

Hong Kong Literature as World Literature: Possibilities and Challenges in Translating Xi Xi's Fiction

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For the Workshop "Translating New Writing from Hong Kong" (City University of Hong Kong, September 29, 2018)



- Hong Kong on the "periphery" of Chineseness
 - Dominance of mainland China
 - Notion of HK as a financial center
 - Small size/small readership
 - Cantonese

- Ethnographic approaches to translation and world literature
 - HK's cosmopolitanism
 - Beyond postcard images
 - Intertextuality with world literature
 - "Deceptively accessible" (Andrea Lingenfelter's term)

Asymmetrical exchanges between Hong Kong literature and world literature

- Translation mostly a one-way street
- Only small percentage of HK literature is translated
- Among translations of Chinese-language literature, HK representation is low
- HK readers more familiar with foreign literature than vice-versa

- Limited distribution of these works outside of Hong Kong
 - Journals and presses that mainly circulate within HK
 - Difficulties buying these works outside of HK for teaching and libraries
 - Often expensive

- Money!
 - Need \$\$ to pay translators and editors and cover the costs of producing the books
 - Need funding sources that extend beyond Hong Kong

Translating Xi Xi's 西西 (b. 1937) Fiction





Translating Xi Xi's 西西 (b. 1937) Fiction

Numerous challenges

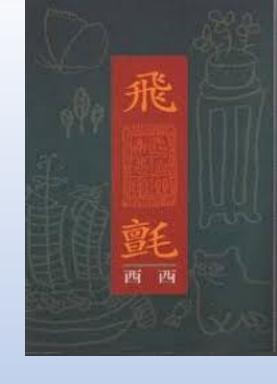
Intertextuality

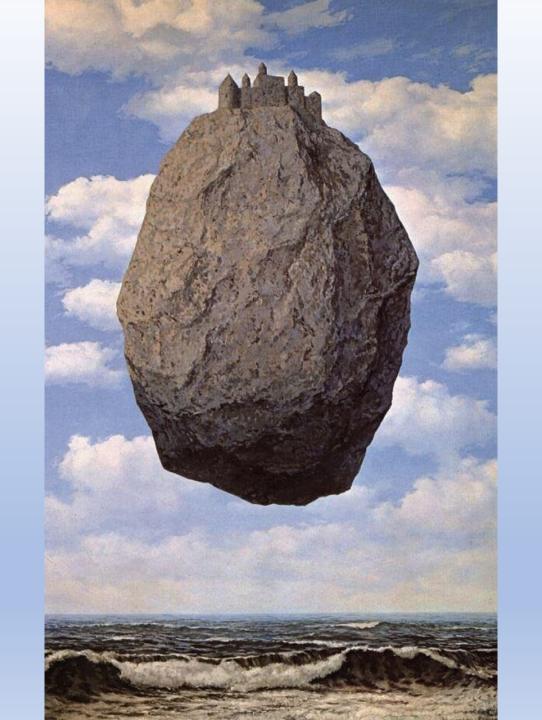
Wordplay

Fusion of the fantastic and the mundane

Fertile Soil Town 肥土鎮

- Works in her "Fertile Soil Town" and related series
 - "The Story of Fertile Soil Town"「肥土鎮的故事」(1982)
 - "Apple"「蘋果」(1984)
 - "Town Curse"「鎮咒」(1985)
 - "The Fertile Soil Town Chalk Circle"「肥土鎮灰闌記」 (1986)
 - "An Addendum to Cosmicomics" 「宇宙奇趣補遺」 (1988)
 - "Marvels of a Floating City" 「浮城誌異」(1986)
 - Flying Carpet (1996) 《飛氈》





• 肥土鎮 Feitu zhen [feitou zan] fat/fertile/rich

• 肥土鎮 Feitu zhen [feitou zan] fat/fertile/rich "Fertile Soil Town"

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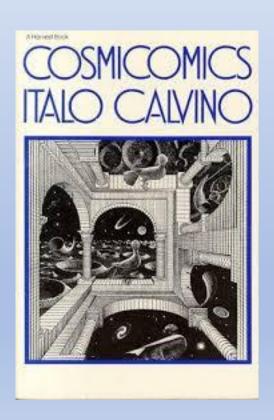
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- 飛土鎮 Feitu zhen [feitou zan] to fly

