University Press, 1959.

Lewis, Mark Edward, and Hsieh Mei-Yu. "Tianxia and the Invention of Empire in East Asia." In *Chinese Visions of World Order: Tianxia, Culture, and World Politics*, edited by Ban Wang. Duke University Press, 2017, pp. 25–48.

Lim, Bliss Cua. "Spectral Times: The Ghost Film as Historical Allegory." *Positions: Asia Critique*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2001, pp. 287–329, https://doi.org/10.1215/10679847-9-2-287

Lionnet, Françoise, and Shu-mei Shih. *Minor Transnationalism*. Duke University Press, 2005.

Liu, Petrus. "Queer: A Term from/of the Global South." *The Funambulist*, 25 Oct. 2023. Accessed 24 March 2025. https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/redefining-our-terms/queer-a-term-from-of-the-global-south

Liu, Petrus. *Queer Marxism in Two Chinas*. Duke University Press, 2015.

Liu, Petrus. *The Specter of Materialism: Queer Theory and Marxism in the Age of the Beijing Consensus*. Duke University Press, 2023.

Liu, Wen, JN Chien, Christina Chung, and Ellie Tse, editors. *Reorienting Hong Kong's Resistance: Leftism, Decoloniality, and Internationalism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

Lorde, Audre. "Poetry Is Not a Luxury." In *Sister Outsider*. Crossing Press, 2020, pp. 37–38.

Louis. "距離真平等還有多遠? 試探雨傘運動中的性/別現象" (How Far Are We from True Equality?). 嶺南人 [Lingnan Folk], 116, pp. 32–34.

Love, Heather. *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

Lu Jinchi [盧勁馳], Li Zhiliang [李智良], Li Weiting [李薇婷], and Yang Zhuofeng [楊焯灃]. 在這自由民主的[殖民地]香港 [In this free and liberal Colonial Hong Kong: A Conversation on The Death of Lo Kei]. *Fleurs des lettres* [字花], no. 9, 18 June 2018, https://zihua.org.hk/magazine/issue_9/article/the_death_of_lo_kei_3/

Luke, Kit Ling [陸潔玲], and Sun Jue [孫玨], editors. 抗命女聲 [*Rebel Girls*]. 新銳文創 [Cutting Edge Creative], 2020.

Luo Guangbin [羅廣斌] and Yang Yiyan [楊益言]. *Red Crag* [紅岩]. Foreign Languages Press, 1978.

Lye, Colleen. "Asian American 1960s." In *The Routledge Companion to Asian American and Pacific Islander Literature, edited by Rachel C. Lee*. Routledge, 2014, pp. 213–222.

Lye, Colleen. "Identity Politics, Criticism, and Self-Criticism." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 119, no. 4, 2020, pp. 701–714, https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-8663603

MacDonald, James. *Comic Trans: Presenting and Representing the Other in Stand-up Comedy*. Master's thesis, University of Arts Helsinki, 2018.

Malatino, Hil. "Future Fatigue." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (2019): 635–658, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-7771796

McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Mercer. "Cost of Living City Ranking." *Mercer*, n.d. Accessed 20 Sep. 2024. https://www.mercer.com/insights/total-rewards/talent-mobility-insights/cost-of-living/

Mingguang Society Information Room [明光社資料室]. "無障礙廁所" [Accessible toilet]. *Truth-Light*, 6 Sep. 2016, https://www.truth-light.org.hk/nt/article/無障礙廁所

Moten, Fred. *Black and Blur*. Duke University Press, 2023.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York University Press, 2019.

Mutual Love Society. *Tears, Tears, Tears*. Spring Workshop, 2016.

Naruse, Cheryl Narumi. *Becoming Global Asia*. University of California Press, 2020.

New China TV. "Music Video: The Belt and Road Is How." YouTube, New China TV, 10 May, 2017. Accessed 28 Sep. 2024. www.youtube.com/watch?v=MolJc3PMNIg

Ng, Jason Y. "Ghost of Yulan Past." In *Hong Kong Noir*, edited by Jason Y. Ng and Susan Blumberg-Kason. AKASHIC Books, 2019, pp. 21–34.

Nicholson, Hope. "In Conversation with Mary Jean Chan." *Cambridge Review of Books*, 23 Feb. 2024, www.the-crob.org/post/in-conversation-with-mary-jean-chan

Ninh, erin Khuê. *Ingratitude: The Debt-Bound Daughter in Asian American Literature*. New York University Press, 2011.

