

New Queer Angles on Wong Kar-wai

Helen Hok-Sze Leung

Prologue: Do it over

Not too long ago, around the 10th anniversary of Leslie Cheung's death, some fans were hotly debating the meaning of the famous opening line from *Happy Together* on *Weibo*, the Chinese version of Twitter. Arguments were made over the literal Cantonese connotation of “going back to do it over” and the slightly different translation in written Chinese subtitles as “starting anew.” Mandarin speakers claim to not be able to really tell the difference, while Cantonese speakers enigmatically answer that the difference can only be “sensed” and not “explained.”

Such exchanges are exemplary of the kind of cinephilia Wong's films inspire, such that more than a decade after a film's release the meaning of one line of dialogue still generates passionate arguments. The fans' debate also reminds us of the nuance of Sinophone languages, how often they do not reconcile neatly, and how much we may gloss over if we allow the films to be explained to us without “sensing” them for ourselves.

Finding new queer angles on Wong Kar-wai appears at first to be a constraining, even preposterous, idea. Yet as I embarked on the journey, it struck me that it is actually not about starting anew. It is much more about going back and doing it over: to sense the films again despite the plethora of explanations, to hear everything a bit differently and see each detail a little more queerly.

Queer investments

Starting with *Happy Together* is inevitable. After all, it is the only film of Wong's that has received any queer reception. However, in spite of the opening sex scene and star Leslie Cheung's queer iconicity, the film has been characterized

by Wong's fellow artists in Hong Kong as well as scholars of queer Asian cinema as not quite queer enough or even somewhat homophobic. Prominent gay playwright Edward Lam critiques the film's heteronormative gendering of the two men and the typecasting of Cheung as a promiscuous gay man (1998, 80–81). In an interview with the trade magazine *City Entertainment*, filmmaker Shu Kei (whose filmography includes queer works such as *Hu-Du-Men* and *A Queer Story*) sees the film as an “exploitation” of Cheung, even going so far as to question Wong's motive for casting the then semi-closeted Cheung in a gay role (Shu Kei 2012). Chris Berry places the film within a tradition in East Asian cinema that represents the gay subject as “sad young men.” He interprets the waterfall in the opening scene as a fetishized and homophobic symbol of the anus as death (2000, 194–195). Audrey Yue finds the film's treatment of the two main characters “didactic,” with a moral overtone that indicts the “excess” of Ho Po-wing (Yue 2000a, 255). Song Hwee Lim also questions the opposition the film sets up between the negative excess of Ho Po-wing's “gay performativity” on the one hand and the lauded “neo-Confucian ‘values’” of Lai Yiu-fai's “decent hard work” on the other (2006, 109). Moreover, Lim is critical of the film's idealization and valorization of home in its domestic as well as national manifestation (120–121). By contrast, queer studies scholars based in the USA have penned more positive interpretations of the film. B. Ruby Rich calls the film “a poem to frustrated desire, grief, longing, exile, cultural displacement, and sexual commerce, all timed to a brilliant tango beat” (2013, 43). David Eng suggests that the film “charts alternative psychic pathways” to forms of family and kinship structure that interrupt “the privileged social narrative of neoliberal globalization” (2010, 90–91).

What do we make of such conflicting queer critical reception? What for some is a homophobic or at least heteronormative stereotyping of gay relationships is for others a stinging realistic rendering of queer domesticity. What for some is a conservative return to a neo-Confucian notion of family is for others a subversive re-imagining of kinship bonds. These widely divergent interpretations of the film may be best explained by the distinct location and investment of each critic. In Hong Kong's local film industry circle, Leslie Cheung's friends and close colleagues saw first-hand the media pressure he was under at the time. Their views on the film understandably betray a protective attitude for Cheung and a heightened sensitivity towards a straight filmmaker's handling of queer material and the use of a semi-closeted star. For scholars who research on queer Asian cinema where representations of queer sexuality have been relatively rare, *Happy Together* carries a significant representative burden and they are rightly concerned about stereotyping and heteronormative clichés. They also recognize more readily an implicit overtone of morality and filial piety that is common in East Asian cinematic traditions. Scholars based in the USA view the film from within the concerns of American queer cinema and politics. Rich writes at a time when queer cinema seems to her to be stuck in narratives of identity and coming out while queer audiences demand

easy-to-digest and idealized images of queerness. She sees in *Happy Together* a grittier and more complex film that does not reproduce what she finds unsatisfying in contemporary American queer cinema. Eng's primary concern is with "queer liberalism," which he and many American radical critics view to be a hegemonic phenomenon in contemporary US queer politics that is in need of critique. Eng interprets *Happy Together* through a "queer diaspora" framework to construct the intimacy portrayed in film as an alternative to neoliberal logic.

At the same time, films have "queer afterlives" (Leung 2010, 84–85) that often go beyond its filmmaker's intention, initial reception, and critics' interpretation. Under the right circumstances, a film can provide queer audiences with a vehicle for what Audrey Yue calls "'doing' cultural citizenship" (2011, 250). The role Yue attributes to a film like *Spider Lilies* in facilitating a queer Asian sense of belonging through media consumption (258–259) is arguably true also of *Happy Together*, which was screened during the late 1990s in various LGBT and HIV/AIDS fundraisers in Hong Kong, Manila, Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore at a time when queer communities in those cities still faced a high degree of public hostility and depended largely on mediated networks and consumption practices to emerge and cohere.

To what extent *Happy Together* is a queer film thus depends on far more than the film text itself. It is contingent on our various investments as queer critics and how we talk and write about the film as queer (or not). It is shaped also by the shifting contexts of community needs and the role a media text plays in facilitating those needs.

Finding new queer angles on Wong Kar-wai is therefore as much about the investments of queer critical discourse and community reception contexts as it is about the films themselves. In this chapter, I aim to explore what Wong's apparently "straight" films can provoke from queer theory and queer film criticism in an attempt to expand the films' possibilities for queer reception.

Straight-up queer

Since all of Wong's films, with the lone exception of *Happy Together*, deal with heterosexual love and desire, the first question logically facing a queer critic is: What does queer theory have to say about heterosexuality? I would venture to answer: a lot. Yet there is also a caveat: queer theory – and queer film criticism in particular – has not *wanted* to say very much about heterosexuality. The relation between queer analyses and heterosexuality is a fraught one that is worth examining in some detail.

In the anthology *Hetero*, the first and, to date, only book-length study of cinematic heterosexuality from queer perspectives, editor Sean Griffin describes the book as an effort to compensate for a blind spot in queer film criticism. He

notes that while whiteness on screen is routinely analyzed through the lens of critical race theory in the same way that masculinity is approached from feminist angles, there is little attention paid to representations of heterosexuality on screen from queer perspectives (Griffin 2009, 1).

