

In Between the Closet and the Wild: Queer Animality in Contemporary China

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the intersections between queer and posthuman studies, exploring how animality can serve as a force for queer movements. Drawing on the theories of Eve Sedgwick and Jack Halberstam, this project proposes the existence of an intermediate space between the domestic and the wild, which is linked by queer movements. Particularly, by examining three queer works from Hong Kong and Taiwan, this project demonstrates how animality provides resources and imaginative space for queering to transgress fixed features and identities. The works examined in this project queer taxonomies, language, species, bodies, and sexualities, opening up infinite possibilities for becoming. In this way, it intends to inspire new ways of thinking about identity, community, and the natural world.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my cherished parents, who have consistently supported me regardless of the choices I made and the challenges I encountered. Your steadfast love, encouragement, and faith have served as my anchor throughout this academic journey.

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1. Introduction

Shanghai Queer Festival (SHQFF) was established in 2016 and is held annually each fall, providing a distinguished platform for showcasing independent queer films in China. In 2020, in the aftermath of the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the festival team proposed the theme of "Boundless." As Will, one of the team members, expressed, the festival aims to broaden people's understanding of queer love, which has become increasingly homogenized and corporatized within mainstream LGBT movements. In comparison, "the otherwise heterogenous queer identities, expressions, and relationships have also become more uniform and tamed than ever."¹ The team's call for diversification within the queer discourse highlights the possible hegemony and invisibility within this community and encourages people to expand their imagination about queering.

The festival's organizers have also articulated the "Boundless" theme from various perspectives. G.Y.Y. explains the slogan as resistance to labels, Jinjing elaborates it as undefinable desires, AKI puts it as cognitive constraints, and Lao Yu suggests that

¹ All these organizers' names are nicknames on the brochure of Shanghai Queer Film Festival, which may be because of the self-protection from censorship. For the citations and background of Shanghai Queer Film Festival, see "2020 Shanghai Queer Film Festival Program," Jan.19, 2023, <http://shqff.org/>. The program is bilingual in Chinese and English. Comparatively, Beijing Queer Film Festival started earlier in 2001 and has held the 15th in 2022. It has changed its names from "China homosexual Film Festival" (2001), "Beijing Gay & Lesbian Film Festival" (2005), and "Beijing Queer Film Forum" (2007), to "Beijing Queer Film Festival" (2009), Jan.19, 2023, <https://www.bjqff.com/category/about-festival/festival-introduction/>.

the festival should pay attention to the "broken, aging, lonely, unseemly, disparaged, and even contemptuous" souls besides the young and beautiful.

The theme of "Boundless" at the 2020 Shanghai Queer Film Festival stands in contrast to the experience of Hong Kong filmmaker Leung at the 2001 Lesbian and Gay Film Festival in San Francisco. In their book, Leung recalls their experience that their interlocutor assumed that queer Hong Kong filmmakers would see the films at the festival as "a model for their own future" (Leung 2008, 1-2). This condescending attitude prompted Leung to question the applicability of Western queer rubrics to Hong Kong queer culture and propose the concept of "queer undercurrents" that manifest as "relational bonds that escape categorization" (1).

The contrast between the two introspections of bonds within queer discourses, separated by two decades and two different film festivals, underscores the significance of Hong Kong filmmaker Robert Loh's (1946–, Luk Suk-yuen 陸叔遠) autobiographical documentary *Baboon and Broccoli* 狒狒與西蘭花, screened as a special feature at the 2020 Shanghai Queer Film Festival. The film responds to these discussions in two significant ways.

Firstly, the film is a retrospective review of the life of a 72-year-old gay man in Hong Kong, expanding cinematic representations of same-sex love beyond the narrow depictions of "young, pretty, innocent, and awakened bodies in the well-known gay

movies," as the festival program advocates (SHQFF, 4). Loh's film showcases a wider range of experiences and perspectives on queer identities and relationships.

Secondly, in addition to exploring interpersonal love, the film also delves into the boundaries between humans and non-human animals, as suggested by its title. The baboon and broccoli, cultural symbols that run throughout Loh's five-decade-long artistic career, represent his shifting and complex identities of culture, sexuality, and nationality as he migrated between Hong Kong, Japan, Europe, and Shanghai.

The title of Robert Loh's autobiographical documentary, *Baboon and Broccoli*, is derived from a painting he created in his twenties (figure 1), which features a young boy holding a piece of broccoli in his left hand, standing against a scarlet background. On the boy's right side is a mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*) with a blue face. The boy in the painting represents Loh himself, who was struggling with his identity as a gay man at a young age.

Loh was drawn to primate studies for the power and savagery of baboons, while he regarded himself as "docile, shy, and timid," feeling the need to repress his same-sex desires. In this sense, Loh saw himself as his "own enemy."² In the 2020 film, after five decades, Loh reflects on his past struggles in the closet, navigating his body and expressions under the pressure of family and public scrutiny in Hong Kong.

² All quotations of Loh's narratives in this section are from our correspondences between 2022 September to 2023 March with slight modifications.

The painting's travels and adaptations signify Loh's evolving personal identity, from a young artist to a senior filmmaker, as well as the shifting political landscape of Hong Kong, from a British colony to its handover to mainland China. The political positions of Hong Kong have implicitly influenced Loh's artistic works with the same title. During the 1970s, Loh completed his studies in the US and went on to become a couturier, which enabled him to travel extensively for work. During his travels to Japan and Europe, Loh had the opportunity to learn about global gay cultures and communities. In the 1980s, Loh returned to Hong Kong and established his own studio. It was during this period that he created the painting "Baboon and Broccoli," which he used to tacitly claim his sexual identity.

It is true that the initial representation of queer identity in Loh's painting "Baboon and Broccoli" is somewhat ambiguous, as it sheds more light on nonhuman species than the human. Indeed, the seemingly peaceful representation of Loh's painting "Baboon and Broccoli" contains rich potential for us to rethink queer identities beyond anthropocentrism through its reverse discourse of species. By placing the baboon alongside the young boy, the painting disrupts conventional notions of identity and kinship, highlighting the potential for connections and bonds that exist beyond traditional human relationships.

As a result, the artistic work challenges not only heteronormative conceptions of identity and family but also the human-centric way of thinking about queerness. By

emphasizing the importance of non-human species and the ways in which they can contribute to our understanding of queerness, Loh's work expands the discursive resources available to queer studies and praxes.

The ambiguity of species in Loh's painting is further complicated by the fact the mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*), while previously regarded as a kind of baboon, is now categorized as a large Old World monkey (*Cercopithecidae*). This illustrates the instability of taxonomies as floating signifiers and challenges the human-centric way of thinking about queerness. However, tracing the etymology of the word "mandrill," it is constituted of "man" and "drill," the latter of which refers to "baboon," implying its previous taxonomy. Moreover, the mandrill is known as *shanxiao* 山魈 in Chinese, referring to a one-legged demon that resides in the mountains and further blurring reality and fictionality.³ The entanglement of the names of man, baboon, and demon in different names for mandrill further underscores this blurring of categorical boundaries.

Moreover, Loh intends to challenge categorical boundaries by depicting the baboon as a domesticated pet and the broccoli as a flower. The nomenclature surrounding broccoli also blurs traditional distinctions between plant types, paralleling the evolution of distinctions between "baboon" and "mandrill" over time. The Chinese

³ There are abundant records of *shanxiao* in traditional Chinese literature, including *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*shanghai jing* 山海經) and *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (*liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異). Usually, the animal is described as ugly and outrageous monster, which precisely echoes the stigmatization of queer people. Additionally, such a metaphor of demons accords with the curse of "crystal ghost" towards the gay boys in *Crystal Boys* (Pai and Howard Goldblatt 1995, 44–45), which will be discussed in the following section.

name for broccoli, *xilan hua* 西蘭花 (literally "Western orchid"), underscores its floral qualities and implies that it was previously regarded as a flower in some regions, prior to its utilization as a vegetable. This blurring of categorical boundaries is further exemplified by the name "green vegetable-flower" (*lv cai hua* 綠菜花), which is used to describe broccoli in certain areas. This nomenclature directly associates the plant with its floral attributes, obfuscating traditional distinctions between plant types. Ultimately, these challenges to classification and categorical boundaries present in Loh's works offer new possibilities for thinking about queerness beyond anthropocentrism.



Figure 1: Robert Loh's painting "Baboon and Broccoli," 1980

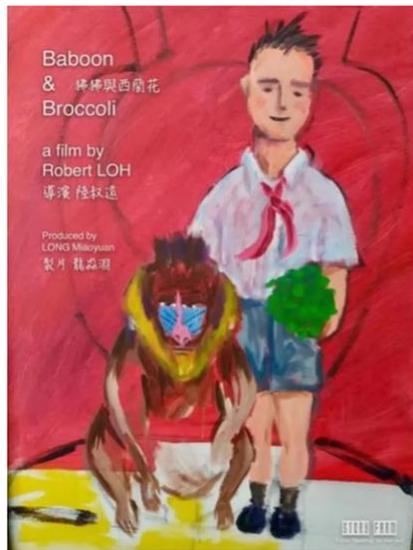


Figure 2: The Poster of the Film Baboon and Broccoli, 2020

Loh's persona and his ideal self are represented as two opposing animals: the docile dog and the wild baboon. On the one hand, Loh's representation of the baboon as his "alter ego," "personae animal," and "wild undercurrent deep end" highlights his fascination with the primate's "savageness and power," which represents a vitality and wildness that he feels unable to express through his own body. Through the pet baboon, Loh's narrative subverts the traditional hierarchy of master and pet, demonstrating that the nonhuman pet need not yield to human domestication and domination. Instead, the baboon becomes a model for human behavior, envisioning an ideal life excluded by human society. In this way, Loh's work challenges anthropocentric thinking and provides a new perspective for queer identity beyond the human-centric perspective.