O'Sullivan, Michael. "Hong Kong and the Sinocentric Afterlife of an Anglophone Postcolonial Discourse." In *The Economics of Empire, Genealogies of Capital and the Colonial Encounter*, edited by Maureen E. Ruprecht Fadem and Michael O'Sullivan. Routledge, 2021, pp. 222–241.

Pang Laikwan. "'De-Sovietization and Internationalism: The People's Republic of China's Alternative Modernity Project.'" In *Siting Postcoloniality: Critical Perspectives from the East Asian Sinosphere*, edited by Pheng Cheah and Caroline S. Hau. Duke University Press, 2022, pp. 90–106.

Prasad, Ritika. "'Time-Sense': Railways and Temporality in Colonial India." *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 47, no. 4, 13 Nov. 2012, pp. 1252–1282, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0026749x11000527

Prosser, Jay. *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*. Columbia University Press, 1998.

Puar, Jasbir K. "'I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess': Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory." *philoSOPHIA*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2012, pp. 49–66.

Qiu Jin [秋瑾]. "滿江紅·小住京華" [Full River Red: Living Briefly at Capital City].

Gushiwen [Ancient Poetry Online]. Accessed 29 Sep. 2024. https://www.gushiwen.cn/shiwenv_2a4e8dfccc72.aspx

Qiu Jin [秋瑾]. "Full River Red: Living Briefly at the Capital City." Translated by Mistranslation Club, *Tears, Tears, Tears*, Spring Workshop, 2016, pp. 6–7.

Qiu Jin [秋瑾]. "感憤" [Rage]. 秋瑾诗集 [Qiu Jin's Poetry Collection]. Accessed 1 Aug. 2024. https://web.6parkbbs.com/index.php?app=forum&act=view&bbsid=2182&tid=3181728

Qiu Jin [秋瑾]. "Rage aka Fuckin' Angry." Translated by Mistranslation Club, *Tears, Tears, Tears*, Spring Workshop, 2016, pp. 50–51.

Qiu Jin [秋瑾]. 自題小照男裝 [Self-Titled: A Little Picture of Me in a Man's Attire]. *Baidu* [百度百科]. Accessed 1 Aug. 2024. https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%87%AA%E9%A1%8C%E5%B0%8F%E7%85%A7/22442640

Qiu Jin [秋瑾]. Self-Titled: A Little Picture of Me in a Man's Attire. Translated by Mistranslation Club, *Tears, Tears, Tears*, Spring Workshop, 2016, pp. 30–31.

Quarks. *Facebook*, 2020. Accessed 28 Sep. 2024. https://www.facebook.com/quarkshk/

Radomska, Marietta, Tara Mehrabi, and Nina Lykke. "Queer Death Studies: Death, Dying and Mourning from a Queerfeminist Perspective." *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 35, no. 104, 2020, pp. 81–100, https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2020.1811952

Redfield, Marc. "The Bildungsroman." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature*, edited by David Scott Kastan, vol. 1. Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 191–194.

Rensenbrink, Greta. "Parthenogenesis and Lesbian Separatism: Regenerating Women's Community through Virgin Birth in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 19, no. 2, May 2010, pp. 288–316.

Reo, Nicholas J. "Inawendiwin and Relational Accountability in Anishnaabeg Studies: The Crux of the Biscuit." *Journal of Ethnobiology*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2019, pp. 65–75, https://doi.org/10.2993/0278-0771-39.1.65

Reuters. "Hong Kong Oct Retail Sales up 5.6%, Helped by Inbound Tourism." *Reuters*, 30 Nov. 2023. Accessed 29 Sep. 2024. www.reuters.com/markets/asia/hong-kong-oct-retail-sales-up-56-helped-by-inbound-tourism-2023-11-30/

RI Global. "The Story of RI Global." RI Global, n.d. Accessed 6 Apr. 2024. https://riddf.org/about-us/

Roberts, Rosemary. "The Confucian Moral Foundations of Socialist Model Man: Lei Feng and the Twenty Four Exemplars of Filial Behaviour." *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2014), pp. 23–38.