This (perhaps deliberate) oversight may be explained by a wider context beyond cinema studies where the consideration of heterosexuality, especially when done by the so-called “straight queer intellectual,” is viewed with suspicion by many as a corollary of queer theory’s post-identity stance and increased dissociation from gay and lesbian identity politics. Calvin Thomas, when summarizing some of the intellectual and political objections to the “spectre” of the “straight queer” in queer theory, admits that his attempts to engage queer theory as a “straight intellectual” has not met (nor is likely to meet) with great success (2009, 18). Thomas’ core question is an interesting one: Can “theorizing,” as a genre of writing that denaturalizes and defamiliarizes, be analogous to “queering”? This question is similar to Paul Bowman’s deployment of “queer” to describe cultural translation’s “investment in ‘crossing over,’ change, twisting, turning and warping” (2010, 396). Identifying the “queerness” of certain critical and aesthetic practices and the investments they share with the queer project of sexual dissidence has the potential to shed interesting light on the workings of different forms of normativity and the processes of their subversion. However, because of his attachment to the “straight queer” position, Thomas takes his question back to whether theory can “turn the reader who is not LGBT into some sort of queer” (18), thereby refocusing attention on the heterosexual subject.

In cinema criticism, a similar critical move is made by Sheila Deasey, who traces contemporary queer theory’s “foreclosure of heterosexuality” back to radical feminists’ reductive account of heterosexuality and queer critics’ hostility to straight queerness despite certain moments of openings in bi and trans theories (2010, 15–31). Deasey’s own project studies female masculinity embodied by heterosexual characters on film while calling for more sophisticated models for understanding heterosexuality. However, she also uses the study as a way to claim heterosexuality’s subversive status and to “enable theorists of heterosexuality to join the pleas for radicalism alongside queer scholars” (33).

To steer away from this tendency to consolidate a “straight queer” position via the study of heterosexuality, Griffin makes a useful distinction between “the heterosexual subject engaging with queer theory” and “queer theory engaging with heterosexuality” (2009, 3). In contrast to the former, which allows self-identified heterosexuals to reassert their critical authority *vis-à-vis* queer theory, the latter focuses instead on exposing the constructed and negotiated nature of heteronormativity while arguing for queer theory’s expertise in critically examining heteronormative structures. Indeed the more successful engagements with heterosexuality in queer scholarship have been works that deconstruct and denaturalize discursive forces that construct heterosexuality as natural and inevitable.

My critical framework in this chapter is also more closely aligned with the latter strategy: to understand various forms of heterosexual love, intimacy, and eroticism in Wong's films through the insights of queer theory, without claiming the heterosexual subject as queer or celebrating heterosexuality as subversive. I will explore the following themes: the genre hybridity in Wong's debut film *As Tears Go By*, which exposes the homoerotic roots of heterosexual desire, the limits of the couple as a relationship unit – an important premise in bi theory and poly discourse – and the erotics of “queer failure” that underlie many of Wong's films, and the facilitation of queer bonds by the artisanal work of tailoring in the short film “The Hand” and by martial arts in *The Grandmaster*. While all of his films illustrate the profound failure of heteronormative structures, Wong is not necessarily critical of such failures. Rather, he indulges and aestheticizes them as the fundamental ground of desire.

Between genres

Wong's directorial debut, *As Tears Go By*, is known for its fusion of romance with the “hero film” genre. The film's idiosyncratic treatment of this particular generic hybrid easily lends itself to a foundational thesis in queer theory, namely, that heterosexual desire is structured by and through homosocial bonds. Exploring Wong's debut film from this queer angle also opens some interesting possibilities for approaching the theme of love and its myriad discontent in his later work.

Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men* (1985), a formative text in queer theory, posits that heterosexual desire, as depicted in the Western literary tradition, is structured by an intense homosociality between rival men, one whose boundary is fiercely guarded by the taboo of homosexuality. Interpreting René Girard's work on the rivalry structure of romantic plots through Gayle Rubin's critique of patriarchal kinship structure, Sedgwick further extends a feminist observation that women as love interest in romantic plots is in actuality a transactional afterthought that facilitates male homosocial bonds. While Sedgwick's study is specific to the context of 19th century English literary tradition, the influence of her theoretical insights are evident in subsequent queer cinema criticism that explores the homosocial and/or homoerotic dynamics of a range of masculine genres (Lang 2002), including the Hollywood Western, buddy film, prison film, military films, martial arts film and, most relevant to this discussion, the “hero film” (*yingxiang pian* or triad gangster film).

It has been noted by many that there is an undercurrent of homoeroticism in the hero film first popularized by John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow*, a suggestion most famously posed by Stanley Kwan directly to John Woo in *Yang \pm Yin: Gender in Chinese Cinema* (Stanley Kwan, 1996). At the same time, while critics explore the underlying homoerotic dynamics, they also critique the genre for

always recapitulating to the patriarchal taboo against homosexuality and sexist attitude towards women (Grossman 2000). In fact, this very criticism is directed at *As Tears Go By*, Wong's explicit foray into this genre. In his study of spatiality in Wong's films, poet and cultural studies scholar Leung Ping-kwan makes this observation:

Wah's unhesitating sacrifice of his life tips the balance the film has up until now constructed with such care: between two spaces (Mongkok or Lantau Island) and two choices (to protect Fly's irresponsible behavior in order to fight for respect or to live for one's love). The film returns to the genre's cliché: the question of women is merely a decorative detail; men ultimately will always make hot-blooded sacrifice for other men. (2004, 16)

What Leung recognizes as a clichéd generic element is, however, more puzzling to other critics. Stephen Teo, for instance, thinks that "the central relationship between Wah and Fly remains an enigma" and that the emotional core of the relationship is neither fully explained nor framed within a moral argument (2005, 19). Referring to the moment when an injured Fly literally stumbles into Wah's apartment during a quiet moment between Wah and Ah Ngor, Teo points out that "the gangster scene quite literally intrudes into the romance" (21).

Critics' different reactions to the men's homosocial bonds which are forged at the expense of heterosexual love would thus seem to depend on their generic expectations. In fact, Peter Brunette summarizes the divided critical reactions to *As Tears Go By* as essentially falling into two camps, with one arguing that the film adheres to genre, and the other arguing that the film subverts genre (2005, 3–6). At the same time, it matters *which* genre one thinks the film is adhering to or deviating from. If one sees the film as a hero film, as Leung does, then the heterosexual interlude is a typical generic decoration of a story of masculine bonds (Figure 10.1). If one sees the film as primarily a romance, as Teo does, then the gangster plot violently and illogically intrudes into the romance.

