

The Humanities in Asia 4

Yiu-Wai Chu *Editor*

Hong Kong Culture and Society in the New Millennium

Hong Kong as Method



 Springer

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In Loving Memory of Esther M.K. Cheung

Preface

This book grew out of “Hong Kong as Method,” an international conference co-hosted by the Hong Kong Studies Programme, Department of Comparative Literature, and the Center for the Study of Globalization and Cultures at The University of Hong Kong in December 2014. The organizing committee called for papers under the themes of, among others, Chineseness, cultural translations, ethnic minorities, global/local/national, identity formation/politics, migration, urban space, and (post)coloniality. There have been heated discussions on the notion of “Hong Kong as Method” and its relation to the rise of China in the context of Asianization. The purpose of the conference was to provide an arena for scholars from different disciplines to address the reconfiguration of Hong Kong culture and society. While Hong Kong was not privileged for the explanations of global and inter-Asia cultural dynamics, what provoked participants’ concerns with the idea of “Hong Kong as Method” would shed light on a new paradigm for understanding the reconfiguration of culture and society not only in Asia but also in the world. As the conference successfully achieved its intended objective to provide a platform for scholars from different disciplines to engage in meaningful discussions of the notion of “Hong Kong as Method” as it relates to the rise of China in the context of Asianization, we also organized post-conference seminars in 2015 to further explore new Hong Kong imaginaries responsive to global, local, and national needs. Discussions about some important issues raised at the conference could be continued in these seminars. After the completion of the conference and seminars, we started planning to publish selected papers in a book manuscript.

Without the continued support of many people neither the conference nor the book would have been possible. To Esther M.K. Cheung, my late collaborator and friend, I owe a special debt. She was actively involved in the organization of the conference despite her health condition, and, more importantly, she was a self-effacing colleague who wanted everyone to succeed. As a personal friend, she was always more than willing to share her experience and wisdom with me. A serious voice of international recognition, she has an almost encyclopedic grasp of various forms of literature and film. Her publications, astutely cosmopolitan and interdisciplinary in perspective, were and will continue to be widely used

and indispensable for comparative literature and Hong Kong cultural studies. In addition, I have always admired her ability to engage and inspire students through her teaching and mentoring. Her dedication and energy are simply infectious, and they are undoubtedly among the factors that have made her such a successful teacher. It was an unexpected and huge loss.

Furthermore, I am grateful to Mirana Szeto, John Wong, and Winnie Yee for organizing the conference. Thanks also go to Louis Cha Fund and the Strategic Research Theme of China-West Studies of The University of Hong Kong for their generous funding of the conference. Last but not least, this book would not have been published without the support of Chu-Ren Huang. Of course, any errors and deficiencies in the book are mine alone.

Hong Kong

Yiu-Wai Chu

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Introduction

There has recently been very strong interest in local studies around the world. Hong Kong's unique history as a city-state and a region, an imperial outpost, a British colony, and a Special Administrative Region of China is a very interesting and important issue. Since its reversion to China, Hong Kong has been caught in a paradox: On the one hand, it has taken great pains in being more than a Chinese city, and on the other, it cannot but lean toward China for the sake of economic opportunities. When China began to globalize, which changed Hong Kong's unique position, the situation worsened. The recent trend toward globalization and mainlandization in Hong Kong has sparked much discussion among scholars for at least three reasons. First, Hong Kong, often seen as a springboard for China's entry into the global economy, must retain its autonomy so as not to become simply another city in China after its reversion to its motherland. Second, because of the increasing capitalization of mainland markets, more mainland cities have become more and more Hong Kongized. Finally, as China embraces capitalism, albeit with its own characteristics, Hong Kong can no longer retain its special role between China and the world. Hong Kong must adjust to the fact that it is not the only capitalist city or financial center in China, is not the biggest port, is no longer a manufacturing hub, and is not even a unique political anomaly any more.¹ In this special context, the triangular articulation of the local, the global, and the national, seen as an opportunity shortly after Hong Kong's reversion, has become a crisis in the new millennium. This crisis has had an impact on Hong Kong people's lives both on a cultural and social level, with significant implications for Hong Kong studies on a theoretical level. Some of the recent social conflicts, such as the governance crisis, the rise of resistance against mainlanders, and the fight for universal suffrage, can be seen as important issues that need to be addressed against this backdrop. It is imperative to have an in-depth study of Hong Kong to critique common misperceptions and misunderstandings of Hong Kong, avoid populist discourse, and

