

■ Mythicizations of the Nationless: Hong Kong Spectral Temporality

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Abstract

Focusing on Hong Kong's unique postcoloniality oscillating in between nationalization and nationlessness, this paper conceptualizes this particular tension as the perfect medium for materializing and valorizing specters to redeem temporality and to invent originality for a community. Delineating the temporalizations orchestrated via exorcism and clairvoyance, this exploration scrutinizes the correlations between communal imagination, spectrality and time to achieve a historical conglomeration mixed by facts and imagination of the city's colonial past and the ongoing nationalization. Hong Kong spectrality, as temporalized by the clairvoyant, serves as a critique against the universality of nationalism with its unique temporal configuration and interrogates the legitimacy of colonial and postcolonial histories. To scrutinize Hong Kong mythicizations is also to trace the paths where ghosts are summoned and materialized in order to reclaim a sense of originality and to redeem a temporal experience peculiarly Hong Kong, which also foregrounds the city's cultural alterity in the processes of decolonization and nationalization among its Asian neighbors.

Keywords: Hong Kong, spectrality, mythicization, originality, temporality

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Introduction

Critical excavation of Hong Kong originalities have proven to be difficult, if not futile, in the myriad trajectories of its cultural configurations. Hong Kong is never enmeshed in any forms of mythical substantiations with historical glamour or nostalgic valor, and it is often mythicization, instead of myths, that hinges on the ebb and flow of Hong Kong temporality. Yet its oscillation is constantly challenged and undermined by discourses of cultural hybridity and mixture that has for long dominated Hong Kong cultural configuration. The city, ever since its emergence from the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial epochs, defies mythical fixation of national essence; yet it is also such defiance that necessitates imaginary compensations for its mythical absence, and it is also this penetrating sense of loss that summons spectral inventions to reclaim a tempo of originality for the city and, most significantly, to serve as an anchorage of temporality in a loose and ephemeral imaginary landscape.

Mythicization is an implicit manifestation of chronological obsession whereas spectrality questions the ontological basis of temporal fixations, and the overlapping of both etches the traces of originality often appropriated for mythic compensation. This is indeed an open invitation to all forms of spectrality in the cultural formations of Hong Kong. Here in this exploration I will first commence with an overview of the functions and formations of myths in communal imagination, and in particular their contributions to a national teleology, followed by the mapping of Hong Kong creativities via the temporal coordinates constituted by the exorcist, and the clairvoyant in their quest for originality and their endeavor for temporal redemption. To locate originality for Hong Kong is to follow the silhouette of the ghosts: first, by centering on the associations between specters and the phantasmagoria of continuity to outline Hong Kong originality, to haunt is also to historicize a community in discordance with national imagination. Second, in the absence of a systematic interpretive framework circumscribing temporality, the originality of Hong Kong is conceived to be an aspect most susceptible to hauntings as the exorcist has no footing in the nationless imagination of Hong Kong.

Death, Mythicization and the Production of Originality

Myths in different cultures are often positioned as the prerequisites of history and the origins of continuity from which narratives after narratives are produced, visualized and disseminated to legitimize their emplotment in a well

chiseled national imagination. The myth-making strategies of Hong Kong also dictate the creative impulses of local and foreign writers from the past to the present in aggravating mythical compensation for Hong Kong. The appearance and disappearance of ghost, as manifested through the clairvoyant instead of the exorcist, often regulate the rhythm of Hong Kong temporality and its momentum in defying the spectral logic of a nation. By unearthing the city's temporal redemptions in the creative and critical endeavors of Hong Kong, one is able to perceive the spectral entanglements engendered via nationless haunting in its temporalizing efforts.

If myths are essentially knowledge of the dead (Lefkowitz 353), it also implies that all mythicizing processes are inevitably spectral—to redeem the loss through unreachable yet mandatory knowledge of the dead. With temporal proximity in mind, the farther the temporal distance or the more variegated the temporal complication may possibly enhance the momentum of mythical consolidation in a given community. A cultivation of this knowledge of the dead can be initiated in many forms and directions throughout the ages. As Anderson reiterates in *Imagined Communities*, “death” as “the last of a whole gamut of fatalities” is the first and foremost step in our imaginings of a nation (10). For imaginative sustainability a nation is often established upon “a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning” (11). Death, in the context of national imagination, is then a creative and cultural point of departure, and via interconnecting with events and components relevant and exclusive, the temporality of a community is likely to have achieved its initial contour. To follow Anderson's argument, perhaps the true power of myths is exercised via systematic secularization of the dead. As the pendulum of imagination swings in between the ephemeral and the secular, and so this oscillation is often appropriated as an experiential articulation of temporality awaiting further temporal imaginative substantiation like history. The potency of myths, within this temporal spectrum of a community, stems from its sustainability for an absolute teleological fixity in the name of a nation. Adjacent to the explosive ebb or flow of global capitalism, a seemingly logical consequence of national dissolution is often offset by an increasing urge for the nation with the designation of originality.

Barthes's *Mythologies* is crucial in disentangling myths and their potential communal impacts. Amid the “formless, unstable, nebulous” essences of mythic constructions (129), Barthes highlights the operative of a “perpetual alibi” in mythicization (133), through which absence and presence are meshed together simultaneously to fulfill the “ideographic” function of a floating, detached signifier (138), as if it is out of any possible manipulation in any given signifying contexts. Through this, mythicization conjures its conceptual tenacity:

We reach here the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature. We now understand why, *in the eyes of the myth-consumer*, the intention, the adhomination of the concept can remain manifest without however appearing to have an interest in the matter: what causes mythical speech to be uttered is perfectly explicit, but it is immediately frozen into something natural; it is not read as a motive, but as a reason. (140)