On the other hand, Loh himself is depicted as a dog, born in the Chinese Year of the Dog in 1946. He characterizes himself as "naturally very giving, sharing, and self-

sacrificing, like a dog who is forgiving and licks up to strangers without grudge." By comparing himself to a dog, Loh suggests that he always puts others first, a trait that also manifests in his sexual behavior. In this way, the baboon represents Loh's desire to break free from social norms and be brave and liberated, making it a metaphor for marginalized queer individuals. Additionally, Loh's linking of animal behaviors to his sexual activities imbues the baboon with sexual implications, further reinforcing the animal's significance to Loh's personal and sexual identity. As a result, his painting becomes a projection of his expectations for sexual expression and liberation, as well as a representation of his identity as a marginalized queer individual.

Besides the anti-taxonomic descriptions of the baboon and broccoli, the boy is also depicted with an ambiguous and multifaceted cultural identity hanging between Chineseness and other cultures. This is conveyed through his incongruous accessories. The white shirt and shorts are reminiscent of a school uniform,⁴ while the red scarf indicates a connection to socialist China. The American Indian war paint and feathered Papua New Guinean headdress further complicate the boy's identity, highlighting his anti-institutional nature. These multicultural elements, akin to the depictions of the baboon and broccoli, challenge normative definitions and classifications, expressing a desire to liberate immanent possibilities. Loh describes them as "external signs of inner

⁴ The boy's clothing style accords with men's school uniforms of Hong Kong middle school in the 1950s, which was modified from American uniforms. See Chen 2019, 64–68.

gayness," countercultural in nature. As such, the boy, the primate, and the plant in the picture challenge the veracity of language and the hegemony of taxonomies, suggesting the queerness not confined to conventional definitions or classifications.

Paradoxically, however, taking a baboon as a pet also means to tame it and eliminate its ferity. In the same logic, once same-sex desire is represented in the form of art and symbols, it loses its "savageness" and oppositionality against regulations that Loh initially pursued. Such a paradox between domestication and wildness embodies the unsayable character of (queer) desire, and Loh's artistic representations through animality and vegetality inevitably traverse the two spaces. Loh's artworks thus challenge the normative understanding of desire and its representation, highlighting the dynamic interplay between societal regulations and subversive artistic practices.

Loh's use of counter-cultural symbols to criticize taxonomies and heteronormativity reveals a desire for a queer identity that cannot be directly expressed. Instead, the painting is a signifier of lack and absence, representing a desire suspended between the paradox of wildness and domestication. Loh's use of animal and plant symbolism blurs the boundaries between categories and reveals the limitations of human language in expressing queer desire. The painting suggests a status of in-betweenness that bridges the wild and home but does not belong to either. Ultimately, "Baboon and Broccoli" serves as a metaphor for the unspoken and unrepresented aspects of queer desire that exist in the liminal spaces of social norms and categories.

In other words, the baboon is neither a wild animal nor a pet, and the broccoli is neither a vegetable nor a flower. The painting represents not what queer identity or a species is, but what it is not, and its rejection of taxonomies is an exploration of the gap itself. This negatory gesture reflects the becoming of "queering" that opposes fixed positions, as Andrea Bachner (2013) has argued. The rejection of fixed definitions signifies the dynamic and changing nature of queer identity and the queering of other species. The painting pushes the broccoli to an intermediate status, moving between the naming of the flower and the vegetable, and promotes a new queer politics of fluidity and in-betweenness as a substitute for the univocal politics of outing.

1.1 Beyond Anthropocentrism/Symbolocentricism

Judith Butler challenges the notion of the primordial nature of Lacanian law by revealing its function as citation. According to Butler, the law is not fixed but produced through citation, which means that the symbolic order functions as "normativizing injunctions that secure the borders of sex" (Butler 2011, xxiii, 167). Similarly, species are also produced through the citational symbolic, meaning that the discourses of species and sexuality both result from the injunctions of the symbolic. Therefore, the struggles for species and sexual justice share a common aim of resisting the hegemony of the symbolic and can provide discursive resources for each other.

Moreover, in her earlier book, Butler critiques Lacanian phallic order as Nietzschean "slave morality," whose adherents tacitly accept the inaccessibility and inevitability of the paternal law that produces heterosexual desire and differentiates between what can be spoken and what cannot. For Butler, inspired by Foucault, the law is constituted by power, rather than being prediscursive or primary (1999, 72–97). This echoes Žižek's comment on Lacanian symbolic order as an anthropocentric/symbolocentric position (Žižek 1991, 47). In this sense, Loh's painting represents an attempt to break free from the existing symbolic order of species and gender, challenging the impossibility and inaccessibility of the order, and questioning the anthropocentric and symbolocentric positions of artistic and sexual expressions. The juxtaposition of the three creatures (the human, the monkey, and the plant) and the play on their names reveal the unspeakable darkness beyond the taxonomic and heteronormative law. Loh's work embodies a negation of the existing order and proposes the potential for a new, more fluid and inclusive order.

As Žižek remarks, human language is inherently structured around the dichotomy of masculinity and femininity, and this is due to the fact that "symbolization as such is by definition structured around a certain central impossibility" (ibid.). In the context of Loh's painting, this "central impossibility" is the lack of a stable definition of queering. The precise description of queer desire is impossible to capture in language, and the symbolization of it thus always points beyond itself. The painting itself gestures

towards this pointing-away, revealing the "impasse of symbolization" discussed by Zizek.

The Lacanian logic defines the masculine side as universal and the feminine side as its phallic exception. However, by introducing a primate and a plant into the discourse of sexual difference, Loh's work adds new exceptions and complicates the situation of differentiation. In this way, Loh's painting challenges Zizek's argument on the "impossibility of a 'neutral' language," derived from a "radical 'anthropocentric'... and symbolocentric version" of explaining the relationship between the human and the cosmic. The inclusion of nonhuman elements highlights the fluidity and instability of the symbolic order and its limitations in capturing the complexities of desire and identity.

Through his manipulation of taxonomic regulations, Loh's art responds to Butler's question regarding the potential for mobilizing the circulation of heterosexist constructs through exaggeration, discordance, internal confusion, and proliferation (Butler 1999, 41–42). The unstable classification of the baboon and broccoli challenges the categorization of "natural objects" and thus calls into question the "naturalness" of a boy's sexuality. Loh's work reveals the inherent prohibitions within the taxonomic law that restrict species to particular niches constructed by language and names. However, the inevitable gaps between species and proper nouns mean that those nouns can never truly be "proper." The attributes that nouns and biological descriptions cannot entirely encompass result in a dissatisfaction with vitality. Like language, taxonomy inevitably

fails to represent creatures fully, but its limitations serve as both the preconditions of biological understanding and the markers of the vanity of such a knowledge system.⁵

In essence, taxonomies are a series of signs that name and represent the real in order to understand it. The limitation of taxonomies exposed in Loh's painting illustrates the barred symbolic with "the irreducible gap separating the real from the modes of its symbolization" (Žižek 1991, 36). As a part of human knowledge and language, all taxonomic methods are a form of tyranny. Yet, since language is an inherent part of our human existence, it is impossible to escape or suspend such a gap. As Žižek asserts, this gap is "something that defines our very *condition humaine*" (ibid.). In this perspective, what Loh's work does is disavow such "*condition humaine*" by questioning the validity of the symbolization and the necessity of the gap.

By bringing zoology and botany in relation to sexuality, Loh's work questions the fundamental way of constructing our knowledge of the world and the relationship between humans and other beings. This touches on Heidegger's (2010) idea of "being-with" and "Dasein-with." Loh challenges not only the regulatory practice that creates the unity of gender, as argued by Butler (1999, 42), but also the unity of other species as a result of exclusionary practices. Thus, the subversion of heteronormativity is deeply linked to the subversion of anthropocentric hegemony over nonhuman species. The

⁵ On the comments about Lacanian understanding of the relationship between language and desire, see Butler 1999, 55.

painting discloses the collusion between the constitutive categories of gender and those of nonhuman creatures, complicating both gender and species justice. In this sense, Loh's work points to the question of how to imagine a more inclusive and equitable way of being-with, one that takes into account the diversity and complexity of all beings.

As Butler argues in her book, gender is performative, meaning that it is not an inherent characteristic of an individual but rather a repeated and culturally constructed act. The same applies to Loh's use of taxonomies, which he appropriates as a masquerade of sexuality, repressed in the heteronormative society. Moreover, animality (and vegetality) signify another structure of masquerade. Assigning an imaginary baboon as his pet and "alter ego," Loh finds/invents an ally and a vessel of his phantasmic desire. The baboon in Loh's painting serves as a Lacanian mask, which "dominates the identifications in which refusals of demand are resolved" (Lacan 2020, 222).

Loh's artwork embodies a subtle form of queering within certain contexts in China where same-sex desire is repressed, by utilizing names and taxonomies to question their veracity while also mobilizing other discourses. By hovering between naming and anti-naming, the painting connects the struggle for species justice with that of sexual justice.

In this light, this thesis intends to delve deeper into the in-betweenness of China's queer literature, which exist within the realms of the human and nonhuman, family and the wild, as well as reality and fictionality.

