

Introduction

Tammy Ho, Michael O'Sullivan, Eddie Tay, Michael Tsang

In his review of the edited volume *Cultural Conflict in Hong Kong*, published in this issue of the journal, Douglas Kerr laments that it is “quite difficult to write about Hong Kong at the present time, when events now in process are profoundly changing what Hong Kong means.” We share this sentiment. The “leaderless” protests in the city, started in June 2019 and sparked initially by the introduction of the Fugitive Offenders amendment bill by the Hong Kong government, have continued into 2020, with no signs of subsiding anytime soon. The protests have united Hongkongers from different walks of life to pursue shared political and democratic ideals while at the same time exposed rifts in society, as those siding with the protesters and those with the police and the government do not see eye to eye. At a time like the current moment, when Hong Kong people are going through such unprecedented experiences but the outcomes of the protests and many aspects of the city’s future remain uncertain, scholars of Hong Kong Studies may not be able to provide immediately useful predictions of what is to come. In fact, even though there is so much to be said, there is also so little one can say meaningfully—perhaps only time can resolve this tautological aphasia. Nonetheless, we at *Hong Kong Studies* believe that journals and forums—avenues that provide opportunities of dialogue, analysis and critical examination—are more important than ever.

The articles in this issue offer meaningful discussion on elements of Hong Kong’s recent history, and will mark an important reference point in Hong Kong Studies. **Lo Kwai-cheung**’s important article opens this issue with a focus on alternative narratives about Hong Kong and its identity. At a time when awareness of distinct Hong Kong identities is heightening due to ongoing China–Hong Kong tensions, Lo reminds that our imagination need not be bound to an elusive “motherland,” but can look toward solidarities forged by alternative geographies and identities such as farmland and farmers, and oceans and pirates. Also drawing connection to localist ideas in Hong Kong is **Annie Hui**’s discussion on the controversial dystopian film *Ten Years* and the censorship surrounding it. In Hui’s words, “[b]y presenting a future that is forcibly denied of Hong Kong’s unique culture, *Ten Years* empowers localist movements by [...] attempting to make clear what Hong Kong identity truly is.” This rings even more true in light of the recent extradition bill protests. **Jonathan Paquette and Devin Beauregard** turn to cultural policy and evaluate the implementation of intangible cultural heritage and its gains and losses in Hong Kong. A

notable quality of this piece is its comparative angle, contrasting cultural heritage policies between Hong Kong and other subnational contexts such as Québec. The world in Hong Kong, Hong Kong in the world: dialogues with other parts of the globe are essential in the development of Hong Kong Studies.

As an interdisciplinary area-studies journal, one of the aims of *Hong Kong Studies* is to understand the scope of the field. This is demonstrated by two special sections in this issue. The Academy of Hong Kong Studies, based at the Education University of Hong Kong, hosts the Hong Kong Studies Research School each year, providing career training to PhD students working on Hong Kong topics, who then present at the Hong Kong Studies Annual Conference and submit expanded manuscripts to this journal. Collaborating with the Research School, this issue features two papers of remarkable academic quality by the 2017/2018 cohort. **Chui Wing-kin's** article fills an important gap in Hong Kong's constitutional history as he discovers the history behind the vesting of public housing responsibilities to the Urban Council up to the 1970s, and helpfully frames this incident as a "minor constitutional experiment." **Dickson Cheung** reflects on Chen Kuan-hsing's influential theorization of "Asia as Method" by discussing the idea of *jianghu* as method. Cheung argues how Wong Kar-wai's 2013 film *The Grandmaster* differs from his previous films in its transcending the need for a base-entity, shown when the protagonist, the kungfu master Ip Man, realizes that Hong Kong is *jianghu*, and *jianghu* is home.

Alongside this showcase of research by up-and-coming researchers is an interview section featuring two well-esteemed and established Hong Kong scholars, Professors **Leo Ou-fan Lee** and **Wong Kin-yuen**, interviewed by **Michael O'Sullivan** and **Stuart Christie** respectively. Professor Lee passionately argues for temperament and cultivation as core qualities of humanists, and makes a persuasive critique of the state of the humanities in Hong Kong. Part of what is called the Hong Kong Generation of scholars alongside Professors Yip Wai-lim, William S. Tay, Leung Ping-kwan, and Chou Ying-hsiung, Professor Wong reflects on the genesis of the group back at the University of California, San Diego. The chance encounter between five bright, like-minded and interdisciplinary young intellectuals is inspirational, and the brilliant work they then go on to produce in Hong Kong indicates the city's precious ability to converge and nurture people of talent.

Douglas Kerr's fair review of *Cultural Conflict in Hong Kong*, written in the midst of the Extradition Bill saga, sketches out some important methodological and conceptual reflections that are not only pertinent to the assessment of the edited volume's strengths and weaknesses, but also relevant for research on Hong Kong culture and society on the whole. **Ng Meng-hin** reviews the newly translated

volume of editorials written by Lam Hang-chi, the founding chief editor of the daily newspaper *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, between 1975 and 1984. As Ng points out, because it was during this important period that Hong Kong's post-Handover future was discussed between Britain and China, Lam's editorials become a crucial barometer for public opinion in Hong Kong, and some of Lam's bold reactions to Hong Kong's post-1997 status perhaps reflects a wider political attitude among Hongkongers at the time. Last but not least, **Romi Jain** reviews the edited volume *Hong Kong and Bollywood*, an interdisciplinary volume that compares and contrasts the film industries of Hong Kong and India. In highlighting the two industries' transnational significance, mutual interplay and regional peculiarities, such comparison connects Hong Kong with the rest of world, exemplifying the importance and potential of "Hong Kong and Elsewhere."