Wong's highly ambivalent handling of the film's generic hybridity may be thought of as queer in various ways. In her analysis of *Rouge* and *A Chinese Ghost Story* as generic hybrids, Audrey Yue deploys Lee Elderman's notion of "(be)hindsight" to describe the queer logic that privileges the posterior and destabilizes normative positionality. Yue interprets Elderman's notion of rhetorical substitution as "a kind of curved movement, synchronizing the past (pre-) and the future (post-) in such a way that in the movement forward, a destination is reached through a turning point that is the same as the point of departure, but *on the other side*" (2000b, 365, original italics). Yue is describing the positional logic of Hong Kong in its pre/post-1997 period, the expression of which she locates in the hybrid generic execution of the two ghost films. Produced only a few years after the films Yue wrote about, *As Tears Go By* arguably



Figure 10.1 *As Tears Go By* (2008), directed by Wong Kar-wai, produced by Alan Tang.

hails from the same period of temporal “(be)hindsight.” Furthermore, in addition to the dynamic play with temporality that critics have often noted in Wong’s films, *As Tears Go By*’s “preposterous” positioning of two *genres* (heterosexual romance and the hero film) exposes an intricate structure of gendered intimacy and the price heterosexuality exacts at the expense of homosociality and *vice versa*.

There is no better way to examine how Wong repositions structural elements of the hetero-homo rival structure in *As Tears Go By* than by comparing it to John Woo’s two *A Better Tomorrow* films. Woo’s films have provoked discussion of their homeroticism not only from Stanley Kwan but also a number of scholars (Koven 1997; Sandell 1996; Gates 2001). I have argued elsewhere that the genre’s attachment to masculine freedom and aversion to heteronormative constraints has produced a crisis of masculinity, one which Woo tries to resolve with a forever deferred expression of homoeroticism through violence and sentimentality (Leung 2008, 81–83). In order to balance masculine freedom while delimiting it from the territory of homosexuality, a heterosexual subplot has to be inserted amidst the homosocial bonds. At the same time, to avoid heteronormative constraints such as marriage and child-rearing, which intrude on masculine freedom, the subplot has to be marginalized to the extent that its disavowal in favor of masculine bonds would not disrupt audience emotional investment, which is firmly directed towards the latter. In other words, heterosexuality in these films exists as a *facilitation* of homosocial bonds as well as a marker of the bonds’ *limit*, which is the taboo of homosexuality. This structure is very obvious in *A Better Tomorrow* and its sequel *A Better Tomorrow 2*. The emotional core of both films lies with the bond amongst three men: Ho, Mark (Ken in the sequel), and Kit. The primary conflict in the films is between

institutionalized morality represented by the policeman Kit and the triad ethics represented by his brother Ho and Ho's associate Mark. This masculine universe is punctuated by a perfunctory marker of heterosexuality, personified by Kit's girlfriend (and pregnant wife in the sequel). The character is never given much screen time or depth of characterization and remains very much in the mold of what local critics term "the vase" (*huaping*), a decorative and vacuous female role that facilitates plot development.

Compared to Woo's films, the heterosexual romance in *As Tears Go By* is given much more balance in terms of screen time and characterization. Ah Ngor is no "vase" and she is given equal weight in the film as the two male characters. Even more significantly, her romance with Wah is given its own spatial signature. The domestic space of Wah's apartment becomes associated with Ah Ngor after her arrival, contrasting with the bars, mahjong parlors, and tea houses where Wah and Fly conduct their triad business. The comparatively rural space of Lantau Island (then accessible from the city only by ferry) provides Wah with peaceful respite, in contrast with the urbanized and masculine spaces of Kowloon, where he is constantly embroiled in violent encounters. These two sets of scenes are perfectly balanced, seamlessly cut from one to the other to facilitate an equal sense of importance and investment for the audience.

While the two generic plots are balanced in time allotment, spatial association, and characterization, they are not pitched against one another in a melodramatic manner to generate conflict. Fly never questions Wah's interest in his cousin, and Ah Ngor never asks Wah to abandon Fly. In both spatial and emotional terms Wah shuttles between the two worlds with relative ease, not belonging to one or the other, or belonging equally to both. Furthermore, as Abbas points out, the film eschews the visual excess of Woo's films, opting instead for what Abbas calls a "visual density" that does not cohere but rather "disorient[s] and refuse[s] to stabilize." Abbas cites as an example the last scene in which Wah lies dying and "one quick shot of a flickering memory of love-making" is intercut into the scene while Wah's lifeless image "throb[s] on, like a heartbeat, as if the image had acquired a life of its own" (1997a, 35). The staging and editing of this memorable last sequence illustrates in visual terms what Wong has already done through characterization, narrative, and spatial staging: heterosexuality and homosociality, as core elements in two genres, are "preposterously" positioned, in Yue's sense of a Mobius strip trajectory where it is impossible to disentangle where one begins and the other ends.

Aside from the way Wong visually and narratively positions the two genres, there are other aspects of the film that highlight this queer structure of intimacy. Critics have rightly focused on the Wah–Ngor–Fly triangle, but there is *another*, always overlooked, trio that highlights a clear relation between heterosexuality and homosociality. Just as Wah is Fly's "older brother" (*da lao*) in the triad kinship hierarchy, Fly is himself an "older brother" to Ah Sai. Like everything else in Fly's life, however, his role as an "older brother" is also a gargantuan

failure. The film illustrates this failure through two main scenes, both of which involve Ah Sai's heteronormative obligations. The first is a wedding dinner for Ah Sai and his pregnant girlfriend, held on a rooftop (rather than more respectfully in a proper restaurant). The scene reveals that the disgraceful venue is a result of Fly's financial inability to provide for Ah Sai, thus causing both of them public humiliation and a loss of face in front of Ah Sai's new in-laws. Later we learn that in order to pay for even the farce on the rooftop, Fly has borrowed money from Tony. His inability to repay even that amount ultimately leads to his and Wah's brutal torture at Tony's hand. Fly's responsibility for Ah Sai is highlighted again in a scene after Fly has volunteered to take out the police's witness. He brings some of his "consolation money," usually reserved for the assassin's family, to give to Ah Sai so he could pay for a proper celebration for his new baby and rehabilitate his reputation in front of the in-laws. Fly and Ah Sai's relationship illustrates the *other* side of the structure Fly, Wah, and Ah Ngor inhabit. If Wah's attachment to Fly reveals the fatal price homosociality exacts on heterosexual love, then Ah Sai's heteronormative obligations expose the similarly fatal demands they exert on Fly's homosocial loyalty to him. From the perspective of these two triangles, we can attribute the tragedy of *As Tears Go By* to this "preposterously" tangled logic of intimacy: Wah sacrifices his heterosexual love for Ah Ngor to honor his homosocial bond to Fly, who needs Wah's help only because he wants to honor his own homosocial bond to Ah Sai, whose heteronormative obligations are what demand Fly's sacrifice in the first place.