Barthes's observation of a saluting African and the presence of French colonialism illustrate the naturalizing strength of myth. Things deemed natural will appear to be neutral with potential bias and prejudices all properly cleansed, and this is one of the most essential contributions from mythicization to political rationalization, or in Barthes's words, "as if the signifier gave a foundation to the signified" so that myth eventually becomes a "speech justified in *excess*" (141). If mythicization allocates a beginning in the temporal imagination of a community, and if this beginning is represented as natural and immune to, supposedly, all cultural and political distortions, then what descends from this imaginative origin, including subsequent mythical mutations, will be endowed with a similar signifying halo in representation. With this in mind, when Barthes relegates myths to "speaking corpses" (144), one could easily sense their intrusion and imminence in the articulations of the nation, and the most strenuous reaction against myths is to "mythify" myths into "an *artificial myth*" (147). Such artificiality is also a direct opposite to what he calls "governmentality," as derived from a daily, simple media headline concerning price fluctuation of vegetables which elusively confirms the natural existence of a government (141). Mythicization causally endows daily happenings with a definite agent of governance, or a political entity producing and administering causes and effects to rationalize all forms of regularity and irregularity in a community. Seen in this light, mythicization manifests a collective wish fulfillment of a community while justifying the existence of the invisible power of a nation. The power of mythical production as a symbolic investment for nationalization may find its new articulation in Bouchard's classification of "master myths" and "derivative myths." Using Quebec as an example, Bouchard argues that our collective communal imagination emanates from the layers of "master and derivative" mythicization (4). Master myth refers to "basic, comprehensive, and relatively stable symbolic configurations" which often functions as a source language awaiting rendition into "derivative" ones when changes and transformations in a community are materializing (4). Though differed in terminology, Bouchard's approach of myth may seem to be a more detailed compartmentalization of the symbolic exchange inherent to nationalization assembled along a single unilateral passage. Legitimacy of mythicization, as he remarks, is safeguarded within the symbolic boundary of a nation (18).

The inextricable bondage between myth and nation has indeed survived different eras of critical exposition, as if this bondage has become, in Barthes's sense, another powerful and pervasive "alibi," so natural and neutral in signifying without the need of critical examination. From the knowledge of the dead to the myth-symbol complex one can delineate a clear teleological passage from mythicization to nationalization: while summoning the dead and extracting their symbolic residues, the process of mythicization, in part welding up a solid and collective sense of originality out of temporal and spatial obscurities, is theoretically attainable under national formation. Spectral craving in this sense then is also nationalistic: ghosts will only be ghostly if they are summoned to fill in the temporal loopholes of national imaginaries, or else, not only are they casted away from all forms of epistemological coverage, their names and forms, if any, will be erased from the epitaphs and become a sheer wandering absence. Therefore, though differed in imaginative proceedings or diverged in temporal scales, all national imaginings are by and large spectral cravings for fantasizing an origin. If a nation, in Anderson's words, is a "sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time" through which simultaneity, along happenings and events imaginatively taken place among communal members, serves as a crucial anchor in its imaginaries (24-6), then through mythicization may the temporal obsessions of a community be partially, if not completely, satiated.

Myths and calendars, though equally evasive, represent two compatible and complementary imaginative impetuses of a community. If Anderson's calendrical temporality captures the coequality of a community, then myths should have become a platform to imagine *beyond* such coequality: What should be there outside the scope of daily, repetitive and routinized tempo of a communal imagination? If simultaneity generates continuity, then spectral cravings, as manifested via the layers of mythicization, certainly invokes temporal flow in the imaginative historicity of a community. Before we reach out for further exploration in nationless originality, one should first problematize the symbiosis between mythicization and nations. If, as discussed earlier, the valor of myths and the validity of their raw components can only be revealed solely as pretexts for national imaginaries, then spectral cravings pave a nebulous passage for the temporalization of national imaginaries.

Exorcism, Clairvoyance and the Cravings for Ghost

National imaginary is an omnipotent exorcist whereas the nationless is

orchestrated by a clairvoyant, and their professions crisscross under the spectrum of communal consolidation, as it is mandatory for both of them to initially identify, locate and summon the specter and eventually cast it away for its forthcoming return in the economy of imagination. This polarity, as paved throughout incessant summoning and dissipation of the specter, is coterminous with a singular passage or flow enmeshed in a definite national imaginary, a process that is deemed legitimate as a temporal framework which may later on serves as the backbone for historicity and monumentality of national nature.

To imagine beyond the calendar via mythicization and conjuring of the specter, is of paramount significance in pinpointing an obscure yet probable origin. This origin, though incompatible with the calendar in a temporal sense, structures the imaginative timetable from a far-fetched and unreachable outskirts whose presence is demanded most in situations when the ontology of the calendar is being interrogated. The spectral craving for originality, as launched via mythicization, is both imminent and repugnant, and this situation is similar to Malinowski's observation of the contradiction in preserving and erasing the dead body from a ritual of mourning (49). The yearning for complete elimination of the corpse may further justify its original existence, and this contradiction not only prevails in primitive society, but in the temporal fantasizing of the nation. The corpse here tells its mourners that time has transformed and mutated along the ambiguity of life and death; the body is a temporal embodiment, now existing and physical, to be erased for the sake of actual or ephemeral remembrance, like dates on a calendar, some of them personal while some anonymous or memorial, and to purge this corpse away completely remains to this very present day an impossibility as its existence is not reciprocal to its visibility. Eventually this body will disappear only as a procedure in the ritual of mourning, just like a date being crossed out from a calendar, but its invisibility as a calendrical fixity also pronounces full spectralization of the dead body—it is no longer here anymore, and its physical presence has been transformed into a spectral one. Temporality in communal imaginaries, alongside the appearance and disappearance of the dead body, is initiated beyond the calendrical and physical boundaries, in other words, *finite* time has become *infinite*. When Debray highlights the importance of “two anti-death processes,” including “delimitation in time” and “delimitation within an enclosed space,” he is indeed highlighting the predominance of mythicization in the construction of temporality, or the “irreversibility of time” in an imaginative landscape of a community (27). These processes, in order to maximize their impact on temporality, must be replicated when imaginative sustainability of a nation is at stake. The

dead must be unearthed on a regular basis for the sole purpose of burial, and only through the oscillation between the visibility and invisibility of ghosts can this be truly attained. These proceedings have long occupied the agenda of an exorcist and a clairvoyant.

The specter is by essence eminently subversive not only in interrogating the validity of time and debunking the calendar, to Derrida, the summoning, the “conjuration” of the specter disrupts the deeply rooted foundation of hegemony (58). Through this the specter embodies inheritance and opens up passages to the future, or to be more exact, the distinction between past and present will crumble with the materializing of the specter:

It is a proper characteristic of the specter, if there is any, that no one can be sure if by returning it testifies to a living past or to a living future, for the *revenant* may already mark the promised return of the specter of living being. Once again, untimeliness and disadjustment of the contemporary . . . a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come back. (123)