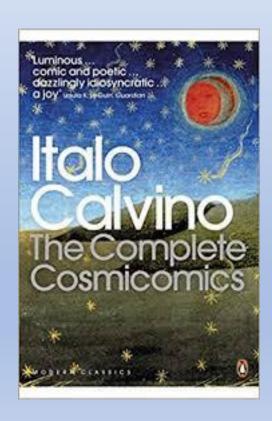
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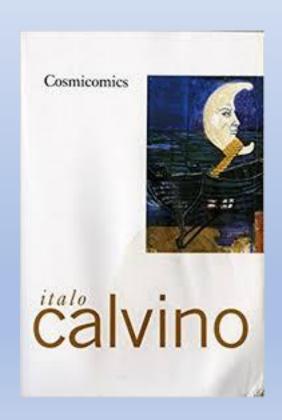
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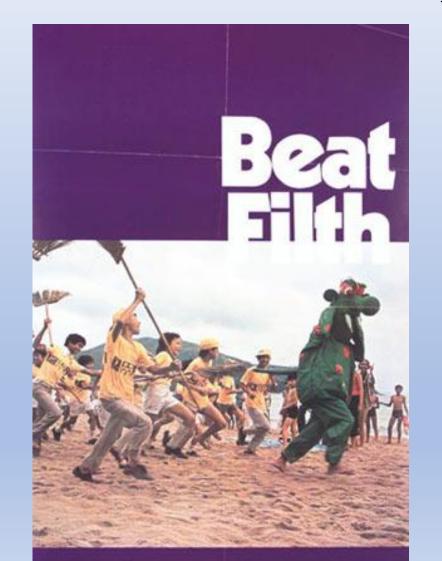