Rollo, Katherine. "The Posthuman *Bildungsroman*: The Clone as Authentic Subject." 'Authenticity': Centre for Modern Studies Second Annual Symposium, 31 May 2012, University of York, UK. Conference paper. https://www.york.ac.uk/media/modernstudies/documents/pgforumpapers/K.%20Rollo%20-%20The%20Posthuman%20Bildungsroman%20for%20CModS%20website.pdf

Rose, Emily. *Translating Trans Identity: (Re)Writing Undecidable Texts and Bodies*. Routledge, 2023.

Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." In *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. Duke University Press, 2011, pp. 33–65.

Sandilands, Catriona. "Queer Ecology." In *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, edited by Joni Adamson, William A. Gleason, and David N. Pellow. New York University Press, 2016, pp. 169–172.

Savage, Maxine. "Ástin sem varð að taugahrúgu [The love that became a nervous wreck]: Or, What Does Queer Failure Have to Do with Translation?" *Parse*, no. 11, Summer 2020. Accessed 29 Sep. 2024. parsejournal.com/article/astin-sem-vard-ad-taugahrugu-the-love-that-became-a-nervous-wreck/

Schindler, Seth, Nicholas Jepson, and Wenxing Cui. "Covid-19, China and the Future of Global Development." *Research in Globalization*, vol. 2, December 2020, p. 100020. Accessed 1 Aug. 2024, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resglo.2020.100020

Schultz, James Willard. "Life Among the Blackfeet." *Forest and Stream*, vol. 21, no. 26, 24 Jan. 1884, p. 512. *Reading the Region: Texts by and about Natives*, University of Washington, www.washington.edu/uwired/outreach/cspn/Website/Classroom%20Materials/Reading%20the%20Region/Texts%20by%20and%20about%20Natives/Texts/11.html

Sedgwick, Eve. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Duke University Press. 2003.

Serano, Julia. *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*. Seal, 2007.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts*, edited with introduction and notes by G. Lowes Dickinson. J. M. Dent and Co., 1898.

Shen, Shuang. "Hong Kong Literary History and the Construction of the Local in Xi Xi's *I City*." *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 73, no. 4, 2012, pp. 569–595.

Sherwin, Skye. "Sin Wai Kin: Dreaming of Me." *ArtReview*, 8 Nov. 2022. Accessed 2 Sep. 2024. https://artreview.com/sin-wai-kin-dreaming-of-me/

Siddiqi, Dina. "Development." In *Keywords for Gender and Sexuality Studies*, edited by Keywords Feminist Editorial Collective. New York University Press, 2021, pp. 62–64.

Sin Wai Kin. *A Dream of Wholeness in Parts*. 4K single-channel video. 23 min 9 sec. 2021.

Sin Wai Kin. *It's Always You*. Blindspot, Hong Kong, 23 Nov. 2021–15 Jan 2022, https://blindspotgallery.com/exhibition/sin-wai-kin-always/

Sin, Wai Kin. *Play and Loop II*. Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong, 2020. Exhibition.

Sin Wai Kin. "Sin Wai Kin: 'I Have Had to Unlearn So Many Narratives,'" by *Art Basel*, n.d. Accessed 29 Sep. 2024. https://www.artbasel.com/stories/meet-the-artists-victoria-sin-wai-kin-sin?lang=en

Sin Wai Kin. "Sin Wai Kin: 'I Want People to Exist in My World,'" by Tate Gallery. *Tate Gallery*, 12 Oct. 2022, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/sin-wai-kin-i-want-people-to-exist-in-my-world

Sin Wai Kin and Sophia Al-Maria. *Astral Bodies Electric, Make Up! Transformer: A Rebirth of Wonder*, 180 Studios, The Strand, London, 2 Oct.–15 Dec. 2023.

Sin, Wai Kin and Sophia Al-Maria. "#BCE." BCE, 15 Jan. –28 April, 2019. Whitechapel Gallery. Handout.

Slaughter, Joseph R. *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law*. Fordham University Press, 2022.

Smart, Alan. "The Development of Diamond Hill From Village to Squatter Area: A Perspective on Public Housing." *Asian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1986, pp. 43–63.

Smith, S. A. *Revolution and the People in Russia and China: A Comparative History*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Smithsonian. "Marsha Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and the History of Pride Month."