The predominance with the present motivates respective reverts to the past, to the dead, yet it is the specter that underpins the possibility in disrupting time, in dissolving the illusion of distance and artificiality imposed upon by the calendar or any other symbolic confinements that materialize time in an orderly fashion. The profession of an exorcist is affiliated with the conjuration of ghost with natural causation. The role of powerful exorcists connotes, often naturally, the existence of heinous specters, and through identification, authentication and, eventually, resolution by means of exorcism, reaffirm the gravity of their professions. It is often the specter, not the exorcist, that takes the blame for repeated hauntings in a community, as in this situation the exorcist, again naturally, will become a victim, just like his or her fellow members in a community until he or she comes up with a stronger method to expel ghosts that are likely to return again. The exorcist is positioned beyond any potential attributive entanglements of the haunting and its aftermaths, including its forthcoming repetition. Here the existence of specter valorizes the presence of exorcist, and an exorcist, though inadvertently, demands the return of the specter. The amulet often used by an exorcist to subdue the specter is called history, and especially that of national essence. Whether it is appropriated for the purpose of propaganda, as in the display of the embalmed dead bodies of Mao Zedong or Lenin, or it is marketed as a present, experiential and consumable emblem like the dead bodies in the Catacombs of Paris or other innumerable ghost or haunted tours around the world, this spectral dynamic is commonly appropriated in an established nation under the name of history, and perhaps the only difference nowadays is their levels of consumption and participation as prescribed in their respective cultural

economies. The dead has to remain constantly present in the ongoing political and cultural imaginations of a nation, especially those having their eeriness distilled and repackaged by the exorcist whose performance is solely measured by the substances he or she aggregates from the specter for the historicization of a nation.

Yet there is simply no room for an exorcist to work the magic out in Hong Kong, and this can be confirmed via the conflicting and paradoxical historicizations of the city (Carroll 3). Whether Hong Kong was originally “a ‘factory’ in the Indian sense, a mercantile station, in which length of residence was determined almost entirely by economic considerations” (Endacott vii) or was a child bred by the “unwilling parents” between the British empire and the late imperial China (Welsh 1), the city has no originality of its own beyond the historicizations of the old British master or the new mainland Chinese owner. This is indeed the reason accounting for Rey Chow’s “double impossibility” of Hong Kong as it fully highlights the difficulty of pinpointing the originality of the city from its precolonial to postcolonial eras, given the fact that “it will be as impossible to submit to Chinese nationalist/nativist repossession as it has been impossible to submit to British colonialism” (151). This also sheds light on a situation for Hong Kong from which no exorcist will be able to function as substances for historicization remain scarce or incompatible with national imagination. The specter, or here a source of time for the community, remains elsewhere and has to be relocated or reinvented through clairvoyance. With clairvoyance at its center, Hong Kong tiptoes on a passage rarely navigated by theoretical conjectures due to the absence of a strong national identification. Nationless mythicization, then, sustains mythic eligibility with spectrality when the clairvoyant discovers that there is no proper corpse available for temporalizing a community, or simply, there might be nothing outside and beyond the calendar. This is also the reason why Hughes’s observation is still valid to this day when he writes that “Hong Kong did not exist, so it was necessary to invent it. Though involuntary, the process of invention was logical enough, but everyone involved, willingly or reluctantly, was denounced and punished” (97). The focus here is not the methods or ingredients used in the inventive process, but the potential risk from doing so. As highlighted by the Australian journalist, the difficulty here stems from an identification of an originality that, throughout Hong Kong’s temporal processions along the absence of a national framework, it is conceptually difficult to position Hong Kong within any available imaginative pre-configurations, particularly those inherent to nationalisms, and disfigurements often come along when incompatibilities in the realms of politics, history, identity or memory disrupt the inventive process of Hong Kong. Simply

put, *beyond* the calendar is there any other anchorage available to satiate Hong Kong's temporal urges? If the specter is summoned and erased incessantly for the sake of temporalizing a nation, then how does Hong Kong imaginary dismantle such spectral dialectics—temporality as synthesis in between spectral summoning and exorcism, while fulfilling its own spectral craving and temporal obsession? Spectral pluralities of national mythicization will eventually be interpreted in a singularized symbolic context, so that differences and collectivities may gain their new and, above all, natural backbones throughout the fantasizing of a nation, yet the pluralities of nationless mythicization, throughout their non-teleological junctures, will remain plural instead of singular at the end.

Mythicizing the Nationless

It is by now obvious that mythicization and nationalization are inseparable in communal imagination, only that the originality of Hong Kong may not fit in with this cultural equivalence. Hong Kong temporal configuration is a conceptual challenge to communal imagination: could mythical resources be excavated and conglomerated for purpose other than the universal and legitimate national imaginaries? Does mythicization manifest an alternative other than temporalization of the nation, or, in extreme cases, compensate its failure? What if the mythic resources of a community are patched up, often elusively and temporarily, to echo its "nationlessness"? The ubiquity of nationalization is therefore interrogated in the mythicizations of Hong Kong.

The originality of Hong Kong articulates the most extreme form of spectral craving. With old, solid and established nations guarded by the exorcist, as Hong Kong lacks those prominent counter forces in sublimating ghosts for nationalization, it is therefore clairvoyant in its oscillation for temporality. The responsibility of a clairvoyant is not to purge but to trace the whereabouts of the apparitions, to give them a voice, and often, to exchange corporeality in return for temporality in the economy of imagination. Contrary to the professions of an exorcist, a clairvoyant is demanded for his or her full submersion in the spectral encounter, and by doing so, the clairvoyant and the specter become inseparable in every instances of haunting. This self-spectralized persona maintains the equilibrium of mythicization and secularization throughout the nationless quest for temporality; nationless temporalization may eliminate the dichotomies in between subject and object, center and periphery and the past and the present along its embarkation on an imaginative process. In the quest for originality, such clairvoyant tendency is overtly translated into myriad spec-

tral cravings circumscribing both *within* and *beyond* the calendar. This highly spectralized temporal obsession will rule out the imaginative possibilities of a nation. When the specter encroaches upon the calendar, temporal redemption and mythicization will become coterminous in the imaginary landscape of a community, as in the case of Hong Kong, the distinction between the boundaries within and beyond the calendar will also be obscured. With its nationless orientation, the city's temporal redemption may become a critique against national imaginaries. This is often rendered into a diffusive symbolic excavation. Diffusion connotes a decentering inclination in the imaginative initiation of originality—a disoriented temporality sustaining its existence beyond calendrical inception. Hong Kong originality is often inserted with Lord Palmerston's remark of "barren rock," a typical colonial contempt and discontent for the island of Hong Kong when it officially became a crown colony; and this nameless and unidentifiable referent is often manipulated in the imaginative landscape of Hong Kong as evidence of its geographical absence and temporal vacuum. But the point here is not about the remark, but the rationale for its adoption as an imaginative point of departure and its frequent integration to colonial discourses to historicize Hong Kong's originality, as discerned by a historian: "Mainstream accounts of Hong Kong's past, wittingly or unwittingly, have adopted the same colonial paradigm. Indeed, recognizing that the "barren island" remark is not literally true, these accounts have qualified and elaborated the remark to arrive at the same conclusion" (Chan 457). The mythical eligibility of the "barren rock," or its perverted sense of a beginning, gains new imaginative aptitude when it is appropriated for initial temporalizing of the colony for magnifying its future temporal significance and economic affluence and valorizing the rightful presence of the colonists (458). The temporal deficiency of Hong Kong is best articulated in a 1924 English guidebook which derogatively claims that "Hong Kong has no history prior to its occupation by the British" (qtd. in McDonough and Wong 34). Such deficiency, as inherent in the colonial and postcolonial imaginaries of the city, initiates mythical contestations to excavate and redeem temporality beyond calendrical illusions of a community in which the calendar—an anchorage of coequality—has not even yet been negotiated among its floating members. Spectralization is thus transformed into a new mythical currency in the symbolic exchange of Hong Kong imaginaries for originality.