1.2 In Between the Closet and the Wild

The paradox of domestication and wildness embodied by Loh's artwork can be further considered as a response to Jack Halberstam's recent book on desire. In the book *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*, Halberstam (2020) proposes an epistemology of the ferox/wild as an alternative way of considering the sexuality of "pre-homosexual life" in the twentieth century. As a counterpart to Eve Sedgwick's (2008) *Epistemology of the Closet*, Halberstam argues, "the closet has proven to be too narrow and even too domestic as a symbol" (10), and he thus intends to open the space of the wild beyond family. Echoing Foucault's "untamed ontology" in *The Order of Things*, Halberstam investigates the potential of unknowable and unsayable space that cannot be positioned in the existing taxonomies (Halberstam 95; Foucault 302). By illuminating the bewilderment of desire, Halberstam provides access to the disordered space veiled by knowledge and scientism, rediscovering the desire that has not been tamed by words. In this way, Halberstam proposes, we "enter the wild rumpus, the disorder of desire," to "eschew the order of things with its private property" "and its family homes" (32).

Halberstam's work remarkably opens up a productive space of desire which was more or less ignored by queer studies, providing a vehicle for further diversifying and queering sexuality. However, by refuting Sedgwick's closet as "too domestic" and thereby taking wildness as "another language of sexuality," Halberstam, in a sense, sets a new binary between domestication and wildness, the knowable and unknowable, named and unnamed. Nevertheless, besides the oppositional territories, there are also "semi-wild" spaces, which both resist and cooperate with taxonomic orders, such as the city park in Pai Hsien-yung's 1994 novel *Crystal Boys*, the mountain villa in Dung Kai-cheung's 1994 novella *Androgyny*, the underground bar in *Notes of a Crocodile*, etc.

I draw upon the concept of "semi-wild" as discussed by Juno Salazar Parreñas in her ethnographic monograph *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation* (2018), as well as Carlos Rojas' essay "Becoming Semi-wild: Colonial Legacies and Interspecies Intimacies in Zhang Guixing's Rainforest Novels" (2022), which appropriates Parreñas' notion "semi-wild." Parreñas and Rojas explore the complex dynamics of colonization and decolonization in Sarawak, Borneo, through the lens of the "semi-wild" concept. Building upon their work, I apply the idea of the "semi-wild" to investigate the liminal space between Sedgwick's domestic imagination and Halberstam's wild extension, examining the connections and movements between the two realms. This thesis explores queer relationships that, like captive orangutans, confront a similar predicament, suspended between the home and the wild, between

knowledge and non-knowledge, and between dominant narratives and counter-narratives.

However, this project aims to move beyond viewing the "semi-wild" status as merely a traumatic consequence, as illustrated in Rojas' and Parreñas' works concerning the colonized and captive orangutans. Instead, I consider it in queer context as a unique situation that Chinese queer communities encounter, influenced by traditional Asian values about family and globalization. I view this situation as an opportunity for Chinese queer individuals to articulate their subjectivities and discourses distinct from the dominant Euro-American narratives. Homi Bhabha terms "third space" to complicate political identities and the relationship between minority and authority, emphasizing its ambivalent nature. (Rutherford 1990). With this perspective, this project proposes that the "semi-wild" space between the closet and the wild can function as a third space that enables us to challenge binary thinking and explore the inherent fluidity in queering.

On the other hand, as an alternative epistemology to the closet one, Halberstam's *ferox* aims to discover the desire goes beyond borders, languages, and categories. Nonetheless, abandoning taxonomies and embracing the unsayable and unknowable is not the only way to represent the "untamed" desire. Rather, it can also be acknowledged by creatively mobilizing modern institutional structures through the invention of new scientific theories and new species, as well as the formation of new alliances with other species, as Rojas (2020) demonstrates. Continuing Rojas' argument, this project further

explores the tension between taxonomies and queerness, stressing the double facets that Chinese queer discourses both cooperate with and transgress scientific discourses and norms, the home and the wild. As my thesis will demonstrate, the semi-wild space does not simply abandon the language/rationality and step into the unsayable darkness. Rather, they play with taxonomies by delving into scientific discourses and representing new possibilities of evolution. The mobilization of taxonomies, therefore, renders the new space in motion, instead of a fixed area.

1.3 Beyond Suffering: Animality in Question

Considering the intermediacy between domesticity and wildness, tamed and untamed ontology, I would take animality as a lens to investigate queer culture in Greater China from the late 1980s to early 2000s, exploring its potential as a force of becoming in queer discourses.

Limited by language and rationality, the nonhuman animal can be impenetrable to the human. In her essay analyzing J.M. Coetzee's (2016) novella on animal rights, *The Lives of Animals*, Cora Diamond (2003), discloses the difficulty of considering others' lives via philosophy and hence proposes the poetic way to approach "the reality to which we were attending seemed to resist our thinking it." In this light, the fictional species in queer literature provide such a poetic lens to imagine the relationship that cannot be achieved by philosophical speculations. Both Coetzee and Diamond, however, endorse a utilitarian position and presuppose animality as passivity and vulnerability when

contemplating animals through their suffering. Following Bentham, they take suffering as the ethical foundation for animal-human relationships, for pain can be felt beyond language. Yet this means can only approach the animal from its weakness. Similar to them, in his famous essay "The Animal Therefore I am," Derrida (2008) also ends up thinking of animals via their tortures, while criticizing the Western metaphysical tradition that trivialized animals.

Despite compassion, these discourses implicitly attach negative connotations to animality, and such a logic continues in queer contexts. As Mel Chen (2012) has demonstrated in her book *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, the address about animality in the Anglo-Saxon culture usually imply racial and sexual bias. Especially, in her third chapter, Chen makes "an invitation to consider queer animality not just as a component of technofuturity, but as a site of investment, a commitment to queer, untraceable, animal futurities, morphing time and raciality" (122). Through various visual materials, Chen investigates how African slaves, "white negros" and the Asian-male body in North American culture are inherently linked with primates and queerness. In these contexts, animality refers to the precivilization and the weakness to be overcome, while queerness is regarded as perverse and animalistic.

Opposed to utilitarianism and racism, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) disclose the power of animality with their notion of becoming-animal. Through becoming, the human may be extended in the new alliance with other beings, illustrating the counter

logic of Western humanist and masculinist ways of representing and precepting the human. Inspired by the mechanism of becoming, I would like to explore how animality serves as a power to intervene in queer discourses. Comparatively, queer animality in Chinese texts does not shine too much light on racism, which is an inevitable factor in most existing scholarship setting its scope in Anglo-Saxon or antiblack history (Nyong'o 2015; Brown 2015; Weaver 2015; Chen 2012).

In that sense, Chinese texts and practices would provide a perspective that racism/colonialism plays a less significant or different role. In the contemporary queer works in Hong Kong, mainland China, and Taiwan, animality not only refers to the shared vulnerability of creatures but also serves as a way to obtain support and build alliances. Indeed, many (Chinese) queer works appropriate animality to simulate the discipline of taxonomy but in fact invent imaginary species to discipline the taxonomy. In other words, these works do not resist the hegemony of taxonomies by ignoring them, but rather by playing with pastiche.⁶

Agamben's *Homo Sacer* (1998) exposes how the division of life into *zoe* and *bios* has led to the exclusion of "bare life" and the holocaust in modern society. *Zoe* refers to the fundamental fact of living shared by all living beings, including animals, humans, and gods, while *bios* describes qualified life with political and moral aims, differentiating

⁶ This can be related to Judith Butler's transposition of Fredric Jameson's distinction between parody and pastiche when analyzing gay identities (Butler, *Gender Trouble*, Note 56, pp. 201-2).

humans from other beings (1). Modern biopolitics governs bodies through the exceptions of "bare life"/*homo sacer* to ensure the smooth functioning of society, wherein "bare life" can be slaughtered like an animal at any moment. This mechanism, according to Agamben, is the foundation of modern totalitarianism and "the perfect senselessness" (11), resulting in "imprisoned and immobile" theories and praxis (ibid.). To break free from this dilemma, Agamben advocates for the interweaving of *zoe* and *bios* (187), striving towards a new life "that is neither animal nor human" and "a high stage beyond both nature and knowledge, beyond concealment and disconcealment" (Agamben 2004, 87).

In this light, if we regard queer individuals as a group who are viewed as the "bare life" within the compulsory heteronormative society, then their solidarity with animals can be seen as a means of reconnecting *zoe* and *bios*. The rejection of the hierarchical distinction between human and nonhuman beings is thus an act of sacrilege against the phallogocentric law rooted in difference. Consequently, the alliances formed between queer individuals and nonhuman animals dismantle the longstanding division of life, envisioning the indocile bodies that challenge biopolitics.

1.4 Chapters

The thesis consists of two chapters to explore queer animality as an intermediate force that moves between the domestic closet and the wild, challenging taxonomic hegemonies. The first chapter focuses on the interplay between imaginary species and

women's bodies, through Hong Kong author Dung Kai-cheung's 1994 novella, *Androgyny: An Evolutionary History of a Nonexistent Species* 安卓珍尼：一個不存在的物種的進化史, and Taiwanese writer Chiu Miao-chin's 1994 lesbian novel, *Notes of a Crocodile* 鱷魚手記. These works embody the potential of animality to reproduce the human body and transform it into a new becoming.

Dung's novella challenges heteronormative reproduction by presenting the female body as androgynous in its encounter with a fictional lizard named *Anzhuozhenni*. Through this work, scientific discourses are linked with sexuality, mobilizing patriarchal and heteronormative structures and challenging zoological research and taxonomic naming. The observer and the observed are reversed, destabilizing the relationship between the human and nonhuman, and ultimately questioning and abandoning the anthropocentric heterosexual marriage. In her biologist study, the female protagonist transforms into a lizard-woman, forming a new solidarity between women and the reptile that reduces the importance of men in a heterosexual relationship, queering it into an organ. In this way, the previously sterile female body becomes a broad plane of consistency, on which her body is liberated from patriarchal regulations and the other human and nonhuman fellows are gathering and moving.