¹Refer to Yiu-Wai Chu, *Lost in Transition: Postcolonial Hong Kong Culture in the Age of China* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013), 3–6.

envision Hong Kong in the context of China and the world. Meanwhile, local studies present an academic counterpoint to globalization and a critical perspective on the new globalism. This book aims to stir up discussions that go deep into core issues, such as Hong Kong as a transition zone for ideas, capital, and people. The book can further function as a vibrant platform to generate, gather, and share knowledge on Hong Kong studies. In short, the book takes full advantage of the uniqueness of Hong Kong, developing an innovative intellectual orientation response to global, national, and local needs, which will prove to be important for the future of Hong Kong culture and society.

The reversion to China in 1997 was expected to bring a new sense of belonging to a nation and/or possible hybridization of the local, the global, and the national to Hong Kong. Hong Kong's identity crisis, however, has endured despite these anticipations. The so-called new Hong Kong identity engineered by the government has been more of a hindrance than a help. It is therefore necessary to review and update the theories and research findings that have been used to interpret Hong Kong over the past few decades. Facing a clash of local, global, and national identities, Hong Kong can no longer count on its past formula, which is why it is essential to move beyond the 1997 framework and imagine Hong Kong from new perspectives. In short, recent developments have forced us to review Hong Kong culture and society as an academic field. As discussed by Koon-Chung Chan during the tenth anniversary of Hong Kong's reversion to China, "in spite of having a strong identity and a vibrant local culture, Hong Kong has not developed its own theoretical language of self-articulation and that has impeded its self-understanding," mainly because "the ruling elites have been enthralled by neo-liberal promises and other faulty assumptions for so long that they have not been able to see Hong Kong through its own eyes."² As long as Hong Kong continues to procrastinate in imagining a future beyond the status quo, the possibility of self-writing will diminish in the new economic, social, and cultural landscapes in the new millennium. As Tai-lok Lui has also argued in a similar vein in his stimulating account of the problem related to the handover of Hong Kong, the framework of the handover was designed in the 1980s, when Hong Kong people's fear of China and the Communist government made retaining the status quo of Hong Kong a mainstream opinion. In other words, the "50 Years without Changes" slogan did sound sweet to many at that time, but a blueprint developed on the basis of status quo cannot effectively deal with political changes brought forth by decolonization in the context of global and regional changes.³ Moreover, no one could have expected the stellar rise of China and its economy, among other segments, in the new millennium. Lui's conclusion is that Hong Kong has to go beyond the "50 Years without Changes" framework to which it has been hopelessly

²Koon-Chung Chan, "Hong Kong Viscera," *Postcolonial Studies* 10:4 (2007): 388.

³Tai-lok Lui, "Facing the Future: Hong Kong's Return to China and Problems in the Design of One Country Two Systems" (in Chinese), *Reflexion* 19 (2011): 91–92.

bound since its reversion to China and imagine possible changes and its new role in the rapid development of China.