Literary Inceptions of Hong Kong Clairvoyance

Capitalizing on the strengths of the specter, mythical diffusion outlines a

continuous and effervescent itinerary in mythicization, and once the process has gathered a sense of solidarity in a communal imagination with full materialization of the ghosts, they begin to mutate and transform or, at times, substituted by other supernatural counterforces. As a result, spectral diversity and imaginative plurality are synonymous in mythicizing Hong Kong's originality. To mythicize a nationless community, imagination attempts to debunk the calendar, and if that turns out to be futile it may need to be reset with a different anchorage. But if there is nothing of mythical value outside and beyond the calendar, a nationless community has to strategically tiptoe on mythic coequality. This concept, though seemingly contradictory, fully manifests the spectral craving of a nationless community like Hong Kong and its temporal dependence on the clairvoyant. Under mythic coequality, the distinction between the dead and the living is eliminated to satiate nationless craving for the corpse, even that implies spectralization of the living or the ordinary to re-imagine a sense of originality compatible in a nationless setting.

In Hong Kong imaginary, the traces of clairvoyance can even be traced back to the early days at a time when this barren rock was becoming a British crown colony. In Wang Tao's (王韜) *Dun Ku Lan Yan* (遁窟謠言) and Carlton Dawe's *Kakemonos: Tales of the Far East*, it is apparent that a clairvoyant makes his or her debut in the cultural imagination of 19th century Hong Kong as contradictory manifestations of national indignity and colonial superiority. Widely known as the pioneer of Hong Kong literature and mass media (Liu 19), some of the episodes in *Dun Ku Lan Yan* (遁窟謠言) mythicize Hong Kong as a haunted and decadent territory alongside its loss to the British colonizers, such as "The Island" (海島), "The Willow Spirit" (柳妖), "Su Yin" (素馨) and "Li Jia" (李甲). Around the same period, Wang's Australian counterpart Carlton Dawe also treaded upon a similar creative path for the ghostly, mysterious and derogatory dimensions of this newly ceded colony, as embodied in the stories of "Why Mrs. Wethereton Went Home," "The Passenger Aft" and "The Phantom Junk." A juxtaposition of "The Willow Spirit" (柳妖) and "The Phantom Junk," in particular of their respective emplotment with the same eastern district of Lei Yue Mun (鯉魚門) and Quarry Bay (磡魚涌) crisscrossing in between the Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula, helps to unravel mythicization in the form of clairvoyance.

Wang Tao's "The Willow Spring" (柳妖) is a typical spectral tale of geographical mythicization with the invention of a temporal originality of an estranged yet secular territory of Lei Yu Chung (鯉魚涌). The story begins with: "Beyond the Foshan province there is a place called Lei Yu Chung, a territory of farmland and creepers" '佛山界外，有地名鯉魚涌，其處多闌田蔓草。' (123).

The tale develops with the materializing of three young damsels in the field engaging in a flirtatious exchange with the young tenants of the farmland, while such coquetry is interrupted by an older tenant in the village, one of the younger ones realizes that he has lost his waist belt amid the hasty retreat of the mysterious damsels. On the other day, while tracing the footsteps of their otherworldly visitors to a location with three willows, the tenant rediscovers his belt hanging loosely on one of them (124). Echoing the mythicizing tactics of Wang's modern counterparts, ever since Hong Kong commences with its notability as a barren rock this territory has embarked on a peculiar imagination different from its colonial and, later on, postcolonial coexistences around the world. Wang's narrator here functions as a pseudo-clairvoyant: with its third person narrativity the spirits and the narrative voice are innately detached, yet the geographical identification with a specter delineates, again, the initial contour of a nationless community with which temporality is discoverable and redeemable only through ghosts, just like Lei Yu Chung resurfaces to the imaginative landscape through its haunting. This pseudo-clairvoyant is also performing his or her imaginative duty via the narration of Dawe's "The Phantom Junk," only this time on the other side of Hong Kong eastern corridor. This tale of the Far East initially revolves around the existence of an "it" or "the thing" from various points of view of the curious sailors from afar and the muted local ones in Hong Kong:

The rumor was this, and it arose among the sampan people who sleep on the boats, and who know everything that goes on in the harbor. They said on more than one occasion a phantom junk had been seen to steal through the Ly—ee—moon Pass, sail steadily down the Kowloon side, and disappear southwards through the Sulphur Channel. (121)

This tale captures an explicit longing for the ghosts in the repeated attempts of the narrator and his companion Kernot to track down a mysterious junk, even though in their eventual encounter "no other part of the ship could be seen, but we took it for granted that there was a phantom hull somewhere (130)." At the end of the story this phantasmagoria is unraveled secularly as the ghostly sailors are simply outlaws smuggling contraband opium across the Victoria Harbour (137-8), it is the presumption of the existence of ghosts that strengthens their persistence and necessitates the search for the phantom junk, and it is essentially the same presumption that endows Ly-ee-moon, just like Wang Tao's Lei Yu Chung, with an imaginative significance in a nationless community of precarious temporal anchorage. What marks the difference between their imaginations and other folktales and myths of a nation is that the ghostly tales of Hong Kong will not be easily subsumed as annotations of a national originality, and will re-

main as maneuvers of nationless clairvoyance as they are futile to the colonial or anti-colonial historicizations of Hong Kong.