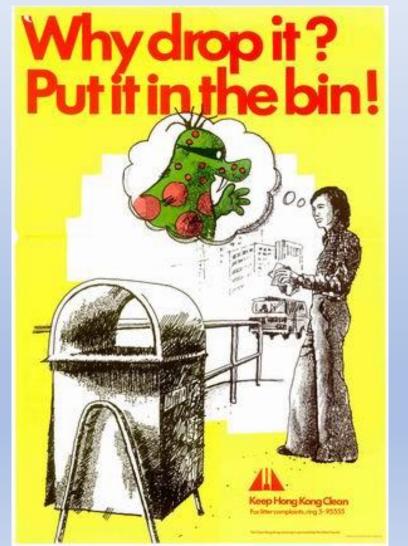




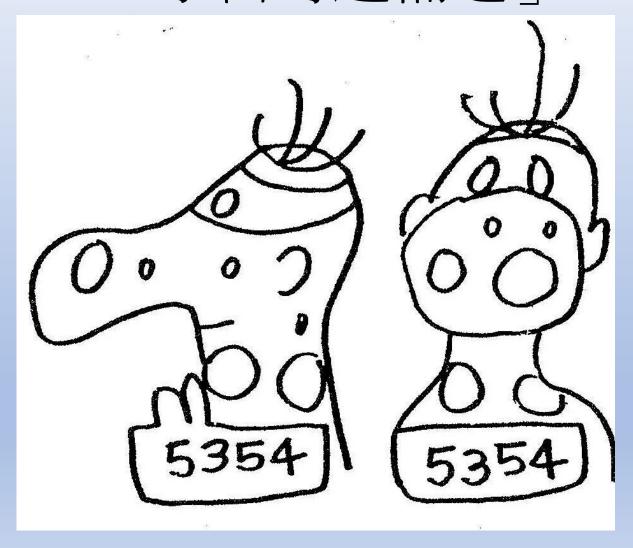


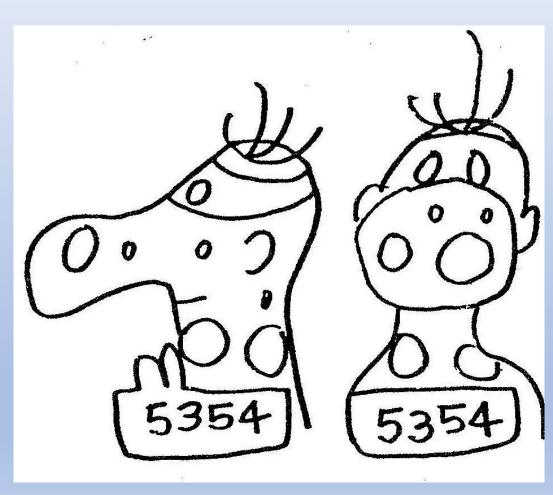




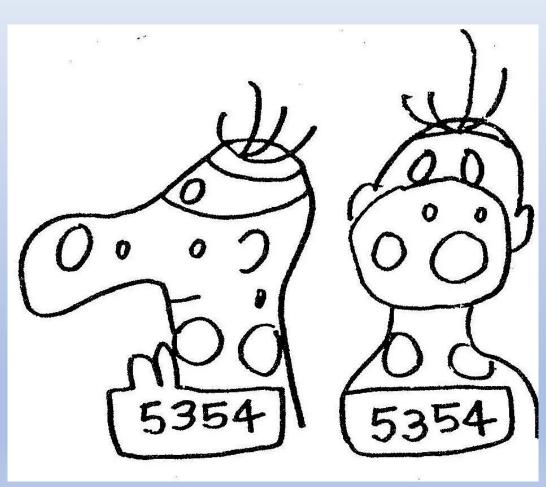








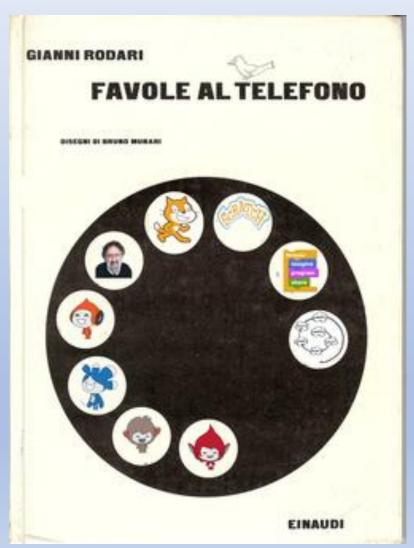
- 5 and 唔 homophones
- Play on 不三不四



- 5 and 唔 homophones
- Play on 不三不四
- "Fie thee, fie foe"

- - 鮮龍沙律拼盤
 - 龍柳炒豆苗
 - 百花釀龍角
 - 麻鮑龍翅
 - 清蒸龍腦
 - 紅燒龍掌
 - 油炸龍鬚
 - 龍眼杏仁露

- - 鮮龍沙律拼盤 fresh dinosaur salad hors d'oeuvres
 - 龍柳炒豆苗 T-rex T-bones sautéed with pea shoots
 - 百花釀龍角 stuffed dinosaur horns
 - 麻鮑龍翅 abalone with dinosaur fin
 - 清蒸龍腦 steamed dinosaur brains
 - 紅燒龍掌 Dino paws braised in soy saurus
 - 油炸龍鬚 deep-fried Tricerachops
 - 龍眼杏仁露 Dragon eye fruit Pteramisu



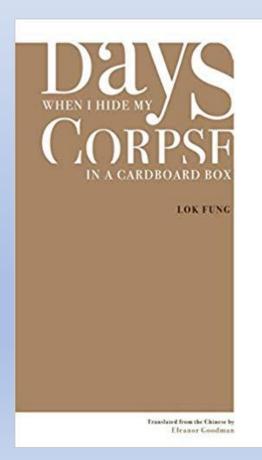
Fairy Tales Over the Phone by Gianni Rodari (1962)

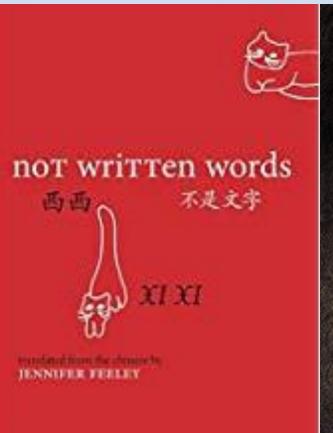
• Rodari *Luodali* 羅大裡

- Rodari *Luodali* 羅大裡
 - •羅小裡

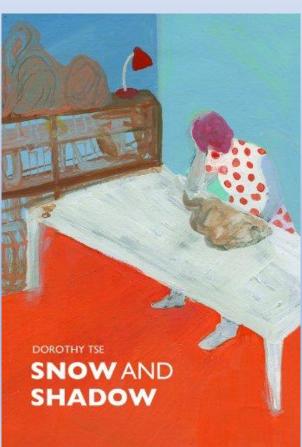
- Rodari *Luodali* 羅大裡
 - •羅小裡
- Signor Rodari
 - Junior Rodari

Hong Kong Atlas Project

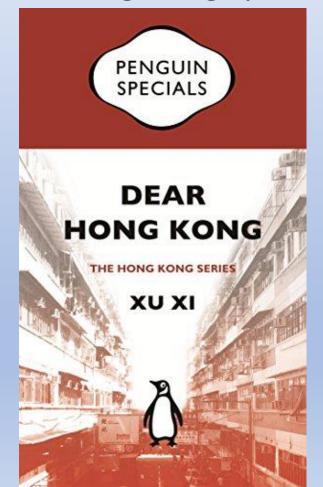


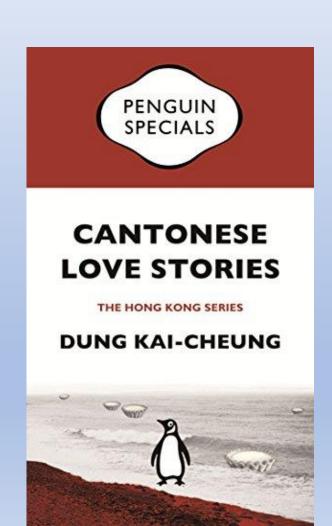






Penguin Hong Kong specials





Hong Kong-themed special issues

feature

Fabulist Writing from Hong Kong

Nonfiction by Jennifer Feeley

Reimagined Cities: Fabulist Tales from Hong Kong

Hong Kong is situated at the convergence of multiple literary and linguistic traditions.