In this special context, this book aims to discuss the notion of “Hong Kong as Method” as it relates to the rise of China in the context of Asianization. While Hong Kong’s distinctive colonial history can be used to account for the characteristics of its culture before 1997, its relation to China, the most swiftly developing economy in the world over the past decade, has introduced a paradigm shift. The richness of this city, along with the complexity of its political, socioeconomic, and cultural situation, has generated many projects of “Hong Kong as a case study.” These case studies have explored new Hong Kong imaginaries in regard to the complex relationship among the local, the national, and the global. While we do not intend to privilege Hong Kong for the explanations of global and inter-Asia cultural dynamics, we recognize that what provokes our concerns with the idea of “Hong Kong as Method” may shed light on a new paradigm for understanding the reconfiguration of culture and society, not only in Asia but also in the world. The major theoretical thrust of this book is to address the reconfiguration of Hong Kong culture and society in the age of global modernity from different disciplines, exploring the possibilities of seeing Hong Kong as a method. Through critical inquiries into different fields related to Hong Kong culture and society, including, among others, gender, resistance, and minorities, various perspectives of Hong Kong culture and society can be reassessed. New directions and guidelines related to the reconfiguration of Hong Kong culture and society are also projected in the book.

Hong Kong’s particular form of presence did illuminate for us the elusiveness of colonial space before its reversion to China in 1997, which has been discussed by Ackbar Abbas in his inspiring account of the space of disappearance of the then-British colony in *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*.⁴ While Abbas’s argument that for Hong Kong “the cause of its emergence—1997—may also be the cause of its demise” may have been valid before 1997, it is argued in Yiu-Wai Chu’s *Lost in Transition* from a different perspective: “Hong Kong” became lost in transition when it took great pains to define its international visibility, and the cause of its “demise”—China—may also be the cause of its emergence in a different form.⁵ *Lost in Transition* builds its argument on seminal studies on Hong Kong published after its reversion to China. For example, Leo Ou-fan Lee’s *City Between Worlds: My Hong Kong* offers an insider’s view of Hong Kong, capturing its unique history and culture by highlighting its role on the fault line between China and the West; Stephen Wing-kai Chiu and Tai-lok Lui’s *Hong Kong The Global City* focuses on the rise of Hong Kong to the status of a Chinese global city in the world economy by examining its developmental history; and Elizabeth Sinn, Siu-lun Wong, and Wing-hoi Chan’s *Rethinking Hong Kong: New Paradigms, New Perspectives* provides different new perspectives rather than a

⁴Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

⁵Chu, *Lost in Transition*, 4.

theoretically developed account of Hong Kong.⁶ During the past decade, there have also been books on different aspects of Hong Kong, such as Gordon Mathews's anthropological account of a dilapidated building in the heart of Hong Kong's tourist district in *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong*, Carol Jones's legal analysis of postcolonial Hong Kong in *Lost in China?: Law, Culture and Identity in Post-1997 Hong Kong*, and Esther C.M. Yau, Esther M.K. Cheung, and Gina Marchetti's cultural exploration of Hong Kong movies in *A Companion to Hong Kong Cinema*.⁷ If contemporary Hong Kong culture has to be conceptualized via new modes of critical thought (as well argued in Abbas's book) because its own characteristics are themselves new, a different theoretical perspective is in order. Toward this end, the current book endeavors to point to a new alternative Hong Kong imaginary—Hong Kong as Method—in light of Hong Kong's relationship to the world, Asia, and China.

"Hong Kong as Method," proposed by Koon-Chung Chan, a prominent cultural figure active in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China, echoes the Taiwanese cultural critic Kuan-Hsing Chen's adoption of the Japanese notion of "Asia as Method." Developing the concept through Yoshimi Takeuchi and Yūzō Mizoguchi, Chen used historical experiences and practices in Asia to develop an alternative perspective, which led to a method to advance a different understanding of world history.⁸ According to Takeuchi,

When this rollback [of untransformed Western values] takes place, we must have our own cultural values. And yet perhaps those values do not already exist in substantive form. Rather I suspect that they are possible as method, that is to say, as the process of the subject's self-formation. This I have called "Asia as Method," and yet it is impossible to definitively state what this might mean.⁹

In a similar vein, Chen also deals with subject formation. As indicated by the title, Chen's *Asia as Method* also focuses on deimperialization, aiming to move outside the framework of the West and envision a new imaginary in terms of Asia: "[U]sing the idea of Asia as an imaginary anchoring point, societies in Asia can become each other's points of reference, so that the understanding of the self may be transformed, and subjectivity rebuilt."¹⁰ With a concern that marginal discourses

⁶Leo Ou-fan Lee, *City between Worlds: My Hong Kong* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Stephen Wing-kai Chiu and Tai-lok Lui, *Hong Kong The Global City* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009); Elizabeth Sinn et al. (eds.), *Rethinking Hong Kong: New Paradigms, New Perspectives* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies of the University of Hong Kong, 2009).