Clairvoyance and the Mythicizations of Hong Kong

The clairvoyant tactic adopted by Wang and Dawe in configuring Hong Kong's originality finds its echoes and mutations in contemporary theoretical and literary mythicizations of Hong Kong. Leo Lee reflects in *City between Worlds* that "'History' has become a material form of commercial window-dressing that lures antique hunters and curiosity seekers" when he, as a flaneur of Hong Kong, strolls along Hollywood Road—one of the oldest sites on the Hong Kong Island, through which he observes that "nostalgia is mostly a sentiment to be exploited for its tourist attraction" (14-5). History in Hong Kong is a façade in the making, like window-dressing that demands regular change and decoration for seasonal and, above all, calendrical relevance. The originality of the city, often associating with namelessness and historical vacuum, activates the most effective catalyst for mythicization (22). Long before the flaneur begins roaming the streets of Hong Kong tracking down temporalities in *City between Worlds*, Lee first engages in a spectral monologue with Walter Benjamin in his preface to *Festival Walk Rhapsodies*. Initiating imaginative parallelism between his daily routinized walking in Festival Walk, a mall situated in Kowloon Tong—a residential area synonymous with Hong Kong traditional affluence, and Walter Benjamin's 19th century urban Paris as recaptured through *The Arcades Project*, Lee begins his meanderings with the temporal and functional distinctions between a modern Hong Kong mall and Benjamin's steel and glass arcades, then he sidetracks onto the cultural significance of walking in Hong Kong alongside his critique on local cultural preservation policy, as manifested through the abolition of Lee Tung Street in Wan Chai district, also nicknamed the street of wedding invitation as the location was once inhabited with shops specializing in Hong Kong traditional invitation card, packaging and typographical design and production.

While interacting with his dead and mute conversant, Lee is in fact temporalizing the daily and the commercial dimensions of Hong Kong as witnessed through the intercepting topical changes in shopping, walking, film, heritage and politics. The function of the clairvoyance here is concentrated on dislodging the spectral from the ordinary to invent a sense of time beyond abstractions of the colonial and anti-colonial historicization of Hong Kong. In short, a daily, normal window shopping experience is here valorized by Lee as a distinctively

cultural experience of Hong Kong, only this requires one to imagine beyond the secular complexity of consumerism in the cultural economy of the city. If a sense of the past, as emanating from the arcades of Benjamin's ghost, serves as a mirror in authenticating Hong Kong with its visibility in the present and ongoing consumerist temporality, then, strange enough, the disinclination in preserving the past, as in the case of Lee Tung street, dilutes the density of an originality that may begin to take partial shape for a certain district in Hong Kong. Through the ghostly conversant, Hong Kong's struggle with temporalization does not evade Lee's critical perception: "Even though the display of logo is highly uniform in Hong Kong luxurious brands, yet to me they have distilled the coerciveness of the typical Western logocentric hegemony" (*Festival Walk Rhapsodies* 13). It is often this yearning for temporality that finds no proper echo in materialization, like a seed sowing in groundless soil, which also provides easy access for the coming and going of ghosts as there is no exorcist here in Hong Kong managing the ghostly itineraries.

Lee's imagination of the ghostly Benjamin embarks on a different passage in his *Musings*, and in the first chapter entitled "In Search of a Hong Kong Mythology," the flaneur goes on to navigate his mythic quest of Hong Kong via nine directions, beginning with a reflection on the handover, Hong Kong history books, Hong Kong bookfair, then followed by five writers and/or critics; namely W. Somerset Maugham, Dung Kai-cheung, Pun Kwok-ling, Shih Shu-ching and Ya Si (P.K. Leung), and eventually ended with a comparative contemplation on the city and its magazines. Through a quick glance of their titles, normally none of them bears any possible resemblance, let alone imaginative similarity, to mythical resources. Part of the reasons is, of course, their *present* calendrical entanglements and part of it will indeed be their impossibility for cohesion, and even by integrating these nine particularities together no universality in the mythical Hong Kong can thus be redeemed as each one of them pinpoints separate mythicizations encompassing the cultural, historical and creative dimensions of Hong Kong, like a thematic coordination that aggravates no overlapping in temporality.

The critical meanderings of Leo Lee's flaneur are taken up by other forms of mythicization, and via the creativity of local writer Dung Kai-cheung the originality of Hong Kong is transformed into a rich mythical mosaic. Dung's *Visible Cities* (繁勝錄), apparently a pseudonym for Hong Kong, are built upon a tripartite structure through which the narration is dissected into twenty-one components: volume one consists of the city of fortress, the city within city, the city of passages, the city of bridges, the city of streets, the city of government and the city of the governor's residence; volume two embodies the city of

Chinese restaurants, the city of street delicacies, the city of puppets, the city of prostitutes, the city of shops, the city of fashion and the city of entertainments; volume three comprises seven festivals, namely Chinese New Year, Ching Ming Festival, Easter, Dragon Boat Festival, Chinese Valentine's Day, The Ghost Festival and Mid-autumn Festival. Similar to the quest for Hong Kong mythology conducted by his critical counterpart, the components of Dung's V City are not integrated or subsumed under a rigid thematic correlation for imaginative emplotment: each of these stories remains thematically and conceptually reflexive upon its own existence with no bridging between it and the other. This mythic diffusion capitalizes on layers of narrative, instead of structure, to sustain the imagination of temporality of a familiar yet estranged city with clear resemblance to Hong Kong, as Wang observes, "Dung fully believes that Hong Kong gains its historical emergence in the morphology of a city, and so it is unnecessary to pledge allegiance to the orthodoxy of nationalizing narrative" (192). It is therefore the city's nationless peculiarity that neutralizes the demand for narrative cohesion.

All narrators, with names starting with the capital V, perform the role of an ethnographer excavating and cataloguing in each disperse layers of narration. Mythical diffusion is initiated with two imaginative imperatives in Dung's creativity: one of them flows along items of the daily and the familiar for archival purposes while the other, as concomitance of the first, generates a temporality by eliminating the distinction between the present and the past within calendrical contemporaneity. For instance, in the city of the Chinese restaurants, the ethnographer-narrator-cowriter Viola "resides in the city of the Chinese restaurants who finds lodgings in an edifice called Chinese restaurant which also deprives Chinese restaurants of their initial shape." '我，維安娜，V城風物誌修復工作合寫者之一，處身於酒樓之城中，居住於名為酒樓的屋廈之內，卻不復了解酒樓的本貌。' (75) The ethnographer begins archiving the names of Chinese restaurants and the delicacies and dishes commonly available in Hong Kong with an explicit purpose in locating the originality of the Chinese restaurants as an artefact, or in words of the narrator, "the shadowy Chinese restaurants" (影子酒樓):

As self-explanatory as the city of the Chinese restaurants, material deterioration coexists along its celebrative temperaments while its grandiose decoration fails to conceal the ephemerality of its own shadow. It is now beyond authentication for the originality of the shadowy feast, it might well be correlated with the Chinese opera reserved for customary worship in ghosts or ancestors. . . . The so-called midnight shadowy feast with empty seats is an additional banquet on top of those reserved for the living, . . . it is launched to comfort the dead, to pay homage to the past and to symbolize the present unsubstantial lifestyle.