Fiction by Xi Xi

Apple

In honor of the first Internationalization Campaign, they decided to put on an Apple Pageant.

Translated from Chinese by Jennifer Feeley

bilingual

Fiction by Dorothy Tse

Chewing on Words

It wasn't their voices that they'd lost, it was all memory of their language.

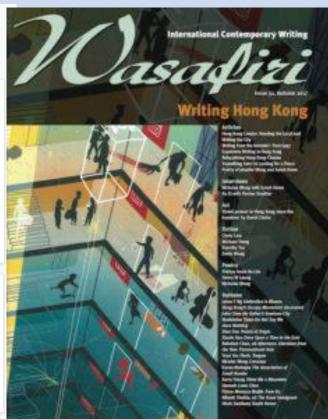
Translated from Chinese by Natascha Bruce

Fiction by Hon Lai Chu

Puma

It was on that afternoon that the cat. began talking to me.

Translated from Chinese by Andrea Lingenfelter



ASIAN AMERICAN WRITERS' WORKSHOP

THE MARGINS

OPEN CITY CULTURESTR/KE

THE MARGINS

ESSAYS

POETRY

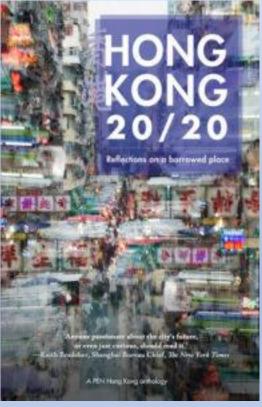
Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement: Four Poems

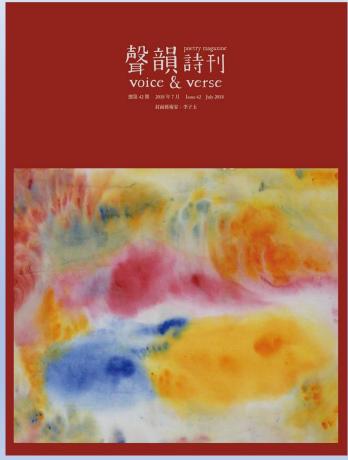
"In the smoke, they forget their bare feet / as they see their faces more clearl than ever... No trial can strike down / their small and fragile umbrellas."



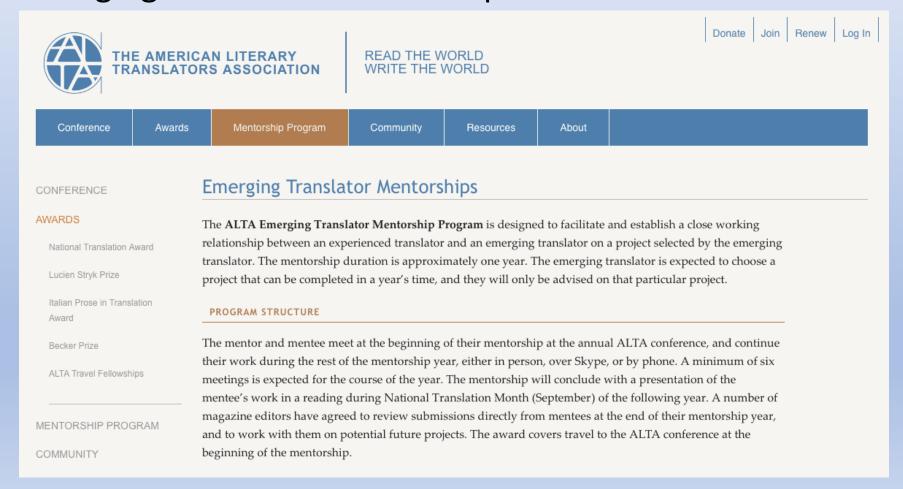
Efforts within Hong Kong



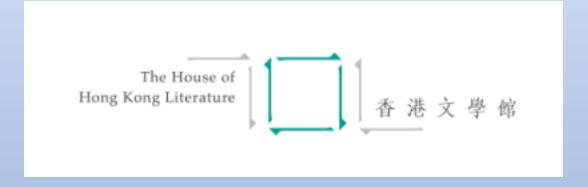




ALTA Emerging Translator Mentorships







More funding sources



Engaging presses and translators both within and beyond Hong Kong