⁷Gordon Mathews, *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011); Carol Jones, *Lost in China?: Law, Culture and Identity in Post-1997 Hong Kong* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Esther C.M. Yau et al. (eds.), *A Companion to Hong Kong Cinema* (Chichester and Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015).

⁸Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁹Yoshimi Takeuchi, *What is Modernity?: Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi*; Richard Calichman (ed., trans., and intro.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 165.

¹⁰Chen, *Asia as Method*, 212.

would not but become the derivative of imperialism should they be framed by Western institutions, Chen shifts the attention to “Inter-Asia” as “a self-reflexive movement to examine problems and issues emerging out of our experiences organizing interventions in various local spaces.”¹¹

Having no intention of going into the complexity of these arguments here, I will use them to show that Koon-Chung Chan’s “Hong Kong as Method” is a similar but different concept. Unlike Chen, Chan tends to avoid the concept of subjectivity; he would rather shift the focus to the hybridity of Hong Kong. Chan argues that over the past fifty years or so, Hong Kong has successfully embraced globalization on the one hand, and has generated hybridized local cultures on the other, and hybridity is the style of Hong Kong, which has become its major characteristic as well as edge. As maintained by Chan, hybrid cosmopolitanism should straddle the traditional and the modern, the East and the West, and the indigenous and the foreign, not just multiculturally but genuinely hybridized.¹² In the 1980s, despite the domination of the finance and real estate sectors, there was still room for a hybridized Hong Kong popular culture to flourish on its own. Now that the historical context has changed significantly, we need to study hybridity on the one hand and point toward new imaginaries on the other. Recent contributions of researches on Hong Kong identity, gender, popular culture, and ethnic minorities, among others, have played an essential part in shaping the ways Hong Kong is understood. Having said this, it is also important to note “as Method” faces a problem in the contexts of both Asia and Hong Kong. Arif Dirlik put it succinctly when he wrote, “[p]erspectives from Asia are important to be sure, but it is a mystery to me how ‘Asia as Method’ may claim responsibility for the criticism of hegemony or orientalism.”¹³ The potential of “Hong Kong as Method” is to problematize “Hong Kong” by offering different perspectives and possibilities, as Ge Sun said about “Asia” in her conclusion to a seminar titled “On the Possibilities of East Asia Discourses”: “My sense is that what we have been doing is to turn the absolute, rigid premise of ‘East Asia’ into an open-ended concept.”¹⁴

Toward this end, the current book starts with a section titled “Framing Hong Kong (as Method),” in which the authors imagine from different perspectives how Hong Kong can be seen as Method(s) on a theoretical level. Meaghan Morris’s “Hong Kong Liminal: Situation as Method” considers how discussions of “method” developed in inter-Asian cultural studies contexts and recent work on the anthropological concept of “liminality” offer ways to think about cultural production and social experience in the Hong Kong context. Between a vanishing past, a turbulent present, and clashing potential futures that are violently contested, Hong Kong and

¹¹Chen, *Asia as Method*, 213.

¹²Koon-Chung Chan, *My Generation of Hong Kongers* (in Chinese) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2005), 47.

¹³Arif Dirlik “Literary Identity/Cultural Identity,” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*. September 2013: <https://u.osu.edu/mclc/book-reviews/literary-identity/>.