In Dung's *Androgyny*, reproduction is not portrayed as a passive or vulnerable act, but rather as a force for fertility and becoming. Evoking Massumi's (2021) analysis of affective motions, the man and the lizard are both virtual entities, making this story

about more than just heterosexual reproduction or interspecies relationships. It is a complex tale of becoming a *lizard-man-woman*, surpassing even Deleuze and Guattari's becoming wolf-man, as it involves both interpersonal and cross-species sexual reproduction. In essence, this story exemplifies how reproduction serves as a conduit for becoming. In comparison, Octavia Butler's *Bloodchild* (1995), published a year after Dung's novella, also explores inter-species reproduction but differs in that it assigns men to bear offspring with an extraterrestrial species. In contrast, reproduction in *Androgyny* is not depicted as a burden or sacrifice, but rather a process of self-discovery and liberation. Through the silence and unknowability of the lizard and the man, the reterritorialization is taken through the encounter of bodies of different species, transcending biological structures and human language. The animality inherent in the *Anzhuozhenni* and the anonymous man is what ultimately impregnates the narrator, leading to a pregnancy and reproduction that signify the liberation of the body and a new becoming. It is important to note that while *Bloodchild* may carry more colonized connotations, both works challenge heteronormative and anthropocentric structures in their exploration of inter-species reproduction.

In Chapter One, I also examine another work of fiction that queers the human body by creating an ugly nonhuman body. Taiwanese writer Chiu Miao-chin's 1994 novel, *Notes of a Crocodile* (Qiu 2017; 2012), is considered one of the most influential lesbian novels in Chinese literature, where Chiu creates an imaginary crocodile species

as a metaphor for queer people. The crocodile appears identical to humans but is inherently a crocodile once its disguise is removed. They lurk in human society, living and working among humans but yearning to connect with other crocodiles, who are often viewed as a metaphorical representation of queer people who remain closeted.

In the novel, the public reacts dramatically to the crocodile's existence. The local health agency believes that the crocodile is an oviparous animal whose eggs are harmful to humans. Moreover, they discover that the crocodile reproduces not through sexual intercourse but by contagion. Their eggs adhere to human skin and can be transmitted, causing the human to "become" a crocodile. These eggs are highly contagious, similar to viruses, and can cause the infected individual's skin to turn red with black spots. The authorities fear that all humans will eventually become crocodiles.

In this novel, the crocodile-human reproduction occurs virally, delinking reproduction from sexual organs. Reproduction becomes more powerful and more accessible without the need for embryonic development. It reveals a new symbiosis beyond the four traditional classes and endosymbiosis, imagining a non-proliferative reproductive process. The crocodile increases its offspring not by generating new cells, but by infecting and reducing other species. This form of reproduction surpasses human understanding, causing panic. It is powerful and intimidating rather than vulnerable and passive, pointing to a creative reproductive model through particles without bodily coition and beyond filiation, embodying Deleuzian becoming.

The second section of Chapter One analyzes the queering of the human body in another work of fiction, Taiwanese writer Chiu Miao-chin's 1994 novel, *Notes of a Crocodile* (Qiu 2017; 2012). In this highly influential lesbian novel in Chinese literature, Chiu creates an imaginary crocodile species that serves as a metaphor for queer people. The crocodile appears identical to humans but is inherently a crocodile once its disguise is removed. They live and work among humans but are constantly searching for other crocodiles, representing queer individuals who are still in the closet.

In the novel, the public reacts dramatically to the crocodile's existence. The local health agency believes that the crocodile is an oviparous animal whose eggs are harmful to humans. Moreover, they discover that the crocodile reproduces not through sexual intercourse but by contagion. Their eggs adhere to human skin and can be transmitted, causing the human to "become" a crocodile. These eggs are highly contagious, similar to viruses, and can cause the infected individual's skin to turn red with black spots. The authorities fear that all humans will eventually become crocodiles.

While it embodies the stigmatization against queer people, the crocodile-human reproduction in this novel occurs virally, delinking reproduction from sexual organs. Reproduction thus becomes more accessible and powerful without the need for embryonic development. The novel introduces a new symbiosis beyond the traditional

four classes and endosymbiosis,⁷ imagining a non-proliferative reproductive process. If the specialist's theory comes true, the crocodile could increase its offspring not by generating new cells, but by infecting and reducing other species. This new form of reproduction surpasses human understanding, causing panic, exactly because it is so powerful and intimidating rather than vulnerable and passive. In this sense, the novel envisions a queer human body whose inherent animality is triggered by queer desire, pointing towards a creative reproductive model that operates through particles without bodily coition and beyond filiation, and embodying the Deleuzian concept of becoming.

Expanding on the themes of female queer love in literature by Hong Kong and Taiwan authors explored in the first chapter, the second chapter focuses on the queer works produced queer writing in the diaspora. This chapter delves into the complex relationships between queer desire, in between the human and nonhuman realms, and cultural identities that straddle the boundaries of mainland China and global culture. Especially, it will demonstrate how queer animality serves as a means of transnational expression, mediating between different cultures and assisting individuals in constructing their self-identity beyond national borders.

Continuing the discussion on Loh's challenge to naming, the second chapter investigates Taiwanese writer Pai Hsien-yung's 白先勇 1983 novel *Crystal Boys* 孽子,

⁷ As Jackson explains, the four classes of interspecies association are "mutualism (benefit for both), commensalism (benefit for one; neutral for the other), amensalism (costly for one; neutral for the other), parasitism (benefit for one; costly for the other) and synnecrosis (costly for both)" (Jackson 2020a, 128).

renowned as the first gay novel in Asia. Written while the author was living in the US, the fictional work sheds light on the Taiwanese gay community and challenges the Name of the Father through a series of animal names. The gay adolescents, exiled by their fathers, establish a same-sex community and embrace their animalistic nature as a means of resisting the phallogentric law. The novel highlights the darkness and wildness within these characters, as they imagine themselves as animals to gain additional power in their struggle for autonomy.

Like Loh's painting, *Crystal Boys* does not promote a simple betrayal of the father. Rather, these boys maintain a relationship with their blood family in an unusual way. The novel embodies a movement between the space of the family home and the disordered wild. As a result, they do not choose between the blood family and the gay community but instead stay in the movement in between, dwelling in an undefinable space.

Through the three sections, my thesis explores queer in-betweenness from four perspectives. First, it examines the desire that exists between the named and unnamed, within and beyond the symbolic. Second, it explores the ambiguity of species and the fluid boundaries between human and nonhuman animals, the wild and the tamed. In resisting taxonomies, humans are able to form new alliances with other species. Thirdly, it explores the queer identities that emerge in the liminal space between the home and the wild, forging a new familial relationship that is neither based on notions of equality

and respect nor on patriarchal norms. Finally, it considers the cultural status of Hong Kong and Taiwan as regions that exist in between Chinese and global cultures.

These praxes highlight the distinct characteristics of queering in contemporary Greater China and envision the infinite potential of the intersection between queer and posthuman perspectives. By breaking free from the constraints of anthropocentrism, queer theories and practices open up to a wider range of possibilities. Animality enables queer lives to move more freely, empowering individuals to transgress established boundaries, challenge taxonomies, redefine species, create unconventional family structures, and subvert language.

2. Queering Human Bodies through Reproduction

Reproductive isolation is a fundamental concept in biology that encompasses the various mechanisms that prevent interbreeding between different species or produce sterile offspring. These barriers are crucial in maintaining species characteristics and are commonly employed in species identification. However, recent research has uncovered that some hybrid genotypes may exhibit heightened fitness, which has underscored the potential and complex evolutionary significance of natural hybridization (Arnold et al. 2001). In literature, interspecies relationships have been a recurring theme that has expanded our understanding of species, reproduction, and the body. Particularly, depictions of human hybridization with nonhuman creatures have been prevalent and thought-provoking, often challenging conventional notions of human identity and agency. Through imaginative portrayals of these relationships, literature has provided a unique lens for exploring the boundaries of human existence and the intricate interplay between different life forms.

Octavia Butler's "Bloodchild" (1984) is a work that explores evolutionary association by creating a mode of interspecies reproduction between humans and alien creatures. The story depicts interspecies reproduction as men's obligation, portraying a "queer reproduction," as Jackson (2020b) asserts. By challenging the assumption that breeding is exclusively a woman's job, Butler shows how vulnerability inherent in reproduction serves as a part of the openness to symbiosis.

The story imagines an interspecies reproduction between humans and a new insectoid species called Tlic on a non-terrestrial planet, which becomes a shelter for Terrans after the destruction of Earth. After years of conflict, Terrans and Tlics form a symbiotic relationship in which the Tlics host and utilize Terrans to incubate their larvae. In return, the Tlics protect humans from danger outside the Preserve and offer their eggs to prolong humans' lives and reduce their pain. Intriguingly, the story imagines cross-species reproduction, breaking through the reproductive isolation among species on Earth. Moreover, the man takes the most responsibility for bearing the alien offspring, while the woman still procreates human children. In this way, men are forced to endure the physical pain and risk of childbirth. Overall, Butler's *Bloodchild* is a thought-provoking work that challenges traditional gender roles and reproductive norms by exploring interspecies reproduction, symbiosis, and the limits of human identity in a changing world.

Jackson (2020) has interpreted Butler's "*Bloodchild*" as queer fiction, where the author redefines species through reproduction. The cross-species relationship in the story transcends the oppositional slavery between Terrans and Tlics, highlighting the potential of mutual caring and symbiosis. However, as Elyce Helford (1994) argues, Tlics' and men's lovemaking represents heteronormative assumptions, and Tlics' impregnation and injection of their eggs into men's bodies implies male penetration (246). Jackson disagrees with this interpretation, as T'Gatoi (the master Tlic in the human

narrator's family) cannot be reduced to a male metaphor, and "penetration is not something only males can do" (148).

