

**Tales of Shifting Homelands:
Singapore and Hong Kong in Literature and Art
(ELLS2262)**

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education
(Singapore-Hong Kong Exchange)

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #1 Steki Chung - City Bus 12A



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0650 wake up call.

0700 morning stroll begins.

0710 first halt, refill coffee, keep going.

0735 back from the walk, found some more coffee, but not much; refill.

0740 length of a small speed jet.

0745 length of a big white shark.

0750 length of a huge blue whale.

0755 drops of coffee leave the whale, on constant diet.

0800 the whale starts wriggling in impatience!

0805 strolls in and halts matter-of-factly, leaving some shrimps in utter
despair; don't blame me, i have no choice.

0810 the bell rings.

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- #1 Steki Chung - City Bus 12A

when he strolls in and

halts

a relief washed off me

no nostalgia

no aroma of supper after a long hard day

he is my reluctant tool who on purposely drive me

mad with unhurried footsteps

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- #1 Steki Chung - City Bus 12A

what makes me madder is how

i can't let him go

i'm trapped!

how can I complete my journey without him?

—the way his matter-of-fact announcement goes:

“thank you for taking Citybus 12A.

we hope you've enjoyed your journey.”

when on my clock

there's no spare tick tocks

to finish listening to his words

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- #1 Steki Chung - City Bus 12A

i can't wait for the day I'll
dump
my black hat in his face and say,
i don't need you anymore!

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- #2 Kelly Li – Causeway Bay



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- #2 Kelly Li – Causeway Bay

Causeway Bay

I took all of these photos in Causeway Bay, a place in Hong Kong which I am quite familiar with. In fact, it is probably my most familiar place on the world. I had lived there in my primary school years and the secondary school I am studying at now is near Causeway Bay so I go there very often. Causeway Bay is one of Hong Kong's most crowded areas, since it is a major shopping district with famous buildings such as Times Square, Sogo, and Hysan Place.

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- #2 Kelly Li – Causeway Bay

Causeway Bay

During morning and afternoon rush hours when adults go to and get off work, people almost fight to get on the train, even when the next train is only a few minutes away. Any empty seats are taken in an blink of an eye. When I walk only a bit slower on the street, it seems like I am already being a nuisance. I guess I am supposed to be accustomed to the city life here but honestly, I can barely keep up with it. I wanted to depict the fast paced life in Hong Kong in the photos. Old things are replaced by new things.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #2 Kelly Li – Causeway Bay

Causeway Bay

When I visit a place where I had only been to last month, I always see a new store that had not been there. The Causeway Bay I first learned about is also gone for quite a while. A pawn shop that was near where I had lived had been demolished. When you looked inside the shop, you could a folding screen which blocked the view of the counter. I used to love the mysterious feeling. *Da siu yan, villain hitting, is also in Causeway Bay, under a bridge. (I don't know why I feel the importance to address that it's under a bridge.)*

Da siu yan is a folk sorcery which purpose is to curse one's enemies using magic.

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- #2 Kelly Li – Causeway Bay

Causeway Bay

I am not sure how it works because I have not tried it but I think they treat a piece of paper as the person the client hates and beat it with a shoe. As you can see in the photos, the "sorcerers" are all old women. They are probably the last ones in Hong Kong that do villain hitting for a living. I am so used to the sight of them, I cannot imagine not seeing anyone sitting under that bridge sometime in the future.

As a global centre of trade, it is necessary for Hong Kong to be constantly changing, to become better, in an attempt to keep up with the world and not fall behind it.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #3 Li Sum Chuen – From a Boxed Window



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- #3 Li Sum Chuen – From a Boxed Window

Questions:

- a) How is Hong Kong's society and culture encapsulated in the art works?
- b) In what ways do these representations resemble or differ from your imagination / experience of the city?

From a Boxed Window

There is no sun rise in where I live.

From a boxed window, and a shutter view. Just street lights and orange glow, meager stars, in a LEGO world. And the hues, of the sky, dapples like water.

Lightens the ocean, into morning. Merely brighter.

The whistle of a train. The drone of a whirring fan. How should a day feel like?

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #3 Li Sum Chuen – From a Boxed Window

Rationale

Hong Kong is known for its skyscrapers. But for the most part, citizens live in small, restricted spaces. This picture I took, shows a unique angle to a public housing building. The upward view obviously links to my prose, however I could share that the front view of the building, is a sight much like LEGO blocks. In fact, it may be worse looking than LEGO blocks, as each “column” of apartments were painted in a different rainbow colours, and such paint is worn by its age. It is botched and faded. Hence, I felt that this picture is a more realistic and interesting view on Hong Kong architecture.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #3 Li Sum Chuen – From a Boxed Window

Rationale

The manner which I linked it with my prose piece, is through the sky. Although I decided to choose a black and white colour scheme, most people must agree, the sky is actually bleak and grey. Especially for me, I prefer waking early, contrary to my peers. And around 5:50am, that is when the sky turns from “night-time” and “day-time”. It is not a spectacular sight really. It was also then, that I was inspired to write my piece of prose.