One final element in *As Tears Go By* that highlights the dynamics of the hetero-homo structure is the heightened portrayal of homophobia amidst intense scenes of homosocial bonding, thereby revealing the taboo of homosexuality in homosocial relations while drawing attention to the underlying proximity between the two. The first instance of such homophobia is articulated by Fly at Ah Sai's wedding, when he repeatedly calls Ah Sai's disgruntled father-in-law a "faggot" to mask the humiliation he feels at not being able to put on a proper wedding for his triad brother. A far more intense expression of homophobia comes from Tony. In the scene where Wah tries to placate the fuel between Fly and Tony, Tony constantly puns on the term "little brother" which refers to a junior triad associate (in this case Fly) but is also a slang term for penis. Tony's insult implies with derision that there is a homosexual relation between Wah and Fly. The insult leads Wah to fire a shot into Tony's pants, aiming in turn at his "little brother," thereby adding a homoerotic (if also homophobic) *frisson* to the violent tension between the men. This exchange is recalled in the brutal torture scene, where Tony plays Russian roulette into Wah's pants, once again punning on "little brother" to conflate Wah's vulnerable penis with the severely wounded Fly writhing in pain on the ground.

Wong's debut film is thus most impressive from a queer perspective in its repositioning of elements from two genres that exposes a queer structure of

intimacy. Heterosexual love and heteronormative obligations are entangled with homosocial bonds that are in turn fiercely, yet precariously, demarcated from homosexuality. At the same time, the *failure* of love, whether as heterosexual romance or as homosocial bonds, is at the heart of this film. From hindsight, we know that this is only the beginning of many, many more failures to come.

Erotics of failure

In a study of Wong's first six films, Abbas suggests that Wong may not be primarily concerned with change and development. Rather, Abbas describes his films' structuring principle as that of "repetition and memory" (1997b, 40). What is persistently repeated and remembered, according to Abbas, is "an experience of the negative" (1997b, 41), of something elusive that is just out of grasp, resulting in what he calls the "erotics of disappointment" (1997b, 39). While Abbas exhaustively compiles a list of what disappoints – from images that raise unmet expectations and plot lines that lead to no resolution to characters filled with negative emotions and desires that are persistently displaced – he does not explicitly explain what is *erotic* about such disappointments. No doubt there are many possible answers to this question. In this section, I will attempt a queer explanation.

One element from *As Tears Go By* that recurs in the later films with ever deepening complexity and intensity is its triangulated structure of intimacy. Love triangles abound in all of Wong's films. It may sound absurd to say there are no couples in a Wong Kar-wai film but the statement would not be too far wrong. In fact, love in Wong's films appears to be a recurrent failure of monosexual intimacy. In other words, the couple – the fundamental unit of heterosexual monogamy – is shown to fail over and over. From this angle, even though Wong's films are not about bisexuality and polyamory *per se*, it is interesting to look at them through bi and ploy discourses, which are premised on a critique of the hegemony of *coupling* as a basis for love and intimacy.

In a recent survey of bi cinema criticism, B.C. Roberts lists exposure of stereotypes, examination of tropes, and identification of bisexual narratives as the three main approaches favored by critics. Roberts argues, however, that all of these approaches rely on an *a priori* notion of what bisexuality is, without taking into account how bisexuality is being constructed by the cinematic medium itself. In a footnote, Roberts cites Claire Hemmings' definition of "bi perspective as a way of knowing, rather than a thing to look for" as a better critical path (2011, 341). Maria Prammaggiore (1996) calls this way of knowing "an epistemology of the fence":

The fence...identifies a place of in-betweenness and indecision...Bisexual epistemologies – ways of apprehending, organizing, and intervening in the world that

refuses one-to-one correspondences between sex acts and identity, between erotic objects and sexualities, between identification and desire – acknowledge fluid desires and their continual construction and deconstruction of the desiring subject (282).

A “bi way of knowing” is thus not necessarily, or even primarily, about “finding” bisexuality. Rather, it provides a lens through which we view the constricting structure of coupledness while noting what resists, escapes, or transcends its constraints.

A similar approach may be culled from the discourse on polyamory, which also poses important challenges for the primacy of the couple as a relationship unit. While there has been critique of the tendency of poly literature to focus on self-help and esoterism (Haritaworn *et al.* 2006, 519–523), more recent works have brought attention to the political and historical contexts in which polyamory emerges as a relationship philosophy, or what Christian Klesse calls a “discourse of love” (2011, 5). Klesse teases out many eclectic elements from the discursive construction of polyamory and finds that poly practitioners distinguish themselves from other non-monogamists by centralizing *love* as a core experience. While elements of poly discourse coincide with normative notions of romantic love, it also fundamentally “challenges the hegemony of the core couple as the only valid script for erotic and intimate relationships” (20). A “poly way of knowing” thus inquires beyond the binary unit of the couple and locates in monosexual failure alternative scripts of commitment and intimacy.

In this section I will discuss several ways in which love in Wong Kar-wai’s cinematic universe is fundamentally at odds with the structure of the couple. Bi and poly epistemologies provide us with one means to understand why Wong’s films are at their most alluring when heterosexual coupledness fails and disappoints.

Yuddy in *Days of Being Wild* is a perfect symbol of the fence. Narcissistic and melancholic, consumed by his own identification with the fable of the legless bird, he seems committed to a refusal (or inability) to stay grounded or make decisions, especially in matters of love. He also happens to be the common point of three intersecting love triangles in the film: Yuddy/Lulu/So Lai-chen, Yuddy/Lulu/Zeb, and Yuddy/So Lai-chen/Tak. In Marjorie Garber’s encyclopedic study of bisexuality in culture, she points out that love triangles are often erotic not so much because of the people involved, but because of the *structure* itself. Garber explains the erotic appeal of what she calls “the logic of the third”: the persistent uncertainty of triangulated desire, the position of the third as a force of interruption and intervention, and the opportunity to change positions within the triangle in a variety of permutations (1995, 430–431). All these elements provide pleasure, intensity, or thrill that are not possible within the structure of the couple. Triangles in romance narratives are thus not necessarily, as often assumed, an “obstacle” for the couple to overcome while on their way to the *denouement* of true love. Triangles in and of themselves can be the erotic object. The love triangles in *Days of Being Wild* provide an example for

us to examine how this structure is eroticized at both a visual and a thematic level.

In a detailed study of *Days of Being Wild*'s visual style, in particular Wong's use of the multiple movement long-take and depth of field, Sam Ho – a local film critic and member of the Hong Kong Film Critics Society – compares the interaction between actors, camera, and the lens to “an ensemble dance” (2004, 52). Ho interprets this dynamic visuality as an expression of the “entangled, inseparable” feelings that bind the characters (55). All the scenes chosen by Ho to illustrate this visuality involve two sides of a love triangle, with the absent third party driving the emotional force of the scene. The most celebrated of Ho's examples is the one-minute take of the conversation between So Lai-chen and the policeman Tak, just before the stroke of midnight, when Tak scolds her for being indecisive about her unfaithful lover. Ho describes the scene in this way:

The take begins with a medium shot: the policeman faces So Lai-chen, his back in front of the camera. Then, as though they were in a dance-musical, they move through two sets of dance steps: turn around, twist the body, turn the face, while switching positions, each alternately facing and backing away from the camera. Finally, facing her back which is in front of our screen, he says: “You either want him or ditch him...From this minute on...” She suddenly turns her body – now both characters are facing the camera in a two-shot – and interjects almost hysterically: “You shut up about this minute!” And just as the minute [-long take] is about to end, the clock chimes. (50)