Nevertheless, the quasi-heteronormative relationship between T'Gatoi and the narrator, Gan, is undeniable. This is not only because penetration is typically viewed as masculine, but also because of the unequal power dynamic and risk of childbirth that still dominate their interspecies love. Thus, despite the Terrans' symbiotic relationship with Tlics, forms of sexual hierarchy and exploitation between men and women that are inherent in lovemaking and reproduction on Earth persist. In essence, the interspecies coitus and reproduction transplant the heterosexual relationship from human society to a new planet. Consequently, two assumptions can be discerned from Butler's work. Firstly, reproduction is deemed to be inherently harmful and painful. Secondly, the weaker side (women to men, men to Tlics) is assigned more pain and responsibility in the bilateral relationship of reproduction. Both assumptions are based on heteronormativity. If we challenge the heterosexual model of reproduction, the potential of cross-species relationships and our definition of what it means to be human could be expanded.

In comparison to Butler's work, Hong Kong writer Dung Kai-cheung's 1994 novella *Androgyny* and Taiwanese writer Chiu Miao-jin's 1994 novel *Notes of a Crocodile* have created queer reproductions in more radical ways, thereby transgressing

heteronormativity. Both works feature parallel narratives of an imaginary animal species and a female narrator with repressed queer desire.

Dung and Chiu, through the virtuality of these species, envision the possibilities of human bodies via reproduction, transcending the unequal relationship between the two sides of reproduction. Reproduction is reversed as a chance to liberate the body, rather than reinforce oppressive structures. These fictional species are not merely “mirrors” of marginalized queer people, but also indicate thrilling prospects for human beings that can only be achieved through queering. Thus, anti-discrimination of queer love is insufficient, and we need a more radical imagination of human bodies that reproduces in nonhuman ways. This mutation of the body enables a reconsideration of interspecies alliance, embodied subjectivity, and evolutionary discourses.

2.1 United through Reproduction: The Interspecies Becoming in Dung Kai-cheung's Androgyny

A thing is when it isn't doing. A thing is concretely where and what it is.... Concrete is as concrete doesn't.... The body is as immediately abstract as it is concrete; its activity and expressivity extend, as on their underside, into an incorporeal, yet perfectly real, dimension of pressing potential.

— Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*

In 1994, Hong Kong author Dung Kai-cheung's (1967–) novella, *Androgyny: An Evolutionary History of a Nonexistent Species* 安卓珍尼：一個不存在的物種的進化史, was awarded the New Writer's Prize by the Unitas Literary Association in Taiwan. This

particular work of fiction focuses on a female biologist from Hong Kong who leaves her hometown and husband to relocate to the mountains in order to trace and observe a fictional lizard species having solely female specimens, which is nicknamed by the woman the "*Anzhuozhenni*" (androgyny).

This legendary reptile is typically read as "the fable of the human body and the imagination of gender" (Zhu 2018), a reptilian "symbol" signifying "homosexual people" (Huang 2017), or "both a reference to an ambiguous category in the biosphere and an imagined comparison to the female protagonist's sexuality" (Wang 2011; Mei 2000). These opinions, though, assume a mirrored relationship between the lizard and the human protagonist simplifying the animal-woman relationship as analogical or imitative. Meanwhile, they exclude the role of an unnamed man that would be later introduced in the novella out of the mirrored relationship.

In contrast to this interpretation, this paper rethinks the estrangement of the body incarnate and its reproduction in this fictional piece, reading the work instead as contouring the formation of affective interspecies and heterosexual relationships. More specifically, this section argues that the fictional lizard serves as an embodiment of the narrator's erratic affects, the indescribable feelings and visceral forces relevant to her reproduction. The exploration of the lizard liberates the female narrator from the discipline of her heterosexual marriage and scientific knowledge, curing her infertility and ultimately transforming her into *a body without organs*. In this light, the fictional

animal is not simply the projection of the human body or fixed desire, but rather the medium for facilitating a new becoming.

Moreover, *Anzhuozhenni* promotes the sexual coupling between the female protagonist and an animalistic man and redefines the woman-man relationship as monosexual. I read their heterosexual lovemaking as a process of becoming, during which the man is instrumentalized and internalized as a sperm-producing organ and the woman thus becomes androgynous. Consequently, the female narrator, the lizard, and the anonymous man are not interspecies or heterosexual reflections of one another; rather, they form an alliance via a new monosexual maternal body. As they continuously migrate and assemble on the new plane of being, both species and sexual taxonomies are deconstructed.

2.1.1 Species as Socially Constructed

Animals themselves have always been the product of social construction, not only in literature, but also in biology/science. Scholars have generated ideas about animals in relation to the European agricultural revolution, British imperialism, and selective breeding programs (Birke 1995, 42; Thomas 1996; Ritvo c1987; Russell 1986). Similarly, our knowledge of species is also a result of multiple standards of classification. Biologists have utilized Linnaean taxonomy to classify species since the eighteenth century. Later, however, additional taxonomic principles were proposed and implemented (Heise 2016, 26; Wilkins 2011), meaning that those characteristics which

are used to define and classify a species are by no means fixed and constantly subject to change.

The classification guidelines we create influence how we interpret the biological "facts" we decode from nature. As Heise (19-28) notes, species and biodiversity is rhetorical in addition to biological — our understanding of species and extinctions is highly impacted by popular science, the media, the "limits of knowledge and uncertainties," classification methods, and so on. It is also for this reason that, despite the current sixth mass extinction, the number of recorded species is increasing as new scientific discoveries are made and taxonomies are refined. This understanding of species partially echoes the fictional animal created by Dung Kai-cheung in his queer novella, *Androgyny: The Evolutionary History of a Nonexistent Species*.

In this work, Dung constructs a fictional species of lizard called *Capillisaurus varicaudata* (*banwei maoxi* 斑尾毛蜥). The novel's entire narrative is presented in the first-person perspective, from the recollections of a female narrator, a university-trained biologist who, captivated by this rarely sighted animal, decides to track the lizard herself in the mountains. According to the novella, previous unofficial records classify the lizard as a monosexual creature, with only female individuals having been noted. It is for this reason that the narrator thus names the lizard she eventually encounters "*Anzhuozhenni*," which is the Chinese translation of "androgyny" (Dung 11).

The species was initially discovered by an amateur biologist, Fu Shichuan 傅世傳, when he traveled to Hong Kong from northern China. However, it was not officially recognized by the scientific community due to a lack of specimens and photographs, so it was provisionally designated as *Fu Capillisaurus* 傅氏毛蜥.¹ Later, more witnesses recorded sightings, but substantive evidence was still lacking (Dung 12). The narrator therefore endeavors to trace and obtain more information about the endangered animal, so as to create textual records for the "last *Anzhuozhenni*":

As for *Anzhuozhenni*, what more can I say? During the period I spent up on the mountain, I tried to write down everything I knew about them. This is not only because I wanted to create a space and leave a mark in the textual records for the last *Anzhuozhenni*, but also because I wanted to grant her a kind of desire for existence. I have made every effort to compile the story of *Anzhuozhenni* through a process that has been extraordinarily painful, but also extraordinarily beautiful.

關於安卓珍尼,我還能夠說些什麼呢? 在山上的一段日子,我嘗試把我所知道關於安卓珍尼的一切寫下來,這不但是因為我希望為最後的安卓珍尼在文獻中佔上一個位置、留下一點痕跡,也是出於賦予她一種存在的慾望。我竭盡心神地為安卓珍尼編寫她的故事,這個過程是異常地痛苦的,但有同時是異常地美妙的。²

¹ Assigning a species a human name can surely be complicated. The naming rights are influenced not only by knowledge, but also funding, language, politics, and local customs. In 2016, a Prague-based Chinese entomologist named a beetle after China's president Xi Jinping, which was interpreted as an act of humiliation by China's authorities, even though the entomologist thought it would be an honor. Further speaking to how species naming is the product of the social context, this same entomologist retrospectively noted that cockroaches' names before 1949 were mostly in Japanese and their specimens were stored in Taiwan, as a colony of Japan. After Japan was dethroned as a world power following WWII, however, there were more cockroaches named in Chinese. See: Tatlow (2016).

² Dung 12. The English translation is from Rojas (2020).

The desire for and the process of compiling the story for *Anzhuozhenni* align with Heise's reflections on the construction of species, the taxonomy of which is floating and deeply influenced by cultural discourses. On the one hand, the novella, represented as a record of the lizard, is a mixture of biological observations and personal stories. On the other, biological debates regarding the lizard's faculties of reproduction question the objectivity of biological knowledge. In the story, a French female biologist named Françoise Moi believes that *Anzhuozhenni* as a monosexual female species is the result of evolution: the female lizard was able to generate offspring without males, such that the male members of the species finally became extinct.

However, another character featured in the text, the male biologist Stephen Felman, accuses Moi of contaminating the "objectivity and purity of scientific spirits" as a "radical feminist" and dubs Moi a "mad woman" (Dung 56-59).³ Undoubtedly, Felman's esteem of the "objectivity and purity of scientific spirits" is ironic, as his critique is rife with gender bias and thus represents a marked departure from the neutrality typically associated with "science." So, it is in this regard that the fiction emphasizes the contingency of biological knowledge and the rhetorical construction of species.

³ My translation.