¹⁴Ge Sun, Kuan-Hsing Chen, and Younseo Baik, “In Dialogue: On the Possibilities of East Asia Discourses” (in Chinese), *Book Town* (December 2004): 45.

its popular cultures have responded with a high degree of continuity to everyday situations of living on a threshold between “the socially polarizing forces of a rapaciously liberal capitalism (the ‘freest market in the world’) and the political illiberalism of, first, British colonialism and, now, pressure from Beijing.” Using the *Golden Chicken* trilogy as examples, Morris teases out an important theme in this chapter: What it might mean to posit “Hong Kong as Method” in an inter-Asian cultural studies context, and how “Hong Kong as Method” avoids narcissistic closure when it is practiced heterotopically. By way of conclusion, she uses the example of *Lion Rock: The Unbeatable*, a short drama posted in May 2015 by the political satire group Mocking Jer, to show how Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement in 2014 has offered new possibilities of imaginative action, not only for Hong Kong but also for the “threshold” conditions in which common people in many parts of the world now live.

Moving from everyday life to virtual reality, John Nguyet Erni’s “Sex and Freedom in the Chatroom: The Hong Kong Golden Forum as Method” theorizes the rapidly changing forms, norms, and values of sex as an important facet of Internet chatting culture. Through the examination of the highly popular practice of Internet-based “sex chatting” on Hong Kong Golden Forum, a highly popular Internet chat site in a city known to have a vibrant culture of Internet forum chatting, Erni discusses the problematization of sexual discourse in a fairly vast (albeit somewhat underground) segment of Hong Kong society and related questions of gender, misogyny, and sexual freedom. His empirical, ethnographic study of the main recurring themes in sex chatting and the specificities of the chatters’ language reframes our theoretical and political understanding of sexual values shaped by a profoundly quotidian source of meaning-making, which contributes a timely, significant dimension to the study of Hong Kong culture. The study of “vernacular masculine culture” in this chapter not only reshapes the direction of gender studies in Hong Kong by “placing less emphasis on well-worn ideological modes of construction of maleness and more on the fluid flow and interaction of sexual speech constituted out of freely unscripted lines of imagination,” but also sheds light on the importance of Hong Kong as a method to unearth the subtle but vibrant flow of marginalized discourses.

The issue of gender is further discussed in Gina Marchetti’s “Hong Kong as Feminist Method: Gender, Sexuality, and Democracy in Two Documentaries by Tammy Cheung.” Using the works of the female filmmaker Tammy Cheung to highlight that Hong Kong as “method” must come with “a nuanced appreciation of the way in which the process of decolonization is inflected by gender as well as race and ethnicity,” Marchetti envisions Hong Kong as Method from a feminist perspective in this chapter. By considering the part feminist methodologies play in the construction of new paradigms, she explores the way changing attitudes toward gender and sexuality impact the project of approaching Hong Kong as Method in motion pictures. In her *July* and *Election*, Cheung shows women stepping into the political arena as winners. However, as convincingly argued by Marchetti, “they often fall short of embracing a feminist critique of the status quo.” Her inspiring account of Cheung’s visual depictions of women activists and political

candidates shows how the cinematic politics of women's involvement in collective action can make a distinct contribution to Hong Kong's unique role in a general "method" of feminist critique.

The next section includes issues and debates related to the local, the global, and the national. Inspired by the romance road movie *Paris, Texas*, Sidney Cheung's "New Orleans, New Territories" examines New Orleans and southern Louisianan culture with research methods developed through his study of coastal wetland resources in Hong Kong. Not only does this chapter serve as the author's personal reflection after his field trip to New Orleans to relate work done in Hong Kong to the initiatives and challenges in new areas on the other side of the globe, but it also showcases how the local can function as a means to understand the global. As stressed in this chapter, with his experience in the wetland area of Yuen Long, he could much more easily understand land use and coastal resource management in southern Louisiana, even though they are totally different in terms of historical development. Imagining "Hong Kong as Method" between the coastal wetland area in Hong Kong and the lower Mississippi River basin, Cheung demonstrates how a better mutual understanding of coastal cultures and his discovery of parallels may contribute to a renewed understanding of the relationship between the local and the global beyond the binary of Western theory versus Asian reality.