The intricate movement, created by the choreography of the actors' positions and nuanced changes in composition, provides a visual parallel to the emotional movement of the love triangle. Akin to a game of musical chairs, the roles in the triangle – the lover and the beloved, the heartbreaker and the heartbroken, the third-party outsider – change positions throughout the course of the film. In the scene described above, So Lai-chen is on the verge of getting over Yuddy, encouraged by Tak, who is giving advice as a disinterested observer but who is also on the verge of falling in love with her. The absent Yuddy drives the scene – and the triangle – but not for long. Towards the end of the film, this same triangle reappears but in a different permutation. On the train across the Philippine countryside, Yuddy lies dying while Tak sits on the other side of the aisle, his face looking away from Yuddy. The camera cuts from a medium close-up of Yuddy to that of Tak, whose face is intermittently obscured and illuminated by a faint light. The two men talk about So Lai-chen and the “one minute” that Yuddy clearly still remembers. In this scene, the absent So Lai-chen is now the beloved, driving the intense and charged exchange between two men who, despite their disavowal, are both still in love with her. Visually, we perceive little movement, as Yuddy's impending death stabilizes the triangle, leaving no possibility for further change in positions. The only movement

we see in the scene is the flickering light on Tak's face, throbbing like Yuddy's dying heartbeat.

Much of the film's visual poetry is thus motivated by the characters' triangulated emotional involvement. The film's eroticism is underwritten less by scenes of explicit sexuality (of which there are few) and more by the dance-like movement of characters' shifting positioning within the love triangles.

Aside from allowing positional shifts, triangles foster jealousy, an intense emotion that is frequently eroticized in Wong's films. In her study of queer poly communities, Jillian Deri singles out poly practitioners' experience, understanding, and negotiation with jealousy as the communities' most distinctive intervention into normative discourse of love and intimacy, which is often premised on *eliminating* jealousy. By contrast, jealousy in poly relationships is *managed*, often in creative and transformative ways. For example, the notion of "compersion" was coined by poly practitioners (Deri 2011, 27–28) to describe "the ability to empathize with a lover's pleasure, to feel it like one's own, even when the pleasure comes from a source other than oneself" (Anderlini D'Onofrio 2004, 4). While compersion may appear to be the opposite of jealousy, it may equally be thought of as a trajectory for jealousy, a state where negative feelings of mistrust and betrayal are transformed into positive feelings of joy or excitement. Moreover, Deri finds that while some polyamorists do not experience compersion in this transformative manner, they are able to eroticize the intensity of jealousy. Deri calls this practice "emotional masochism" or "a kind of erotic anguish" (2011, 241). I will explore the way this anguished yet erotic state – where jealousy is not yet compersion but is nonetheless managed so that it *facilitates* rather than hinders desire – is at work in *In The Mood For Love*.

In The Mood For Love is at core a romance with a structure. Inspired by the novella *Intersections* by Liu Yichang (and from which the film takes its inter-titles), the film draws from its fictional source a structure rather than content or themes. The novella's Chinese title *Duidao* refers to *tête-bêche*, a pair of stamps where one is positioned upside down in relation to the other. The novella experiments with this structure by placing the contrasting narratives of a middle-aged man and a teenage girl side by side and "head to tail" with each other. By contrast, *In The Mood For Love* deploys the *tête-bêche* not as a narrative device, but as an erotic structure where two married couples are placed metaphorically upside down from one another. As one spouse from each couple engages in an affair with each other, the remaining partners of the pairs begin a tortuously restrained but intensely erotic relation with one another. Abandoning the structure of the intersecting love triangles discussed previously, the film focuses instead on a couple, Chow Mo-wan and So Lai-chen, but their intimacy is routed through their jealous imagining and re-enactment of their spouses' affair. Their closeness grows as they repeatedly play the roles of their cheating spouses, and rehearses with each other possible scenarios of exposing them. The film depicts the repressive constraints of heterosexual obligations in the

world of 1960s Hong Kong through the colorfully cramped environment of the shared rooms where neighbors police each other with their watchful and moralistic eye. Teo even places the film within the lineage of melodrama that involves the moral-ethical dilemma of marriage and fidelity (2005, 118–119). However, if we view the film through a poly lens, the protagonists' anguished relationship is more *erotic* than tragic: it becomes a creative management of jealousy that facilitates their *own* desire for each other.

So it seems the couple as a unit is never enough to ignite desire or contain love in Wong's universe, even in a film like *In The Mood For Love*, which is ostensibly focused on a couple. There is a similar caveat to *Happy Together*, another film that eschews the ensemble structure while focusing on two separate instances of coupling. As depicted in the documentary *Buenos Aires Zero Degree* (directed by Kwan Pun-leung, 1999), which reveals footages of two additional female characters – a nurse who becomes involved with Lai Yiu-fai and a vagabond singer who has entanglements with Xiao Chang – that were later eliminated from the final cut, the film was originally imagined in a mould of triangulated desire that is not dissimilar to that in *Days of Being Wild*.

What can we conclude from this fascination with and eroticizing of triangulated structures in Wong's films? I will close the section with a consideration of this question through another triangle, that of Murong Yin, Murong Yang, and Huang Ruoshi in *Ashes of Time*. I have argued elsewhere that the film's depiction of Murong's split personalities as alternately woman/man, brother/sister, rival/lover is a pathologized depiction of transgender identification as a way to resolve the character's unrequited love (2011, 188–189). Doing a retake here, I see that Murong's self-created "triangle" need not simply be an attempt to resolve her unrequited love for Huang Ruoshi. Rather, she may be *creating* triangulated desire, with herself occupying the roles of rival and lover, because it provides thrill and pleasure. The film's resolution of the subplot is telling: Murong disappears and in her/his stead emerges an androgynous martial artist known as Dugu Qiubai, a name that invokes solitude (*du* and *gu*) and failure (*qiubai* literally means to "court failure"). Indeed, courting failure seems to be what lovers in Wong's films do best. It is arguably also a queer courtship as failure has recently been emerging as a queer trope. In *The Queer Art of Failure*, Judith Halberstam assembles an archive of popular cultural texts to suggest that failing can chart alternative paths of meaning making (2011, 25), that failing may indeed be a "queer art" (87), a consciously inculcated style and aesthetic, and a chosen way of knowing and unknowing. Based on their multimedia show, Ivan E. Coyote and Rae Spoon's *Gender Failure* (2014) unearths strength and wisdom from their experience of "failing" to be a normative subject in a hostile world. More than a decade before this queer embrace of failure, Hong Kong activist and artist Anson Mak (2000) makes a connection between the Chinese word *bai* denoting failure and *bi*, short for bisexual desire, which Mak theorizes as forms of intimacy that are unintelligible in hetero- or homosexual discourses of love. Failure is queer because it forces one to experience

what lies outside of sanctioned structures. The courtship of failure in Wong's films leads us to the intense and erotic edge where heteronormative intimacy falters and where something *else* lies beyond, just out of reach but tantalizingly and alluringly near.