To explain briefly about my content and literary choices. “Boxed window” is a good example of juxtaposition because windows are usually symbolic for vision and hope.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #3 Li Sum Chuen – From a Boxed Window

Rationale

A shutter view”, is a play of diction, because shutters are curtains for the window, while shutter is related to photography. By the grammatical construction, the meaning is the latter, and that is also why the rest of the piece is intentionally “broken”. Personally, I feel it also gives the piece a sort of poetic rhythm when read out loud. There are some metaphors, comparing street lights to stars, the sky to the ocean. The last paragraph with the sudden change to auditory description, just brings the piece back into a personal perspective. It leads to the personal question: how does a day feel like? How does a day feel like, when the day does not seem like a day?

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #4 Gabrielle – Victoria Harbour



Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #4 Gabrielle – Victoria Harbour

Prose:

New Year's Eve

If he closed his eyes half-way, the lights could fool him into thinking it was morning.

Her smile is a brilliant, living streak of red that blurs away the rest of her face.

“Do you think it will be on time?” she asks. He replies softly that, yes, well, they are always on time. “That’s not true,” she begins to argue, “Nothing is ever always on time —”

— And the harbour is staccatoed with eruptions of light, bursting violently like flowers in spring.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #4 Gabrielle – Victoria Harbour

Prose:

New Year's Eve

The water is silent; breathing in, and out, in, and out; converging and diverging like the strollers on the promenade, their faces averted from the past, their feet pointed towards their future.

The sun rises above the harbour. A new dawn has begun.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #4 Gabrielle – Victoria Harbour

Prose:

Victoria Harbour

Summary: A little harbour instrumental in the transformation of Hong Kong from fishing village to trading centre; also famous for its indescribable night view, where manmade lights have replaced the boatmen's guiding stars.

Why I chose it: It fills me a lonely ache for the transience of glory – but every night, the lights do go on forever, and the city never sleeps.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #5 Bianca Ho – Kwai Chung Plaza



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- #5 Bianca Ho – Kwai Chung Plaza

Kwai Chung Plaza

Situated just next to the Kwai Fong MTR station and residential buildings, Kwai Chung Plaza, established in 1990, has been one of the busiest malls in Hong Kong. There are over 1000 shops in the four-storey plaza, those include toy stores, clinics, restaurants, book stores, boutiques, telecom companies etc.

In the 1980s, the main commercial port was relocated to Kwai Chung, namely the Kwai Chung Container Terminal. Kwai Chung Plaza became a popular spot for workers, residents, students young couples to hang out, due to the wide variety of goods provided at attractive prices. Thus, the mall has been regarded as “The Heaven for Civilians” (平民天堂).

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #5 Bianca Ho – Kwai Chung Plaza

Kwai Chung Plaza

To me, Kwai Chung Plaza is a place where anything can be found. Whenever my watch ran out of batteries, or my oversized uniforms needed modification, I would find the right man there for the job. When I was a kid, my father used to rent DVDs for me and my sister there. I recall the time I tried fishing goldfish there. After successfully capturing a few goldfishes, I was given the choice whether to keep one of the goldfishes, or to exchange them for prizes. I don't exactly remember, but I think I kept the fish.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #5 Bianca Ho – Kwai Chung Plaza

Kwai Chung Plaza

I used to hate Kwai Chung Plaza (besides the fishing part) as a kid, it was forever full of people, you literally cramp into the plaza, then try to squeeze through the crowds, through all that sweat and odour. The plaza was like a maze, not to mention it was impossible to figure out where you are heading with people behind you pushing and urging you to move on. In addition, I used to think the mall needed more lighting.

Presentation by HKAGE Student

- #5 Bianca Ho – Kwai Chung Plaza

Kwai Chung Plaza

Not long ago, I revisited the mall. It was quite astonishing to find that there seemed to be a lot less people in the plaza. In fact, due to the decline in consumer spending, the flow of customers in Kwai Chung Plaza have decreased. Subsequently, many shops face challenges in daily operations. In Fashion lane (潮流廊), an area mainly consisting of clothing shops, nearly half of the units have not been rented out.

The future of Kwai Chung Plaza cannot be predicted. However, during my recent visit, I realize Kwai Chung Plaza is more colourful than I had thought, the vibrant clothes, the toy collections, the assorted snacks, the reflections on escalators... ..