Smithsonian, 7 June 2021. https://www.si.edu/stories/marsha-johnson-sylvia-rivera-and-history-pride-month

Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. University of California Press, 1993.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Neocolonialism and the Secret Agent of Knowledge." *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1991, pp. 220–251, https://doi.org/10.3366/olr.1991.010

Steinbock, Eliza. "The Riotous State of Trans Visual Culture." *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2022, pp. 169–174, https://doi.org/10.1353/cj.2022.0001

Steinbock, Eliza. *Shimmering Images: Trans Cinema, Embodiment, and the Aesthetics of Change*. Duke University Press, 2019.

Stockton, Kathryn Bond. *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Duke University Press, 2009.

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Stryker, Susan, Paisley Currah, and Lisa Jean Moore. "Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?" *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 3/4, 2008, pp. 11–22.

Sun, Wanning. "Consumption Plus Love: Inequality, Domestic Utopia, and China's New Politics of the Future." *Modern China*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2019, 49–78, https://doi.org/10.1177/0097700419837929

Taylor, Michael. "Transgender Pastor Defies Court to Conduct Same-Sex Marriages in Hong Kong." *Reuters*, Openly News, 17 Mar 2017, https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-court-makes-landmark-ruling-protecting-transgender-rights-2023-02-06/

Thai, Philip. "Hong Kong in the U.S.-UK War on Drugs, 1970–1980." *Diplomatic History*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2022, pp. 19–54, https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhac069

Thoburn, Nicholas. *Deleuze, Marx and Politics*. Routledge, 2003.

Thornton, Max. "Trans/Criptions: Gender, Disability, and Liturgical Experience." *TSQ*, vol. 6, no. 3, Aug. 2019, pp. 358–367, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-7549456

Tompkins, Kyla Wazana. *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century*. New York University Press, 2012.

Transgender Resource Center. "Transitioning Medical Information." Transgender Resource Center, last updated 23 Sep. 2022, www.tgr.org.hk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=142&Itemid=57&lang=en

Tsang, Michael. "Po Suen." *Wasafiri: International Contemporary Writing*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2017, pp. 46–50.

Tse, Henry. "My Pride Story: Henry Tse" (interview). *Hugill & Ip*, June 2024, www.hugillandip.com/2024/06/my-pride-story-henry-tse/

Tse, Ka-Man. *Narrow Distances*. New York: Candor Arts, 2018.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China. Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong. The Chinese Printing Bureau, 1984. Accessed 12 Dec. 2022. https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ilr/vol7/iss1/6

Vicera, Christine. 2022. "Toward Vocabularies of Liberation." *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 8 (1): 89–94.

Vint, Sherryl. *Biopolitical Futures in Twenty-First-Century Speculative Fiction*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Vukovich, Daniel. "The End of 'Re-Colonization': On Hong Kong, Knowledge, and G.O.D" *Neohelicon*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2012, pp. 167–182.

Wan, Kaspar. "Kaspar X—If I had a soul." YouTube, 30 Mar. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrn3sjRMfi8

Wan, Marco. "Queer Temporalities and Transgender Rights: A Hong Kong Case Study." *Social & Legal Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2020, pp. 563–580, https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663920948950

Wang, David Der-Wei. "A Hong Kong Miracle of a Different Kind." *China Perspectives*, vol. 2011, no. 1, 2011, pp. 80–85, https://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/5393

Weheliye, Alexander G. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Duke University Press, 2014.

Weiss, Timothy. "The Living Labyrinth: Hong Kong and David TK Wong's Hong Kong Stories." In *Translating Orients: Between Ideology and Utopia*. University of Toronto Press, 2004, pp. 79–108.

White, Jenny B. *Money Makes Us Relatives: Women's Labor in Urban Turkey*. Routledge, 2004.

Whitehead, Kate. "Gay Hong Kong Policeman's 1980 Gun Death: Unanswered Questions Remain." *South China Morning Post*, 15 Jan. 2018, www.scmp.com/lifestyle/article/2127818/gay-hong-kong-policemans-1980-gun-death-unanswered-questions-remain

Wing Sang Law. *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese*. Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

Wong, Alvin K. "Thinking Hong Kong's Freedom in Multiplicity." *Hong Kong Protesting*, 16 July, 2020, hkprotesting.com/2020/07/16/multiplicity/

Wong, Beatrice. "From Beavis (M) to Beatrice (F)." *Hong Kong Short Film New Action Express*, 2019, www.naehk.com/2019/en/success/content.php?u=MTk4

Wong, Beatrice. *Goodbye Mr. B, Hello Ms. B*. 2016. (Shared in personal email, 19 May 2022.)