By highlighting Hong Kong as a "port city" as an inter-referencing framework, Desmond Sham unsettles the binaries of the local and the global in his "Hong Kong as a Port City." As per Sham's argument, the potential of "port cities as Method" is to extend the capacities and to visualize the commitment of moving beyond the nation-state framework, in which port cities are often regarded as peripheral and impure. In this chapter, Sham repositions Hong Kong in Southeast Asia and articulates it as a port city; by so doing, he tries opening up the possibilities of understanding Hong Kong beyond the narrow-minded nation-state boundary, and hence beyond the binary opposition of China and Britain. The experience as a (colonial) port city has provided a common ground for Hong Kong and other port cities in the region to invoke an inter-Asia imaginary, in which Hong Kong's experience of dealing with issues such as multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and racial politics could become "method" for other places. In light of Kuan-Hsing Chen's argument, Sham argues that port cities in Asia can become each other's points of reference.

In a slightly different vein, Kenny Ng's "Censorship at Work: Cold War Paranoia and Purgation of Chinese Ghost Stories" deals more with the local and the national. His essay brings us back to Hong Kong shortly after 1949, a time in which, as lucidly shown by Ng, the colonial cultural fields became a battleground for ideological combat between the Chinese Communists and the Guomindang (GMD) nationalists, the American-led "liberal camps," and Soviet-centered Communist blocs. While the British government stealthily introduced and vigorously exercised stringent measures in censoring film and print culture to interfere with the production and dissemination of undesirable messages for the colony's Chinese audiences, Ng argues that besides the common understanding that censorship inhibited creativity, censorial practices had productively affected the

aesthetics and identity of Chinese ghost narratives under political and market constraints in Cold War colonial Hong Kong. Ng's subtle account of globally symbolic resonances with monsters, spies, refugees, and exiles in Cold War cultural representations in adaptations of classical Chinese ghost stories shows how the study of Hong Kong cinema during the Cold War era and its distinctive historical transnationality can provide a method to examine the cultural politics of colonialism, postcolonialism, and Chinese nationalism as they were engrossed in the inter-regional and cross-border Chinese cinematic activities in the geopolitical regions of Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, and Southeast Asia.

Leo Shin's "The 'National Question' and the Stories of Hong Kong" sums up this section by telling different stories of Hong Kong in light of the notion of "nation." Hong Kong has witnessed heated debates over *man zuk* ("nation"; Mandarin: *min zu*) in recent years. In this chapter, Shin unpacks the ambiguities and tensions embedded in the notion of *man zuk* and its intricate relationship with the primary identification with the "Chinese nation" in the territory. Shin also accounts for the reasons why few in the territory have embraced the notion of a "Hong Kong nation." He examines the main reason in light of "the Hong Kong story," arguing that "nation-building" has, at least until recently, not been part of the stories about Hong Kong. Through his discussion of the controversial issue of "Hong Kong nation," Shin ultimately explores the stories of Hong Kong.

Due to its unique history as a British colony and a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, many stories of Hong Kong, albeit not easy to tell according to the famous poet-cum-critic Ping-kwan Leung, have been in one way or another related to the notions of hybridity, marginality, and resistance. Winnie Yee's "'Vibrant Objects,' Shifting Perspectives: Understanding Hong Kong Poetry as Method" explores whether a reading of Hong Kong literature as Method is able to suggest alternative ways of understanding modernity. Yee uses the poems of two famous Hong Kong poets-cum-critics, Ping-kwan Leung (aka Ye Si) and Natalia Siu-hung Chan (aka Lok Fung), as examples to show how both Hong Kong and its literature can be seen as a complex network of connections. As argued in this chapter, the images of food and enchanted objects in the poems of Leung and Chan, in which the cultural imagination of Hong Kong is understood via the circulation and enchantment of objects and commodities, are designed to shed light on the reimagination of Hong Kong as a subject. While popular culture stole the limelight in a city known as "the cultural desert," its literature has been left in the margins of not only the academy but also society per se. Marginality is creatively used by the poets to problematize the monolithic narrative of modernity, cutting through the hegemonic discourse to find the less trodden paths of history and bring forth the potentiality of Hong Kong. The poetic evocation of a world of commodities and everyday events encourages alternative ways of looking at Hong Kong through language and shifting temporalities, and also provides a new mode of inquiry to understand the role of Hong Kong in the making of the rest of the Asian region and beyond.