Bodies and bonds

In the last two sections I focused on conceptual issues like genres and relationship structures. Yet, cerebral and stylized as they are, Wong Kar-wai's films are not devoid of depictions of material, bodily connections. This famous observation, uttered by the two He Zhiwu – characters both played by Takeshi Kaneshiro – in *Chungking Express* and *Fallen Angels* best illustrates this preoccupation: "Everyday you rub shoulders with people. Some of them may become your friend or your intimate." The metaphor of "rubbing shoulders" is visually literalized on screen, in the split second freeze frame where Officer #223 He Zhiwu clashes into the drug dealer at the beginning of *Chungking Express*, and in the last scene in *Fallen Angels* where the hit man's assistant rests her head on the deaf mute He Zhiwu's shoulder during the brief motorcycle ride home. These physical encounters, visceral or tender, are memorable but short-lived in Wong's films. More often, desiring bodies are brought palpably close to each other but kept tantalizingly apart, while the erotic bonds between them are constituted through more unusual means.

In an elaboration of the notion of "queer bonds," Joshua J. Weiner and Damon Young address a central question currently debated in queer theory: "In what ways do our erotic lives constitute legible forms of sociability" (2011, 223)? In trying to bridge the division between theories that are putatively "for" or "against" the social, Weiner and Young highlight the complex, even contradictory, connotations of "bond":

Semantically, bonds holds together something humane and sociable with the objectivity of the inhuman thing: bonds as in physical restraints, bonds of matrimony, of an obligation in law, of atoms. Bondage might describe a medically bound injured limb, a body bound by its culture's vestments, but also, as in S/M, a scene of pleasure willfully embarked on, or the affective extravagances of romantic love. Bonds describe relations that stretch from the strongest forms of human subjection to the most palpably experienced mutuality. (223)

In examining relationality through this notion of "bond," Weiner and Young propose "queer bonds" as a notion to understand the way sexuality "persists... as a force of, at once, incapacity and of creativity" with "a simultaneous adhesion and dehiscence, a centripetal pull toward the social and a radical centrifugal drive away from it" (236). In this formulation, queer bonds may not be "legibly homosexual" (236). Rather, they are manifest in modes of intimacy



Figure 10.2 “The Hand,” a short segment from *Eros* (2004), directed by Wong Kar-wai, produced by Stéphane Tchaladjieff, Domenico Procacci, Jacky Pang Yee Wah, Jacques Bar, and Raphael Berdugo.

that are bounded by, yet persist to stretch beyond, normative forms of relation. In this section, I explore such “queer bonds” in the short film “The Hand” and *The Grandmaster*. In these films, the erotic connection between two people is triangulated through a somatic practice, a form of artisanal labor *on* the body that facilitates erotic bonds outside of socially legible relations.

In a study of *Eros*, which comprises “The Hand” and shorts film by, respectively, Michelangelo Antonioni and Steven Soderbergh, Frank P. Tomasulo shows in detail how “The Hand” uses numerous Antonioni-esque techniques to portray the tortuous, restrained, and ultimately failed affair between Xiao Zhang, a young apprentice tailor, and Miss Hua, a glamorous sex work who is his first client. Tomasulo focuses on the film’s depiction of confinement, through the constricted settings of corridors and small rooms as well as tightly framed close-ups of body parts and restrained expressions during sexual encounters (2008, 32). Tomasulo characterizes Xiao Zhang’s desire as “unrequited” (33): Miss Hua never allows him to become her lover fully, restricting the sexual act to her masturbating him with her hand, at first as a way to “let him feel what it takes to make clothes for women” and towards the end because she does not want him to have full sexual contact with her sickly body. In the most affecting, and to my mind most erotic, scene in the film, Xiao Zhang caresses the lining of the *cheongsam* that he has made for Miss Hua in his workshop and becoming intensely turned on during the act. He is, in effect, making love to the garment (Figure 10.2). It is, of course, possible to read the scene as representative of what Tomasulo sees as the restrained and limited eroticism of a tragically mismatched, mistimed, and unrequited relation. However, bearing

in mind Wong's penchant for eroticizing failure, the scene takes on a different meaning if we accept that the ultimate erotic object in this romance is not necessarily the love affair between Xiao Zhang and Miss Hua. Rather, it may be the "queer bond" – that which simultaneously restrains and connects – forged by the *cheongsam* that Xiao Zhang lovingly and skillfully cuts and sews by hand for Miss Hua. The artisanal trade of tailoring, nostalgically remembered as a form of lost art along with all the other vanished traits of the 1960s so enamored by Wong, is here depicted as a somatic practice: it is trained on the body. Xiao Zhang's skill as a tailor is associated with the (literal) hand job Miss Hua performs on him, as well as the (figurative) hand job he performs on her, as he takes her measurements by tracing the outline of her body with his hand. The not-quite-fulfilled relationship between the two facilitates an erotic act which binds the skills of two socially marginalized artisanal labor, that of tailoring and of sex work. Seen from this angle, the scene in Xiao Zhang's workshop is not a pathetic substitute of what could have been the "real" romance. Rather, it is the erotic object of the film, a queer bond that is not socially legible, yet is irreducible to any relations that are.

A radically different kind of romance takes place in *The Grandmaster*, yet its quality of tantalizing restraint is reminiscent of the relationality depicted in *In The Mood For Love* and "The Hand". The intimate entanglement between Yip Man and Gong Er, the daughter of Yip's northern rival Gong Baosen, introduces an element of ambiguity to the film's central narrative, which is focused on the Wing Chun martial arts tradition and how it flourished under Yip Man's tutelage. In the original release, this central narrative is knocked off balance by the significant presence of Gong Er. In the Chinese-language on-line world, many film fans even interpret the titular "grandmaster" to be a reference to Gong Er, not Yip Man. The elimination in the American cut of many of her most significant scenes, particularly moments of subtle intimacy between her and Yip, reduces the film into a more straightforward narrative (Ehrlich 2013). Because of the discrepancy between the two versions, what I will argue as the "queer bond" in the film is central in the original release but becomes no more than a ghostly echo in the American cut. Yet, perhaps not unlike how the excised footage from *Happy Together* resurfaces, this state of affairs simply shows the persistence of an underlying structure that never really goes away.