Wong Bik-Wan [黃碧雲]. 盧麒之死 [The Death of Lo Kei]. 大田 [Daejon], 2018.

Wong, Brian, and Connor Mycroft. "Hong Kong court orders law on use of opposite-sex public toilets to be struck down." *South China Morning Post*, 23 Jul. 2025, https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3319228/hong-kong-court-orders-law-use-opposite-sex-public-toilets-be-struck-down?utm_medium=Social&utm_content=Channels&utm_source=WhatsApp&utm_source=copy-link&utm_campaign=3319228&utm_medium=share_widget

Wong, Nicholas. *Besiege Me*. Noemi Press, 2021.

Wong Yi [黃怡]. "擠迫之城的戀愛方法" [Ways to Love in a Crowded City], ebook, 聯合文叢, 2021.

Wong, Yu Hin. 論黃碧雲的「非虛構小說」《盧麒之死》[An Examination of Wong Bik-wan's Non-Fiction Fiction, The Death of Lo Kei]. The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2019, undergraduate paper, https://hklit.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WYH_thesis_2019.pdf

Wu Tsang. *Duilian*. Mar.–May 2016, Spring Workshop, Hong Kong.

Wu Tsang. *For How We Perceived a Life (Take 3)*. 9:33 min, color, sound, HD video, 2012.

Wu Tsang and Boychild. *You Sad Legend. Duilian*. 24 Mar. 2016, Spring Workshop, Hong Kong.

Wynter, Sylvia. *On Being Human as Praxis*. Edited by Katherine McKittrick. Duke University Press, 2015, https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822375852

X. 認識跨性別及澳門政策2024 [Understanding Transgender and Macau Policy 2024] Gender Diverse Community. 10 August 2024.

Yang, Xinlei [楊欣蕾]. "Investigating the Healthcare Experiences and Needs of Macau's LGBTQ+ Community through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)." [運用解釋現象學分析（IPA）探討澳門的性少數（LGBTQ+）對澳門醫療 保健的體驗與需求.] 2023. Kiang Wu Nursing College of Macau, Master's thesis.

Yapp, Hentyle. *Minor China: Method, Materialisms, and the Aesthetic*. Duke University Press, 2021.

Yazbeck, Juliana. "The Problem with White Veganism." *Medium*, 1 Nov. 2018, julianayaz.medium.com/the-problem-with-white-veganism-f86c0341e2a2

Yeung, Patricia. "Gender Equality in Hong Kong: at a Glance." *Howse Williams*, 8 Mar. 2023, https://www.howsewilliams.com/attachment/newsPdf/20230308_Gender_equality_in_Hong_Kong_at_a_glance.pdf.pdf

Yeung, Wayne. "The Concept of the Cantophone: Memorandum for a Stateless Literary History." *Sino-Platonic Papers*, no. 334, June 2023, pp. 3–49, https://sino-platonic.org/complete/spp334_cantophone.pdf

Yiu, William. "Hong Kong Law School 'May Have Breached Anti-Discrimination Rules' by Telling Transgender Student to Use Toilets for the Disabled." *South China Morning Post*, 14 Apr. 2023, https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3216958/hong-kong-law-school-may-have-breached-anti-discrimination-rules-telling-transgender-student-use

You Jing [游靜]. "【大海撈音】作家書信　給青年同志的信: 別字第三十七期." [Letters from Writers to Young Comrades: 作家書信　給青年同志的信.] *Fleurs des lettres* [字花], 37, 14 Dec. 2020. Accessed 28 Sep. 2024. zihua.org.hk/magazine/issue-37/article/letter-to-young-people/

Young, Cynthia A. *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left*. Duke University Press, 2006.

Yu, Yuen Lan [余婉蘭]. 月亮破裂 [Moon Split Asunder]. 我街道，我知道，我書寫」—社區書寫計劃 [My Street, My Writing: A Community Composition Project], 22 Feb. 2016, hkliterature.wordpress.com/contact-us/

Zhang, Charlie Yi. *Dreadful Desires: The Uses of Love in Neoliberal China*. Duke University Press, 2022.

Zu, Weizhen [蘇偉貞]. "《書評》給香港青年們的遺言—關於《盧麒之死》" [Book Review: Last Words for the Young People of Hong Kong: About The Death of Lo Kei]. 閱讀誌 [Open Book]. Accessed 20 Sep. 2024. www.openbook.org.tw/article/p-21017

Index