名副其實的酒樓之城，在生之歡慶的同時無忘物質的幻滅，在酒樓堂皇的背後不遺其影子的虛無。影子酒樓的確實源頭已經無法考證，它可能與傳統鄉間酬神祭祖的神功戲有點淵源。…而所謂的影子宴，則是在正式宴席之後，加開一場無人的宴席，…除了對亡魂的祭奠，也有人認為影子宴暗示了對前代的追懷，或是象徵當下如影子般的虛幻生活。(78).

The creative estrangement of the familiar, like innumerable Chinese banquets and restaurants in Hong Kong, is to resuscitate temporality within a calendrical confine of a nationless register. Through the narrative voice of the archiving ethnographer, simple and daily components of the present and the ongoing are here endowed with a creative temporal elasticity for mythicization and its invention of originality. Yet in the case of Hong Kong there are separate origins, as in the case of Dung's imaginary V Cities, and each one of them may not necessarily complement one another in the quest for mythological temporality. The estrangement delineates a further perceptual distancing when one notices that all the raw ethnographical materials are indeed secondary resources, based on the records and writings of another voiceless ethnographer Liu Hua-sang, whose shadowy existence emanates only through the voices of different narrators in the dispersed and dissected cities, yet throughout the narration the silhouette of this non-existent ethnographer functions as a hinge for the mythical diffusion. Unlike national mythicization which imperatively captures a narrative pivot as an imaginary center, the unity, if any, of nationless mythicization rests on its mythical repetition. Like haunting, the specter has to materialize and dematerialize repeatedly so that temporality, without the intervention of an exorcist, may open up new passages in the imaginative landscape of Hong Kong through the clairvoyant, as illustrated in "The Ghost Festival" of Dung's V Cities:

I, Virginia, one of the co-authors of V Cities ethnographical restoration, clairvoyant of words, psychic of languages, through interacting with the apparitions of the previous generations I enable myself to be haunted by the murmuring spirits for the passion of bodily fornication and the indulgence of moaning, while restoring the initial role of a shaman in all readers and writers.

我，維真尼亞，V城風物誌修復工作合寫者之一，文字的問米者，語言之靈媒，與前代的鬼魅精神相交，讓喃喃自語的幽靈上身，激盪於肉體的結合，迷醉於吟哦的交雜，把閱讀者、書寫者，還原到巫的角色。(159)

To spectralize and be spectralized—the prerequisites of nationless temporality—are also the major responsibility of a clairvoyant. This strategy is adopted in cultural imagination when originality may not necessarily be released by dunking the calendar alone, and it has to be anchored within the familiar, so that temporality may regain its nationless footing in the spectral oscillation: the transformation of one ghost to another or their merging may diffuse, if not

dissolve, an origin out of its separate counterparts with a narrative engagement in mythicization. To estrange the familiar, or to spectralize the daily and the ordinary, is one of the mythicizing tactics in shaping the nationless contour of Hong Kong.

This tactic has been repeatedly adopted in Dung's other mythicizing endeavors. In *The Catalog* (夢華錄), the quest for originality or mythical significance is further decomposed into products, items and brands both fanciful and practical, like MS Windows 98, Panasonic DVD, Adidas and Gucci, while charging them with the imaginative momentum of products and merchandises in diffusing mythical Hong Kong, like a supermarket of cultural subtleties available for sale. The tactic, estrangement of the familiar, finds its extension in Dung's *Unnnatural Re-collections* (博物誌), another mythicizing attempt with the intention of, as the writer admits in the postscript, "escalating the relationship between persona and objects to a heightened imaginative and allegorical scale" '把人和物的關係推到更想像性和寓言性的層次' (184). This collection embodies five different directions in circumscribing the imaginaries, namely "Alien Locations" (異地), "Alien Figures" (異人), "Alien Objects" (異物), "Alien Incidents" (異事) and "Private Matters" (私事), yet the strangest of all is that, on the surface, none of the coverages is of alien or ghastly nature as suggested and, at most, many of them are highly ordinary. Take the first chapter of "Alien Objects" (異物), entitled "Cracker" (克力架), as an illustration of its allegorical and mythical estrangement:

To express their unique affection for Mr. Cracker, many people prefer to crush his crispy face. But I refuse to do so as I think I could love him in a different way. I will spread butter and jam on his face, especially marmalade, as there isn't any other flavor that suits his style best.

儘管人們是多麼渴望咬碎克力架先生的臉，作為示愛的唯一方法，我卻堅決不願意這樣做。我認為我可以用其他方式去愛他。我會給他的臉塗上牛油和果醬，而且必定是橙味果醬，因為沒有比橙味果醬更配合克力架先生的風格。(81)

Though at the end the narrator fails to resist the temptation of crushing Mr. Cracker's face for breakfast, but this object of the ordinary, as with its similar parallels in other stories, is here endowed with mythic eligibility among a vast array of separated originalities floating in the ocean of nationless imagination. Through such estrangement the boundary between the ordinary and the mythical is here further eliminated in part to ascertain that mythicization is attainable within, instead of beyond, the scope of the calendar.

Other than Mr. Cracker, the natural scene, under Dung's creativity, is also transformed into a bizarre universe with estranged associations. In "Dragonfly," the little insect is captured with a horrid sensibility:

I think dragonflies are not really interested in humankind, and as always they never attack people. Their peaceful relationship can be easily maintained except for rare occasions of collusion that may injure human beings. But later on there are rumors about dragonflies biting people to death which fuels up panic for a while. After all dragonflies are carnivorous insects, who can guarantee that they will never devour human beings with their stronger appetite?