The Grandmaster is first and foremost about martial arts. Unlike *Ashes of Time*, which treats the martial arts universe mainly as a backdrop for the entangled love stories of the various swordsmen, *The Grandmaster* not only sketches the historical context of the growth and decline of three main schools of martial arts but attempts to visually manifest their philosophical and stylistic diversity. The main actors all underwent rigorous martial arts training, to the extent that Chang Chen became so proficient he was able to compete in national competitions (Anon 2013). Yet, this narrative of martial arts also drives an elusive romance narrative in two ways. First, intimate feelings between Yip Man and

Gong Er are first initiated by a ferocious competition between the two as martial artists. Gong's father Gong Baosen has just lost to Yip in a "competition of reputation" that he has staged. Yip has won, as Gong Baosen says, "not with the superiority of skill, but with the superiority of ideas." Gong Er's challenge to Yip is thus initially an attempt to reclaim family pride. Just as homoeroticism can be initiated by rivalry within a heteronormative structure, here a *heteroeroticism* not permitted outside the institution of marriage is facilitated through martial arts competition. In the long sequence of the competition, the fight is eroticized through close-ups of Yip and Gong positioned as though they were about to kiss and shots dwelling on the touching of hands and the proximity of their moving bodies. After Gong wins by forcing Yip off the railings of the stairs while she herself remains perched on top, they bid each other good-bye. The dialogue in this scene adds an explicit erotic tone to the exchange that has just taken place. As Gong admonishes Yip not to only look forward but must look behind (for competitors like her), he replies with a literary pun (that is glossed over in the English subtitles): "It remains to be seen whether a leaf can hide a flower." Leaf (*ye*) puns on Yip's surname, which literally means "leaf" while the flower puns on Gong's proper given name *Ruomei*, which literally means "like a plum blossom." The intimate depiction of a flower hidden underneath a leaf explicitly eroticizes the relation and introduces an element of flirtation to their ongoing exchange in letters about martial arts. Thus even though the characters never become sexually intimate, the practice of martial arts forges a bodily bond between them that is intensely erotic.

While martial arts facilitates erotic bonds in this way, it also acts as a restraining force, especially on a female body. As the film depicts martial arts lineage and its reproduction through master teachers like Yip, it also portrays the *termination* of a lineage through Gong. After Gong's father is betrayed and murdered by his other disciple Ma San, Gong is determined to seek revenge. Yet, his father's former allies now align themselves with Ma San, and admonish Gong to "get married and bury the hatchet." As a woman, Gong's primary allegiance is supposed to be with her future husband, not her birth family and even less to the family's school of martial arts. Gong's ultimately fatal decision to pursue the revenge (which is at the same time an act of allegiance to the martial arts she excels in) is contingent on her taking up a vow to "never marry, never have children, never to have disciples." Here, the practice of martial arts demands from Gong a sexually chaste body and a total surrender to its disciplining. It binds her to a life outside of heteronormative obligations as well as a life devoid of lineage. In this way, martial arts fosters a "queer bond" that erotically connects Gong Er to Yip Man outside of the marriage structure at the same time that it confines her to a solitary life outside of family, lineage, and socially sanctioned forms of intimate connections. In a scene that is cut from the American release, the *bodily* dimension of this bond is illustrated, brutally and beautifully, through the only piece of possession that Gong leaves to Yip after her death: the burnt ashes of the hair she cuts when she takes her vow forgoing marriage



Figure 10.3 *The Grandmaster* (2013), directed by Wong Kar-wai, produced by Jacky Pang Yee Wah, Wong Kar-wai, and Harvey Weinstein.

and lineage. The close-up image of Yip's open palm receiving the tiny box of ashes (Figure 10.3) portrays a bodily connection between the two that is as ferociously palpable as fist on palm during a fight, and far more visceral than the poetic metaphor of a flower hidden beneath a leaf.

Epilogue: Some strange noise

It befits any discussion of Wong Kar-wai to end where it starts: to stall, repeat, and remember. In this spirit, I return to *Happy Together*, the only film of Wong's that has been recognized as queer, and the one film that I have until now perversely and assiduously avoided analyzing in this chapter. So much has already been said. Are there new queer angles on *Happy Together*? Is there anything left to say?

It turns out, there is.

So much has already been written about the film's queer sex, queer star, and queer reception. A new queer angle on the film requires us to turn a blind eye, not only to all of the above, but turn a blind eye period.

One of the recent stirrings in queer studies have come from its "sonic turn": an emergent interest in queer *sound*. In an article written for *The Wire*, Drew Daniel, a literary studies scholar and member of the experimental band Matmos, tells the story of three queers who went to a night club, heard an iconic gay song, and expected "the shared experience of pop music to create a 'we' within which to party, cruise, hook up, let off steam, organize, network, protect, include..." (2011, 43). However, it turned out the three queers did not actually respond to the music in the same way at all. There was no "we." Daniel

then proposes that a queer sound goes beyond music and language, eschews any form of identification and “might help us echolocate the edges of subjectation and encounter everything that stands outside the hailing process” (44). For Daniel, “all sound is queer” because it has the potential to “let us hear what is not yet locatable on the available maps of identity” (44).

There is such a moment of queer sound in *Happy Together*. After Lai Yiu-fai’s breakup with Ho Bo-wing, he befriends Chang, his co-worker who washes dishes in the kitchen of a Chinese restaurant. Chang likes to close his eyes when he works so he can tune into all the sounds around him. He claims he can perceive the mood of a speaker just by hearing the tone of his or her voice. In a scene that takes place in a night club just before Chang leaves for a trip to Ushuai, he asks Lai Yiu-fai to say something into his tape recorder so he could take Lai’s sadness “to the end of the world” and leave it there. We see Lai holding the recorder close to his face, trying to control his grief but ends up sobbing into it. Later, when Xiao Chang carries out his promise to leave Lai’s heartbreak at the lighthouse in Antarctica, he says on the voiceover that he cannot hear anything on the tape, just “some strange noise, like someone sobbing.” It is also a sound we as audience strain to hear, both in the scene of its recording because on the soundtrack it is buried beneath the music and clamor of the night club, and in the scene of its hearing by Chang because it is once again buried in the roaring wind and chirping seagulls. Yet, the sound that we cannot quite hear encapsulates everything that the film is about: loneliness, heartbreak, the futility of love, and the resilience of hope.

In Wong Kar-wai’s cinematic universe, the search for emotional and bodily connections persists, despite his characters’ ultimate inability to reach for what always lies just beyond their grasp. Yet it is precisely in this persistent struggle amidst failed structures, institutions, and obligations that we can claim a queerness in his films. Like “some strange noise” that we strain to hear but cannot really comprehend, Wong’s films stir our desire for something *other* than what we know to want.

Acknowledgments

This chapter was written in memory of the late Leung Ping-kwan and the many joyful conversations we had on Wong Kar-wai over the years. I am also deeply grateful to Audrey Yue for her encouragement, inspiration, and camaraderie during the long and arduous writing process.