Exploring justice from another angle, Lucetta Kam's "Return, Come Out: Queer Lives in Postcolonial Hong Kong" investigates how queer people tell their story

of sexuality and gender and their participation in civil political movements, and how queer people tell their stories of Hong Kong. According to Kam, “minority” issues are often overlooked or put aside in social movements owing to the strategic considerations of the organizers. It is thus worthwhile studying the stories of those participants who made special efforts to display their sexual and gender politics during the Umbrella Movement, a territory-wide movement of unprecedented scale and intensity. Kam combines in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires for LGBTQ-identified people who have participated in local political events in recent years. As argued in this chapter, the inclusion of queer people’s voices and experiences in local political resistance contributes often neglected perspectives to the study of Hong Kong, including the disconnection between gender/sexual politics and civil political movements, the heteronormative culture and assumptions of local social movements, and the lack of gender perspectives and sexual analysis in the dominant political discourses of Hong Kong.

Focusing on another group of minorities in local society, Daisy Tam’s “Derrida’s Hospitality and Serres’ Parasitism: The Case of Hong Kong” studies the unique phenomenon of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong. In this chapter, Tam argues that while migration has been a subject of global debate, the case of Hong Kong offers different aspects for consideration. Inspired by Jacques Derrida’s notion of “hospitality,” Tam starts her analysis with the oxymoronic nature of “foreign domestic helpers.” Being foreign but domestic, these helpers embody a paradoxical inherent tension between the alien and the citizen, abroad and home, private and public, familiar and strange. Tam’s Derridean reading of “hospitality” highlights a complex set of interdependent relations where the role of the host and guest cannot be clearly delineated, and thus it is necessary to retell stories from the perspectives of the migrant workers themselves. Despite being considered “foreign,” migrant workers are a necessary part of Hong Kong in terms of being an integral part of the city’s labor force as well as economy. This “included-out” population is a strange “illogical logic,” and Tam borrows Derrida’s “autoimmunity” to underscore the condition that parallels the body’s immune system when it starts to attack itself. Hong Kong is not immune from the “illogical logic” that attacks itself as an open-ended concept, so to speak.

Through the frequently asked question “Who is Hongkonger?”, Wai-chi Chee’s “Model of and Model for Ethnic Minorities: Individualization of the Model Minority Stereotype in Hong Kong” examines the discursive constructions of the “role models” of and for ethnic minorities—who have achieved success in the local system—in Hong Kong. Examples, such as Mohinderpaul Singh Gill, the first full-time Indian actor on TVB Jade (a leading local Chinese TV station), and Nabela Qoser, the first Pakistani female news reporter specializing in Chinese news, are used to show how the model minority stereotype can be used as a tool of oppression by making a distinction between desirable and undesirable immigrants. Chee argues that in Hong Kong the “model minority” is represented as individuals, not as a group, and the role model thesis ties success to the integration to underpin assimilation into Hong Kong society. Despite the success of these role models and the claim of embracing diversity, however, the ethnic minority role models are

denied naturalization in this so-called world city—even the best cannot fully be Hong Kongers. Chee reminds us that while Hong Kong as Method may articulate diversity, multiplicity, marginality, and the like, these concepts may also be appropriated to deny racial injustice. In short, notions such as “minority” and “marginality” are often foregrounded in oppositional discourse, but they have to be understood differently in different contexts or else they risk becoming empty slogans used to mask social injustice.