2.1.2 The Performativity of Measurements

Generally speaking, all measurements, as Barad claims, "are agential practices, which are not simply revelatory but performative." In other words, measurements are constitutive of the object of measurement. They "are *intra-actions* (not interactions): the agencies of observation are inseparable from that which is observed" (Barad 2012, 6). For this reason, objectivity is "not absolute exteriority but agential separability — exteriority within phenomena," and the knower is always inside the world being observed (Barad 2006, 184). With Barad's commentary in mind, it can be argued that what Felman presumes about the "objectivity and purity of scientific spirits" (Dung 56) does not exist, for there is "no such exterior observational point" (Barad 2006, 184).

Indeed, the protagonist's observation in *Androgyny* illustrates the performativity of measurements and the co-constitutive role of the observer in what is measured. The narrative centers on the narrator's curiosity about the endangered lizard and starts with her aspiration to observe it in the wild. However, the observation turns out to be bidirectional. The mysterious *Anzhuozhenni* is hard to trace; the narrator can only occasionally find their trail. The *Anzhuozhenni*, by comparison, are much better observers:

They must have seen me and guarded against me. Their eyes are sharp, their senses are sensitive, and they can *react rapidly and instinctively without processing and analyzing information in the brain*. In front of them, I am clumsy and have nothing to hide. I held the net in my hand, like a hunter, but I was more afraid than they were. When the wind blew, I almost shrieked..... She must have seen

me clearly; she must have instinctively known who I was, what my intentions were for her, and what kind of relationship I had with her.

它們必定也看見了我，防範著我，它們的目光銳利，感應靈敏，而且信息可以不經大腦思考分析，迅速做出本能性的反應。在它們跟前，我笨拙而無所遁形。我手中拿著網，儼然一名捕獵者，但我比它們更害怕，一有風吹草動，我也幾乎要驚呼起來。……她一定把我清清楚楚看在眼裏，她一定本能地知道我是誰，對她有什麼企圖，跟她有著怎樣的關係。(Dung 60-61)⁴

The dissolving of the clear demarcation between the observer and the observed exemplifies the more radical "*intra-action*" that Barad describes. The observer and

measurement do not only constitute the measured, but are constituted by it, as well.⁵

The novella depicts two kinds of observations: *Anzhuozhenni* sees via instinct, whereas the human narrator sees through lenses of rationality and knowledge. This explains why her observations and attempts to capture *Anzhuozhenni* always fail when they encounter one another. From this vantage point, the protagonist's failure to observe calls scientific measurement into question and presents a fresh manner of perceiving—through "instinct."

As *Anzhuozhenni* looks back at its human observer, the narrator encounters a predicament similar to Derrida's (2008), as described in his renowned essay, "The Animal Therefore I Am." In this piece, Derrida recounts an awkward experience when

⁴ My translation.

⁵ Barad discusses scientific measurement in a relatively general sense. Many feminists have built on these discussions, so as to reveal the sexism inherent in scientism. Sang (2003, 1–34, 99–160), for instance, keenly observes the objectification and control of women in Republican China's "sexual science;" Jackson (2020a, 159–98) exposes the stereotypical portrayal of black women in the Western medical discourse; scholars like criticize masculine subjectivity in the pursuit of scientific objectivity.

he was once naked after a shower, and found his cat gazing at him. An inexplicable embarrassment struck Derrida, prompting him to meditate on the trivialization of animals in the tradition of Western metaphysics, which devalues animals due to their lack of linguistic capacity, and moreover advocates for compassion for animals based on suffering shared by humans and animals alike.

Though superficially advocating for animals to be granted a degree of importance equal to that of humans, Derrida maintains a condescending attitude as an observer when attempting to bridge the cognitive divide between humans and animals, viewing pain and distress as an extension of human suffering. In a similar fashion, the narrator in *Androgyny* concedes that *Anzhuozhenni's* gaze operates by a profound mechanism, which may be superior to hers, and she thus places herself in the more vulnerable position of accepting to be observed. It is here that she learns to observe by "instinct" (rather than language), internalizes the lizard into her subjectivity, and converts the observation into an affective motion deprived of definitions, which ultimately aids in her becoming an *Anzhuozhenni*-woman.

2.1.3 Species as Affects

What does "instinct" signify to the narrator? To answer this question, one must first examine the dual nature of scientific discourse in the novella. On the one hand, as Rojas (2020) eloquently argues, the *Anzhuozhenni* as a new species shows how queer subjects can harness modern institutional frameworks and scholarly knowledge to

"effectively write themselves into existence." On the other hand, besides the utilization of a specialist discourse, the novella further displays resistance to biology and even language, as Chen (2006, 93) keenly observes. At the end of the story, the narrator concludes that any storytelling for the *Anzhuozhenni* is "ridiculous," because the creature "would forever escape from voices and words" (Dung 77).

As previously mentioned, the protagonist's intended scientific expeditions are thwarted when the *Anzhuozhenni* gazes back. Consequently, the narrator's attempt to place the *Anzhuozhenni* in evolutionary history, as a lesser species without human faculties, proves to be ineffective. After tracing the *Anzhuozhenni* fruitlessly for some time, one day, a nameless man catches an *Anzhuozhenni* for her. She keeps it in her closet, which metaphorically implies the queer desire of both the *Anzhuozhenni* and the narrator.⁶ The lizard's same-sex sexual behavior is comparable to the woman's rebellion against her marriage and husband, both of which are inversions of heteronormativity. However, unlike Sedgwick's (2008) renowned argument in *Epistemology of the Closet*, this particular closet does not enact the division between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Rather, the *Anzhuozhenni*, as a monosexual animal, moves freely in and out of the closet at its leisure, as the protagonist details:

It occurred to me that perhaps we could capture her because she was willing to do so. If she is not willing, no one can capture her. As to why she would want

⁶ On the history of the metaphor "coming out of the closet," see Scott (2018).

to, *I don't know. I'll never know, not even she.* Something *unexplainable* led her here, just as something *unexplainable* led me here. She and I have followed an *invisible* touch to this same path, a path that has *no exit and no destination*. 我突然想到，也許，我們可以捕捉到她，是因為她願意這樣。若她不願意，沒有人能捕捉她。至於她為什麼會願意，我不知道，我永遠也不知道，甚至連她自己也不知道。有一種沒法解釋的東西，把她引領來這裏，正如有一種沒法解釋的東西把我引領來這裏一樣。我和她也遵照著一種無形的觸覺，走到這條相同的道路上，而這是一條沒有出口也沒有目的地的道路。(Emphasis added, Dung 66)⁷

This encounter with *Anzhuozhenni* prompts the narrator to modify her assessments of the observation, for she realizes that the species is unknowable and cannot be explained by biological knowledge and scientific terminology. Additionally, she describes her interaction with the lizard as a movement with neither an "exit" nor a "destination," indicating its non-linear temporality. In other words, their connection involves an inter-subjective meeting that extends beyond progressive evolutionism.

In this regard, I would argue that the meeting that occurs between the narrator and *Anzhuozhenni* is affective in nature, and that the indefinable animal per se exists as an affect, instead of a biological entity. In his influential work, *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi (2021) theoretically differentiates emotion and affect. Influenced by Spinoza, Bergson, and Deleuze, Massumi defines affect as an "unqualified" intensity concerning the body's movements that is not "ownable or recognizable" — that is compared to emotion, which is fixed and subjective (30). Massumi relates affect to the infinitely

⁷ My translation.

divisible positions throughout the arrow's movement, using Zeno's arrow as an illustration. He inverts the relationship between movements and positions by defining locations as the consequence of movements. In this light, the affect is "an unmediated experience" (2) of the body that is generated during sensory locomotion. Affect, therefore, "is utterly redundant to their description" and refers to "an unmediated experience" (2), resulting in a rupture between narration and function (26-27).

It is through this lens that *Anzhuozhenni*, a species difficult to place in evolutionary history, can be understood as a result of the narrator's affective motions. It is not a preexisting species waiting to be discovered. Rather, the narrator feels it when she experiences her body's transition and its change in capacity. The narrator describes the lizard as "unexplainable" in that it dwells in the gap between qualifications and intensities, which is beyond her consciousness. Their "invisible touch," then, refers to an affective quality that resides outside of the laws of observation. That being said, the "instinct" that enables the lizard to "react rapidly and instinctively without processing and analyzing information in the brain" is the affect. It is for this same reason that the lizard remains free and cannot be hunted while temporarily residing in the narrator's closet. The closet as a symbol of repression is now unlocked and serves as an interface between the wildness and the home, the nonhuman animal and the human.

Consequently, the relationship between the protagonist and the lizard adheres to the mechanism of affective doubling:

The doubling of sensation does not assume a subjective splitting and does not of itself constitute a distancing. It is an immediate self-complication. It is best to think of it as a resonance, or interference pattern (chapters 1,9). It is a complex dynamic unity. . . bouncing back and forth. . . . (Massumi, 14-15)

In this light, there flows a continuity and resonance between the animal and the narrator, the latter of which suddenly recognizes her fate through the fictitious lizard, as she says, "I see my destiny in the *Anzhuozhenni*" 在安卓珍尼身上，我看到了自己的命運 (Dung 65). At the end of the story, she further asserts, "I am *Anzhuozhenni*" 我便是安卓珍尼 (72). The *Anzhuozhenni* is therefore not a newly invented nonhuman entity in a discrete animal body, but rather the dynamic sensation that exists "across its multiplications" (Massumi 14).

Furthermore, as Massumi (2021) argues, positions and qualifications result from such movements, not their preexisting agents (1-7). From this perspective, the taxonomies of lizard/human and androgyny/dioecy are rather the outcome of their affective interactions. We discern *Anzhuozhenni* to be a lizard and the narrator to be a human by relying on the questionable assumption that species precede affective movements. However, the novella depicts the two as a continuous unity and thus refutes the priority of species over affect. Rather, it is the dynamics of affects that generate species. Likewise, the distinction of reproductive modes between (the lizard's) androgyny and (human) dioecy is also a secondary consequence to sensational movements.