我看蜻蜓們對人的興趣不大，一向也沒有襲擊人的習慣。除了是意外碰撞導致途人受傷，看來大家可以相安無事。不過後來發生了懷疑蜻蜓咬死人的新聞，頗引起了一陣恐慌。畢竟蜻蜓是肉食性昆蟲，誰敢保證牠不會因為更大的胃口而吃起人來？
(33)

The general perception of dragonflies, under Dung's mythicization, is extended with a subtle mystery. The estrangement of the familiar and the natural turns the conceivable into the inconceivable is a comprehensive tactic for nationless mythicization as the passage towards a teleological fixity is nowhere to be mapped, and this perception is in fact transformed into an inquisition of the calendar, as in the case of dragonflies in the communal imaginary, through which its naturalness is stripped completely off from the insect. This particular estrangement is viral throughout Dung's entire collection, rabbits are here endowed with the derogation of sexual promiscuity (67), sweet corn turns into a suicidal persona whose sudden death is attributed from his tearing of his own heart to satiate the narrator's daily craving for sweet corn (83), a smoking pipe becomes an inseparable bodily extension of the smoker (89), or the strange encounter between a bottle collector with his bottle fairies (95), all these creative efforts are steered towards debunking the calendar and its natural and physical associations. As a mythicizing strategy, Dung's tactic corresponds to Paul de Man's idea of "prosopopeia":

the fiction of an apostrophe to an absent, deceased, or voiceless entity, which posits the possibility of the latter's reply and confers upon it the power of speech. Voice assumes mouth, eye, and finally face, a chain that is manifest in the etymology of the trope's name, *prosopn poien*, to confer a mask or a face (*prosopon*). (75-6)

If national imagination demands the materializing and annihilation of the imaginative specter to sustain its momentum, then in a nationless context the creative appropriation of prosopopeia authenticates the ubiquity of spectral craving. As the availability of raw mythical materials, including originality and non-calendrical temporality, can only be derived from the secular, the daily and the ordinary, and through this the specter will gain its momentum. Contrary to the national desire for the dead, the nationless has to treat the living as if they were dead and unanimated while enmeshing in the ghostly zone of the daily and the ordinary in order to redeem temporality. To give the dead or the inanimate

a voice—a passage of spectralization—is to safeguard the possibility of mythicization within the boundary of communal imagination, and through dialogues, interrogations or other means of encounter with the ghosts—the persona of the living—and the living—the persona of the dead—collaborate under the imperatives of secularized spectrality.

Have Lee and Dung both demonstrated here in their respective mythicizations that Hong Kong has no originality, even via their very own mythicizing attempts? Is de-mythicization itself a mythical endeavor? Or is the search for originality totally unnecessary as it will end up as a mere narrative embodiment of totality that erases the particularities of temporality in a nationless context? Here Chu highlights the potential limitation in exploring the true cultural significance of Hong Kong if it is ensnared in the framework of originality:

In brief, the predominance of cultural root and the cravings for home should not be adopted to restrict any sensible exploration of Hong Kong narratives, or else it will be trapped in a unilateral and uninspiring spiral of self-alienated reality that rules out the possibilities of unraveling Hong Kong identity formations via manifold narratives.

要言之，香港故事不能也不應指向一種單純的家或根的感覺，否則又會重新陷於無法自拔的現狀之中，既不能包容差異，也無法抖擻精神，繼續藉述說不同的故事來延伸身份認同的開放指涉過程。(10)

The search for a solid, unilateral originality, similar to the quests for cultural root and a symbolic home, is often circumscribed for aggravating symbolic sovereignty and for orchestrating temporality for the nation; yet in the situation of Hong Kong, as espoused by Chu, through subsuming a nationless community under a symbolic, imaginative and interpretative framework of its national parallel may stagnate its open-ended metamorphosis. In other words, initiating the critical and/or creative model of the national and cast it upon the nationless bears the risk of erasing all its peculiarities.

If general mythicization fails to gratify such temporal craving, the last resort for a nationless community is mythic coequality—spectralization of physicality and corporeality within the simultaneity of the calendar. As the most intensified form of spectral craving, the prerequisites for mythic coequality exercising its full strength usually demand the living to perform the role of the dead, the physical to become ephemeral and the corporeal to become discarnate, and only through these conditions can mythicization be initiated *within* the calendar for temporal imagination. A nationless community, unlike the national ones passively awaiting hauntings, relies on spectralization of its inherent or innate resources which, as a result, may easily submerge into what Derrida coins the “visor effect”:

Nor does one see in flesh and blood this Thing that is not a thing, this thing that is invisible between its apparitions, when it reappears. This Thing meanwhile looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there. A spectral asymmetry interrupts here all specularity. It de-synchronizes, it recalls us to anachrony. We will call this the *visor effect*: we do not see who looks at us (6).

The incapability to visualize the otherworldly visitors does not imply that a perception or an awareness of their existence is out of reach; instead, it is the visual, broadly including the mythical, absences that catalyze the puncturing of the obscurity of nationless imagination and defy the national imposition. This “visor effect” is not a form of visual impairment or an indication of a community gone mentally derailed; it is a solid evidence of spectral craving in exchange for temporal redemption in a nationless context. As construed by Derrida, the awareness of the existence of invisible specter “de-synchronizes” when it liberates imaginative temporality from its calendrical confines and its national parallelism along the clutches of the exorcist or psychic. Nationless mythicization, seen in this light, equates temporal liberation with spectralization in a cultural configuration contrary to a typical national subsumption with temporal irregularities and anomalies are purged for the national present, through which myths may serve as an imaginary counter-point. After all, as John Berger reminds us, “the way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe,” and as a result “to look is an act of choice” (8), and if so, seeing is always an act of pre-conception. Nationless imagination is grounded in the faith in the seeing of the invisible. Unless time is materialized with the calendar—one of the visualization or experiential methods under national apparatus, temporality will embark on a different itinerary of materialization, and in the case of Hong Kong only ghosts can dignify this request with responses.

This also accounts for the spectral rationale of the symbolic portfolio of Hong Kong and its mythical articulations. Hong Kong mythicization is not blind-folded; instead it has to see through and beyond the confines of the calendar and its physical and natural configurations. As illustrated by Xi Xi’s (西西) in “Fu Cheng Zhi Yi” (浮城誌異), an intertextual mythicization in thirteen chapters encompassing a juxtaposition of narration and Rene Magritte’s artworks, which delineates this particular mythicization with a hazy boundary between the local and the foreign—categories precariously drawn in the absence of a nation. Amid its fairy-tale like beginning, in chapter four “Apple” the narration concludes with the statement that “the miracles of floating city is not a fairy tale” ‘浮城奇跡，畢竟不是一則神話。’ (134); in the same chapter the illusion of Magritte’s apple also becomes the illusion of the floating city; when chapter eight “Time” is concluded with an inquiry of whether or not people in

the floating city can see the future through mirrors ‘人可以透過鏡子看見未來的面貌麼?’ (138), in chapter 9 “Mirrors” the same narrative voice reminds us that “in the floating city, looking in the mirrors can neither find an answer nor predict the future” as mirrors in the floating city can only shed light on the “posteriority of matters” ‘在浮城，看鏡子並不能找到答案，預測未來。所有的鏡子，...就只能照見事物的背面了。’ (139) Such intertextual mythicization is indeed an intertextual coexistence and exhaustion initiated via elimination of boundaries between the visual and the verbal, the subject and the object and the primary and the supplementary. There is indeed no trace of apparition in the narration, but the mythicization gains new momentum with its structuring via the spectral logic of imaginative coequality, or the cultivation of visor effect on a normative and secular time span in a nationless context. The visual/ verbal dynamism in Xi Xi’s floating city is transformative via its forward and backward narration in the form of inquiry and response, the oscillation in between insertions constitutes a temporal trajectory, amid that those insertions may or may not be stemming directly from the soil of a nationless community.