References

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

- Abbas, Ackbar (1997b) "The Erotics of Disappointment." In *Wong Kar-Wai*, edited by Jean-Marc Lalanne, David Martinez, Ackbar Abbas, and Jimmy Ngai, 39–84. Paris: Editions Dis Voir.
- Anderlini-D'Onofrio, Serena (2004) "Introduction." *Journal of Bisexuality*, 4 (3–4): 1–6.
- Anon (2013) "Revealing Cut Scenes from *Grandmaster*" [揭《一代宗師》消失的場面. 失的明報週刊]. *Mingpao Weekly*, 2305. <http://www2.mingpaoweekly.com/contents/?id=24869&page=2> (accessed 8 June 2014).
- Berry, Chris (2000) "Happy Alone? Sad Young Men in East Asian Gay Cinema." *Journal of Homosexuality*, 39 (3–4): 187–200.
- Bowman, Paul (2010) "Sick Man of Trans-Asia: Bruce Lee and Rey Chow's Queer Cultural Translation." *Social Semiotics*, 20 (4): 393–409.
- Brunette, Peter (2005) *Wong Kar-wai*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Coyote, Ivan E. and Rae Spoon (2014) *Gender Failure*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.
- Daniel, Drew (2011) "Queer Sound." *The Wire*, 333: 42–46.
- Deasey, Sheila (2010) "After Halberstam: Subversion, Female Masculinity and the Subject of Heterosexuality." Salford: University of Salford.
- Deri, Jillian (2011) "Polyamory or Polyagony? Jealousy in Open Relationships." Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada: Simon Fraser University.
- Ehrlich, David (2013) "Kung Foolish: How The American Cut of *The Grandmaster* Ruins a Masterpiece." *Film.com/Movies*. <http://www.film.com/movies/wong-kar-wai-the-grandmaster-ruined-by-american-cut> (accessed 1 December 2014).
- Eng, David (2010) *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- Garber, Marjorie (1995) *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Gates, Philippa (2001) "The Man's Film: Woo and the Pleasures of Male Melodrama." *Journal of Popular Culture*, 35 (1): 59–79.
- Griffin, Sean (ed.) (2009) *Hetero: Queering Representations of Straightness*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Grossman, Andrew (2000) "Homosexual Men (and Lesbian Men) in a Heterosexual Genre. Three Gangster Films From Hong Kong." *Journal of Homosexuality*, 39 (3–4): 237–271.
- Halberstam, Judith (2011) *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- Haritaworn, Jin, Cjin-ju Lin, and Christian Klesse (2006) "Poly/logue: A Critical Introduction to Polyamory." *Sexualities*, 9(5): 515–529.
- Ho, Sam (2004) 何思穎. 舞動的影像 風格:《阿飛正傳》的鏡頭賞析 [A Dancing Visual Style: An Analysis of Shot Composition in *Days of Being Wild*]. In 王家衛的映畫世界 [*Wong Kar-wai's Cinematic World*], edited by Lawrence Pun 潘國靈 and Bono Lee 李照興, 48–61. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing.
- Klesse, Christian (2011) "Notions of Love in Polyamory: Elements in a Discourse on Multiple Loving." *Laboratorium: Russian Review of Social Research*, 3 (2): 4–25.
- Koven, Mikel (1997) "My Brother, My Lover, Myself: Traditional Masculinity in the Hong Kong Action Cinema of John Woo." *Canadian Folklore*, 19 (1): 55–68.
- Lam, Edward (1998) 林奕華. "春光背後,快樂盡頭 [Behind *Happy Together*, at the end of *Hold You Tight*]. *City Entertainment* 電影雙週刊, 495: 80–81. *Leslie Cheung Cyberworld*. <http://www.lesliecheung.cc/home/library/1990?type=year&year=1997> (accessed 1 December 2014).
- Lang, Robert (2002) *Masculine Interests: Homoerotics in Hollywood Film*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Leung, Helen Hok-Sze (2008) *Undercurrents: Queer Culture and Postcolonial Hong Kong*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Leung, Helen Hok-Sze (2010) *Farewell My Concubine: A Queer Film Classic*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.
- Leung, Helen Hok-Sze (2011) "Trans On Screen." In *Transgender China*, edited by Howard Chiang, 183–198. London: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Leung, Ping-kwan 也斯 (2004) 王家衛電影中的空間 [Space in Wong Kar-wai's films]. In 王家衛的映畫世界 [Wong Kar-wai's Cinematic World], edited by Lawrence Pun 潘國靈 and Bono Lee 李照興, 14–25. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing.
- Lim, Song Hwee (2006) *Celluloid Comrades: Representations of Male Homosexuality in Contemporary Chinese Cinemas*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Mak, Anson 麥海珊 (2000) 雙性情慾 [Bisexual desire]. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Christian Women's Association.
- Pramaggiore, Maria (1996) "Epistemologies of the Fence." In *RePresenting Bisexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire*, edited by Donald E. Hall and Maria Prammaggiore, 1–7. New York: NYU Press.
- Pun, Lawrence 潘國靈 and Bono Lee 李照興 (eds) (2004) 王家衛的映畫世界 [Wong Kar-wai's Cinematic World]. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing.
- Rich, B. Ruby (2013) *New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- Roberts, B.C. (2011) "Muddy Waters: Bisexuality in the Cinema." *Journal of Bisexuality* 11 (2–3): 329–345.
- Sandel, Jillian (1994) "A Better Tomorrow: American Masochism and Hong Kong Action Film." *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 13. <http://brightlightsfilm.com/better-tomorrow-american-masochism-hong-kong-action-films/#.VaVivHhg8kg> (accessed 14 July 2015).
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky (1985) *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Shu Kei 舒琦 (2012) 舒琦:這部電影對張國榮是一個剝削 ["Shu Kei: This Film is an Exploitation of Leslie Cheung"]. 張國榮的電影世界 [Leslie Cheung's Movie World] 3: 1996–2002, 161–163. *City Entertainment 電影雙週刊*. Hong Kong: City Entertainment 電影雙週刊出版社.
- Teo, Stephen (2005) *Wong Kar-Wai*. London: British Film Institute.
- Thomas, Calvin (2009) "On Being Post-Normal: Heterosexuality After Queer Theory." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory*, edited by Noreen Giffney and Michael O'Rourke, 17–32. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.
- Tomasulo, Frank P. (2008) "Eros and Civilization: Sexuality and the Contemporary International Art Cinema." *Film International*, 6 (6): 28–39.
- Weiner, Joshua and Damon Young (2011) "Queer Bonds." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 17(2–3): 223–241.
- Yue, Audrey (2000a) "What's so Queer about *Happy Together*? a.k.a. Queer (N)Asian: Interface, Community, Belonging." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 1 (2): 251–264.
- Yue, Audrey (2000b) "Preposterous Horror: On Rouge, a Chinese Ghost Story and Nostalgia." In *The Horror Reader*, edited by Ken Gelder, 364–373. New York: Routledge.
- Yue, Audrey (2011) "Doing Cultural Citizenship in the Global Media Hub: Illiberal Pragmatics and Lesbian Consumptions Practices in Singapore." In *Circuits of Visibility: Gender and Transnational Media Cultures*, edited by Radha Hegde, 250–267. New York: NYU Press.