In this sense, the *Anzhuozhenni* provides a new possibility for envisioning inter-species relationships, taking it as affective, and, in this way, going on step further than Heise's claim that species are culturally constructed.

2.1.4 The Man as an Organ

Besides presenting the animal-human relationship as affective, this work of fiction further reconstitutes heterosexual intercourse as affective. In the mountains, the female narrator encounters a man who barely speaks and fears her utterances. The mysterious man is hired to maintain the mountain cottage built by the narrator's father-in-law and serves as the narrator's guide in discovering the *Anzhuozhenni*. Though mute, he catches an *Anzhuozhenni* for the narrator and gradually earns her trust.

One day, they have sex at the cottage, resulting in the narrator's pregnancy. The narrator decides to have the baby and invites her sister-in-law, Anwen, to raise the child together with her. Chen interprets this aspect of the plot as the man's sexual invasion because of the woman's pain and fear caused by the man's force. Rojas (2020a), on the other hand, reads the protagonist's intercourse with the anonymous man as an act of resistance against her husband's control and her heteronormative marriage, and he views raising a baby with a female companion as an effort to build "an exclusively matrilineal kinship structure." I would argue, however, that the bond between the narrator and the silent man is distinct from her relationship with her spouse and beyond

the discourse of heterosexuality. Rather, the man in fact suggests the virtual facet of the body (invoking Massumi), and their intercourse instrumentalizes the man as an organ.

In her marriage, the narrator is depressed and has long been pathologized by her husband:

My husband said that I was sick and needed to recuperate at home, and it was not suitable to go out to work for the time being. . . . My husband is not a doctor, but he always talks like one, analyzing the cause of your illness, judging your conditions, and then setting you a course of treatment. He is not only a doctor, but a good one, *who explains everything so clearly, thoroughly, and in detail that no one can question his authority.*

丈夫說我有病，要在家中休養，暫時不適宜出外工作。……我丈夫不是醫生，但他說話的時候總像一個醫生一樣，能夠分析你的病因、判斷你的病況，然後給你設定療程。他不單是一個醫生，而且是一個好醫生，*他把一切解釋得那麼清楚、透切和詳盡，教人沒法質疑他的權威。* (Emphasis added, Dung 61)⁸

Confined to rest at home and instructed to cease working on account of her "sickness," the narrator is imprisoned by the cage of her medical diagnosis. This cage is constructed through her husband's efforts to explain "everything so clearly, thoroughly, and in detail," which effectively results in the narrator losing her mobility and agency. The marital oppression she experiences is also symbolized by her infertility, despite the fact that her husband never stops trying to have sex with her.

⁸ My translation; ellipsis added; .

In contrast to her husband's eloquence, the anonymous man is all but deprived of linguistic competence, which implies his animality. And in a sense, it is the man's animality that results in the female narrator's pregnancy, after which the man disappears without claiming custody or naming rights to the baby. And with this, the narrator has thus become androgynous/an *Anzhuozhenni* by uniting with the silent man, who functions in much the same way as *Anzhuozhenni's* sperm-producing organ, devoid of agency. In the alliance between the man and the *Anzhuozhenni*, there emerges "a body without organs" in the Deleuzian sense (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Neither the man nor *the Anzhuozhenni* is a bodily entity, and the narrator's subjectivity is also deterritorialized and reterritorialized as a fertile and viable body with a renewed vitality, on a new plane that assembles affects and intensities.

The novella, therefore, envisions a new form of sexuality that is radically fluid and simulated. The intercourse between the narrator and the man thus does not refer to bodily heterosexual intercourse, but rather to an assemblage. The man moves to the plane of consistency – the body – to engage in the sexual intercourse, and then he flows away. The intercourse is about affective movements of intensity and speed, indicating the disembodiment of sexuality and reproduction.

Thus, the heterosexual relationship becomes virtual, and the narrator acquires a new body, not through sexuality or pregnancy, but by forming an alliance with the silent man and the *Anzhuozhenni*. The new body does not simply refer to a queer human

body, but also to a consistent plane, wherein various moving particles are assembled without the restraints of organs.

This subverts the Lacanian notion of the organ/penis as a fetish, which entails the woman to engage in a masquerade, rejecting her femininity in order to become the phallus and "the signifier of the desire of the Other." as Lacan noted:

It is for that which she is not that she wishes to be desired as well as loved. But she finds the signifier of her own desire in the body of him to whom she addresses her demand for love. Perhaps it should not be forgotten that *the organ that assumes this signifying function takes on the value of a fetish*. But the result for the woman remains that an experience of love, which, as such (cf. above), deprives her ideally of that which the object gives, and a desire which finds its signifier in this object, *converge on the same object*. That is why one can observe that a lack in the satisfaction proper to sexual need, in other words, *frigidity*, is relatively well tolerated in women, whereas the *Verdrängung* (repression) inherent in desire is less present in women than in men (Emphasia added, Lacan 2020, 221).

The phallic Law casts women in a paradoxical position where their desire can only be expressed through negation. This dynamic explains the protagonist's frigidity in her patriarchal marriage. However, in her new relationship with the lizard, the female protagonist no longer needs to discover "the signifier of her own desire in the body of him to whom she addresses her demand for love," and thus escapes self-rejection. Instead, she explores a new way to understand her desire through the reptile body and avoids being reduced to the phallus and the masquerade game. Conversely, "the organ" (the penis) is stripped of its "signifying function" and "value of fetish," and is reduced to

its reproductive function of ejaculating sperm. The speechless man's role is to reduce the signifying value attached to the penis and ultimately serve as Lacan's unnamed organ, becoming the phallus in this novella.

Thus, the intervention of *Anzhuozhenni* fundamentally changes the man's and woman's positions in the phallic order, making the man the phallus and the woman the one who possesses the phallus. In this light, the story of *Anzhuozhenni* exemplifies how animality can serve as a means of challenging the Law of the phallus and disrupting established power dynamics.

Finally, the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the body are facilitated by the fictional lizard acting as an intermediary. The female narrator and the man become intimate when observing and studying the *Anzhuozhenni*, and the lizard, as a monosexual creature, sets an example of unrestricted reproduction, thereby activating the narrator's fertility. Meanwhile, the man's animality also serves as the intermediary that liberates her from the hegemony of knowledge and language, which, in turn, rebuilds the narrator's physiological functions. In this way, such animality offers fresh impetus for the becoming, allowing the body to transcend the multiple restraints of sexual norms, language, and species taxonomy. The woman, the lizard, and the nameless man become one as the *lizard-man-woman*, liberated from sexual and social regulations, reproducing and living in motion.

2.2 *Becoming the Crocodile-Human: Queer Reproduction in Chiu Miao-chin's Notes of a Crocodile*

[B]ecomings-animal in the war machine, wildmen of all kinds; becomings-animal in crime societies, leopard-men, crocodile-men (when the State prohibits tribal and local wars); ... becomings-animal in societies practicing sexual initiation of the "sacred deflowerer" type, wolf-men, goat-men, etc. who claim an Alliance superior and exterior to the order of families.

— Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

If Dung Kai-cheung's *Androgyny* still represents human reproduction through sexual intercourse with organs, Taiwan writer Chiu Miao-chin's (1969–1995) queer novel,⁹ *Notes of a Crocodile* (1994), envisions a more radical alternative. Chiu imagines a species – a crocodile-human hybrid – capable of reproducing without the need for organs or intercourse. In her novel, Chiu presents a human-like body where reproduction is not restricted to traditional gender roles or heteronormative practices. Instead, the process takes place through a form of contagion that is free of pain or bodily harm.

The novel intertwines the story of Lazi, a female college student who defines herself as "a woman that loves women" (Qiu 2017, 21), with the tale of a crocodile capable of transforming its skin from green to yellow,¹⁰ adopting human skin as a

⁹ I call it a queer novel, instead of a lesbian novel, for the sexuality of the crocodile is rather ambiguous and asexual, as Chi (2014) observes.

¹⁰ The fiction does not signify the color of the human that the crocodile pretends to be. I assume its human skin as yellow for it preforms as a "normal" Taiwanese in the daytime.

disguise to conceal its authentic identity. Chiu's portrayal of the crocodile has become an emblem of lesbian love, attracting significant interest from both academic and literary communities. As Ta-wei Chi (2014, 141) observes, *Notes of a Crocodile* is particularly noteworthy for its focus on lesbian love as the central theme, allowing it to stand independently from other feminist writings in Taiwanese literature.

Chiu's novel utilizes the crocodile's confession as a means to delve into intricate themes that surpass matters of sexuality and gender identity, ultimately probing the very essence of what it means to be human. The crocodile-human's internal conflict in reconciling its dual nature serves as a potent metaphor for the experiences of queer individuals who grapple with their own identities within a society that frequently fails to comprehend or embrace them.

Conversely, while *Notes of a Crocodile* presents the hybrid species as a symbol of marginalization and stigmatization endured by the queer community, it also signifies the potential of the "ugly body" to challenge traditional norms. By doing so, the novel opens up new possibilities for reproduction and human corporeality, redefining the boundaries of what is considered acceptable or normal.