Here the myth making strategy of Xi Xi for Hong Kong is different from her counterparts, especially when her clairvoyant summons Rene Magritte, or a renowned Belgian artist whose creativity in the past is never rooted in Hong Kong. The clairvoyant here translates and supplements temporal imagination with a spatial or geographical exoticism. Magritte’s works serve as an anchorage beyond, rather than within, the imaginative boundary of a Hong Kong that demands constant renewal in myth making and resists against historical abstractions incepted by colonial and anti-colonial historians. Re-imagining Hong Kong through the lenses of Magritte’s creativity Xi Xi reconstructs Hong Kong’s originality with a contemporaneity manifested through the geographical incompatibility between this Asian community and the European imagination. From his critical encounter with Xi Xi’s creativity, Tay observes that many of her fictional undertakings are indeed “reinterpretation of history and mythology” yet executed “without proper annotations or background illustrations, which often make deciphering difficult” (373). Here Tay also points out a crucial aspect pertinent to the exploration of nationless mythicization—the gravity of annotation. To annotate, on a literal basis, is to search and document referential components to stabilize the articulations of linguistic or cultural meanings, and this process is valorized by an assumption that singularity and readability in meaning might often arise from its initial multiplicities by means of sublimation with a definite and relevant context. To annotate is therefore to chisel a context out of the myriad and out of the unstable, and to secure the prerequisite of an interpretive subsumption which engenders solidarity and consensus in

mythicization in parallel to the imaginative originality of a community; to annotate is also to ensure that the interpretation of a subject matter will tread on a teleological passage, often commencing with the vanishing point of the past, leading towards an epistemological consolidation; to annotate, then, is one of the major cultural duties of an exorcist and a psychic in their services for national imagination, but in a floating nationless community like Hong Kong, to subdue the specter with annotations is equivalent to abandoning the last resort of temporalization resuscitating the city from degenerating into an absolute vacuum of the calendar. This situation partly echoes Punter's conjecture of the "law of the orphans" emerging from postcolonial creativity:

This law . . . is based on the impossibility of return and thus, more importantly, on the impossibility of secure knowledge. It spreads into an absence of grounds for self-definition; and it embraces a wide emptying of the heart, such that unwelcome fantasies will take root here and begin, in their turn, a rhizomatic spread. The law of the orphan forbids resistance . . . within this law there is no way of transcending dependence, only of finding a different footing for it as each successive foothold proves untrustworthy. (165)

Here Punter highlights the creative itinerary of postcoloniality as a way of no-return: not only does it rule out the possibility of locating an origin, it also eliminates the epistemological trajectories paving towards the illusion of a body of intelligence. Punter's elaboration is, however, deeply rooted in the national soil of postcoloniality with "unwelcome fantasies" catalyzing the incessant transformation and relocation of anchorages in cultural configurations; in other words, the predisposition of a specific cultural grounding, though irrevocably eliminated in the present as a result of colonization with no possibility in reversion, is mesmerizing communal imaginaries with an alternative passage in reclaiming the remnants of the past or the debris of cultural uprooting for a new postcolonial conglomeration, usually in the name of postcolonial nation. When cleansing those fantasies the exorcist is motivated to transverse along a viral marginality of imagination with disorderly phantasms to channel these imaginative strengths for the ploughing of a new grounding called modern nation—a political and cultural coupon to validate calendrical subscription on a global, international scale.

From Lee's diffusive footsteps of a flaneur, to Dung's estrangement of the familiar and Xi Xi's intertextuality of inception one witnesses the intersections from which the specter is fully embraced to satiate nationless desire for temporality, with creative and critical mythicization traversing beyond and within the calendar. Temporality, in a national context, is redeemed via subduing ghosts naturally by the exorcist; in a nationless community, with the absence of a na-

tionalizing itinerary in its communal imaginary, an exorcist is an imaginative minority in this highly spectralized yet secular territory, where the materializing intervals of ghosts aggrandizing the anchorages of temporality. The yearning to be haunted, as manifested through the clairvoyant, generates new momentum for nationless imaginary and reinforces the mythicity of a calendar. If mythicization *beyond* the calendar has proven to be a cultural impossibility, then mythicization *within* may function as an alternative for the redemption of temporality by means of spectralization in the manner of a clairvoyant.

By mythicization alone one could witness from the selected creative and critical endeavors of Hong Kong in delineating patterns and traces from which temporality can be anchored, though at times with diffusive and contrary dispositions, in the absence of a national superimposition. Spectral craving, in particular, is a nationless by-product that unleashes the most powerful dimension of haunting in satiating nationless temporalization; through this otherworldliness imaginaries gain the capability in debunking the calendar within the calendar, or in other words, to reach the beyond from the within without disrupting the flow of symbolic exchange in the economy of imagination. Hong Kong, as manifested from its mythicizations, does not require a different symbolic exchange mechanism in sustaining its imaginaries, and bypassing the intervention of an exorcist and from the clairvoyant alone nationless temporality may recapture its myriad articulations when ghosts, accidentally or intentionally, establish points of imaginary departure which can be appropriated as originalities, amid the fact that such originalities are evolving from diffusion, estrangement or inception. If national mythicization is preconceived with singular originality of unilateral continuity, then the nationless alterity, at the expense of reverting the living into death, will spectralize our very own selves in the mythical labyrinth of Hong Kong to illustrate that originality can be nurtured other than just being a mere annotation of a nation.

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無國的神話：香港的靈異想像

摘要

本文以香港的後殖民性及國家觀念的內涵為依歸，從中探討鬼魅對時間重構及根源重塑在族群想像中的重要性。在香港，鬼魅及時空想像的延申，掙脫殖民地歷史及回歸後國家民族主義的牢籠。香港的敘事及論述，在鬼魅身上追蹤時間的足跡，修補歷史的斷裂，讓香港的故事，昇華至神話的境界。在去殖化的過程之下，在家與國的幻影之中，透現出屬於香港的時空構想。

關鍵字：香港，鬼魅，神話化，本源，時間