Despite the differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan, the following introductory remark to the book edited by Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui Liao fits nicely into the case of Hong Kong: “*Comparatizing Taiwan* takes ‘Taiwan’ not as a discreet or separate object or area of study, but as a site and a product of relations with other entities and areas in terms of culture, geography, history, politics and economy.”¹⁵ Actually, the chapters briefly presented above try dealing with this from different perspectives. They cover a broad range of topics which will hopefully constitute a whole greater than the sum of its parts. A more comprehensive view could be envisaged by looking at Hong Kong from without. The postscript “Hong Kong and Beyond” originated from a roundtable session on “Hong Kong as Method” chaired by Shu-mei Shih, in which Maybo Ching, Sebastian Liao, and Sebastian Veg examined their Hong Kongs from different localities, stimulating different views on Hong Kong and its significance in the contemporary era, in Asia and the rest of the world. As stressed by Shih in her introduction to the roundtable session, it is important to bring the study of small places *beyond* the area studies model, as area studies tends to have the problem of only talking to those who already have existing interest in the area. The postscript serves as a “beyonding” of Hong Kong, so to speak. In this section, Ching puts Hong Kong in the context of South China, reminding us that in order to develop Hong Kong studies into a method, it is necessary to rewrite not only Hong Kong history but also the everyday narrative of Hong Kong history. One of the most important dimensions is situating this port city in the regional framework against a global backdrop over a sustained period of time. Meanwhile, Liao calls for a mental rehabilitation from “narco-modernity,” sounding the alarm that modernity should not be adopted at the expense of traditional culture. “Rather than serving as vanguards of neo-imperialist modernity,” Hong Kong as a diasporic site should actually “take the lead in debunking modernity, by revealing its inherent coloniality; and thereby helping sober China up from the hypnotization by narco-modernity.” Last but not least, Sebastian Veg puts “Asia as Method” back in the context of Lu Xun and relates it to the recent critique of the Western nation-state by embracing a romanticized Chinese imperial state at the center of a new *tianxia*, the world order in a Chinese Utopia put

¹⁵Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui Liao, “Why Taiwan? Why Comparatize?” in Shu-mei Shih and Ping-hui Liao (eds.) *Comparatizing Taiwan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 1.

forward by Zhao Tingyang. Using the changes brought about by the June Fourth vigils in Hong Kong as an example, he concludes, in a sense contrary to what this book proposes, that “Hong Kong is not a theory or a method, but first and foremost a place.” This serves as an inspirational footnote to our discussion in this book.

Hong Kong

Yiu-Wai Chu

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Part I
Framing Hong Kong (as Method)

Chapter 1

Hong Kong Liminal: Situation as Method

Meaghan Morris

When this rollback [of untransformed Western values] takes place, we must have our own cultural values. And yet perhaps those values do not already exist, in substantive form. Rather I suspect that they are possible as method, that is to say, as the process of the subject's self-formation. This I have called "Asia as method", and yet it is impossible to definitively state what this might mean.

Takeuchi, Yoshimi, "Asia as Method"¹

It is in its imaginative aspect, rather than its success or failure, that [the 2014 Hong Kong Umbrella Movement] needs discussion, for it is also on this plane that Hong Kong becomes *conceptually* unique. ... Hong Kong's struggles for self-determination appear to be taking us into a political zone for which there may well be no historical equivalent for the questions raised.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "Hong Kong from the Outside"²

1.1 Tight Spots: Golden Chicken Historiography

On the last day of June in 2046, an elderly woman with startlingly smooth, radiant skin struggles up an incline through the lush foliage of Victoria Peak. She is escorted by two police officers and all three are dressed in white. We soon see that everyone in this future wears white. This will be the last day of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), and the end of the historical era of "one country two systems" that began on July 1st, 1997. Yet the scene is peaceful and

¹Yoshimi Takeuchi, "Asia as Method", in *What Is Modernity? Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi*, ed. and trans. Richard F. Calichman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 165.

²Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "Hong Kong from the outside: four keywords". *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 16.3 (2015), 488.

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