2.2.1 Queering Victimhood

Chi (2014) interprets the creation of the crocodile as Chiu's postcolonial resistance to heterosexual hegemony, and he regards the crocodile's floating at the end of the novel as its "flinch from the battle." Such an assertion presupposes

an adversarial relationship involving the crocodile. However, does the crocodile genuinely engage in this battle, or does it ever perceive its survival as a fight? Similar to Chi, Martin (2003) also views the crocodile's note as traumatic and analyzes it as "the object of an injurious gaze" (215), which is reasonable since homophobia is part of the novel's theme. Nevertheless, queer individuals are not merely the objects to be gazed at, but can also gaze back. That being said, in addition to the homophobic speech represented in the novel, we may shift our perspective and reevaluate the world through the crocodile's eyes. Indeed, as Liou (1997) highlights, the crocodile's naivety and humor stand in stark contrast with the discrimination and hatred directed against same-sex individuals, underscoring the differences between these two perspectives.¹¹

In this regard, I aim to challenge the notion of victimhood in the novel by re-examining the crocodile's narrative and offering a fresh perspective on how the crocodile exemplifies the potential for becoming and transformation, without necessarily treating "coming out of the closet" as the ultimate goal. The inclusion

¹¹ Liou, therefore, sees the crocodile's behavior as an embodiment of queer performativity, a response to the humiliation experienced by queer individuals. In this context, Liou still perceives the crocodile as a victim, which could potentially oversimplify the character, given its unique nature as a nonhuman or half-human-half-reptile creature. In this section, I will further examine this interpretation and provide a more nuanced understanding of the crocodile's role and identity.

of a crocodile character in the narrative does not merely imply that the crocodile/queer should be integrated into the realm of the human and seek recognition. Instead, it also demonstrates a means by which humanity can transcend its limitations, the body can surpass the constraints of organs, and reproduction can act as a conduit for metamorphosis. In essence, being a crocodile does not have to equate to being a defensive victim. In other words, the absence of aggression does not inherently imply weakness.

Interpreting the crocodile as a metaphor for lesbians is not the only way to decipher this novel. The ambiguity surrounding the crocodile's identity and its metaphorical significance, as discussed by Chi (2014), points to alternative possibilities for understanding the character beyond simply addressing homophobia. This is not to downplay the presence of homophobic injuries in both Taiwanese society and the novel itself; rather, I propose adopting a posthuman lens to envision queer life and Chiu's writing, in addition to Chi's postcolonial approach.

Consequently, it holds the potential to give rise to a new form of subjectivity, offering a richer and more multifaceted understanding of queer experiences and identities.

2.2.2 The Identification of a Species

The crocodile in Chiu's novel is a quasi-human species existing within human society. Wearing a "human suit" to conceal its crocodile body and braces to hide its sharp teeth, the crocodile works in a bakery and performs as a human during the daytime. At night, it returns home and removes its disguise, an act that is often interpreted as a parallel to coming out of the closet (Martin 2003b).

On the other hand, the novel also tells a story about scientific observation, presenting the crocodile as a newly discovered species whose existence garners significant public interest. "Crocodile experts" from various disciplines—such as developmental psychology, genetic engineering, law, and the Ministry of the Interior—engage in ongoing debates regarding the crocodile's place in evolutionary history, its behavior, and its mode of reproduction (Qiu 2017, 205). This dynamic bears a striking resemblance to the way humans have historically sought to understand people with same-sex desire. Conversely, the crocodile—being the subject of observation—perceives these debates quite differently from its human counterparts.

On the one hand, while there is a diversity of opinions, the majority of expertise on the crocodile is indeed hostile:

There was a general consensus, however, that up to the age of fourteen, crocodiles adopted a homemade "human suit" before running away from home. While exact causes remained unknown, *scholars cited societal attitudes as a factor in crocodile mutation*, suggesting that there was no means of *preventing an increase in the number of emergent crocodiles*, which would ultimately contribute to a broader societal trend toward a full-fledged crocodile ecology and genetic mutation.

大家一致指出，到了十四岁鳄鱼会自制“人装”，逃离家庭。导致鳄鱼的原因不明，然而学者呼吁，就社会心理而言，若不设法防杜鳄鱼的突变，愈来愈多鳄鱼在社会行走，最后会诱发社会全面鳄鱼生态的流行与不正常遗传。(Emphasis added, Notebook 7.8, Qiu 2017, 206; 2012, 213)

Paradoxically, the crocodile interprets these discussions about it in a different light: "What was everyone after, anyhow? If that many people secretly liked them, that'd be totally embarrassing" 大家到底是何居心呢？被这么多人偷偷喜欢，它真受不了，好——害——羞啊 (Notebook 2.8, Qiu 2017, 58; 2012, 53). Watching the TV news that advocates keeping the crocodile's existence a secret to "preserve the very essence of our nation," the crocodile does not feel angry, but rather shy. It believes the entire nation is saying: "How are you, my dear crocodile?" (Qiu 2017, 82). Even in its final words at the end of the story, the crocodile still appreciates the "warmth and enthusiasm" of the public, exclaiming, "I really, really like you guys!" and "I couldn't be happier!" (241-42).

The crocodile's unique perspective, interpreting these arguments as a favor, sets it apart from human thinking. In turn, it might be "anthropocentric" to assume the crocodile's feelings based on human subjective intentions. The crocodile's innocence and naivety are criticized as weak and powerless (Chi 2014) only when viewed through an

anthropocentric lens, as this perspective narrows the definition of "power" and restricts the imagination regarding different ways of displaying strength.

Moreover, although human culture categorizes the crocodile as an "evil" and "ugly" symbol (ibid.), this stereotype never seems to affect the crocodile's self-image. The crocodile has a toy crocodile in the bathroom, which it plays with during each bath. From the crocodile's perspective, the image of a crocodile is neither unattractive nor shameful. In a way, the toy crocodile serves as a representation of its inner self, and the crocodile clings to it every time its self-identity is challenged or becomes the center of attention (Qiu 2017, 82, 151)

Ironically, while the "experts" believe the crocodile is a new species capable of infecting others and turning them into crocodiles, the protagonist crocodile has never encountered any of its kind. On one hand, this demonstrates its solidarity with sexual repression (see Liou). On the other hand, it calls into question the way people identify species. Indeed, human knowledge about specific species is constantly evolving. As Heise (19-28) argues, species can be rhetorically influenced by human culture. As discussed in the previous section, biological concepts of species are consistently shaped by historical and social shifts.

Similarly, the crocodile and the crocodile experts hold opposing views and expectations regarding whether the crocodile constitutes a distinct species. The crocodile strives to search for its peers but ultimately concludes that it is "the only real crocodile"

(Qiu 2017, 241). How can a species be identified if only one specimen has been discovered? From this perspective, recognizing the crocodile as a new species and finding more specimens is not solely about visibility – as Foucault (1978) has revealed – but also about securing resources to enhance its strength. While categorizing the crocodile as a nonhuman species may be perceived as stigmatizing queer individuals, being recognized as a new species can also represent the formation of an alliance. What the crocodile desires is not to be considered human, but rather to find other crocodiles and establish “friendships” with them (Qiu 2017, 242).

2.2.3 From Reproduction to Contagion

"Crocodile, do you think you'll ever reproduce?"
— *Notes of a Crocodile*

As a new species, the crocodile also reproduces differently from humans, which, once again, is not only an accusation but can also be a source of strength. The parallel narratives intersect when the two protagonists – Lazi and the crocodile – meet and become friends at the Crocodile Club. Since then, Lazi frequently visits the crocodile and decides to write down its story. One day, Lazi asks, "Crocodile, do you think you'll ever reproduce?" To which the crocodile replies, "How would I know? I've never met another crocodile before" (153).

The unanswered question, however, is addressed by crocodile experts from various disciplinary perspectives. Ultimately, the authorities reach a conclusion about the species:

One month later, the Bureau of Health and Sanitation published the results of a secret study. According to the bureau, which tracked a *Crocodile Club* event on December 24th attended by sixty active members, within a month, five percent of those in attendance had experienced a *dermatological problem*—*their skin had turned red in places and sprouted dense patches of black specks*. The body hair of those subjects was examined under a high-power microscope, revealing the presence of tiny ova-shaped specimens. A bureau spokesman issued the following conclusions: *The tiny spawns were the product of a toxin secreted by the crocodiles; as an oviparous species, crocodiles produced spawns, which were agents of reproduction; a new organism was produced not through sexual intercourse per se but through the discharge of a spawn that entered the human body and transformed the host into a new crocodile.*"

喧腾一个月后，卫生署发表秘密研究的成果。据卫生署追踪十二月二十四日参加“鳄鱼俱乐部”的十六名活动者，发现一个月内有百分之五的人皮肤发生变化，部分皮肤呈现红色，且长出密密麻麻的黑色斑点，在这些人的毛发之中检验出，以高倍显微镜才能看出的微细卵状物。“卫生署”发言人作出两点惊人结论：“那些细卵若非鳄鱼所分泌出特殊的致死物，就是鳄鱼所产的卵，鳄鱼是种卵生动物，而鳄鱼的生殖方式，不是借由实际的性交而产生新个体，却是借着排出的卵，进入人类体内，将原本的人类‘制造’成新的鳄鱼。” (Emphasis added, Notebook 7.8, Qiu 2017, 206–7; 2012, 213–14)

The experts propose an unusual reproductive mode for the crocodile, which causes panic and sparks debates in society. The new consensus assumes that the crocodile is dangerous and contagious. In addition to the homophobic attack inherent in the "studies" on the crocodile, the specific attributes of the crocodile suggest further implications about transcending bodily constraints and the passivity of reproduction.

The authority insists on the transmissibility of the crocodiles' ova, while the crocodile itself denies being an oviparous animal (Notebook 8.9, Qiu 2017, 242).¹² Neither theory has been examined. Regardless, the bureau's study offers a lens to read the crocodile not as a stigmatized human, but as posthuman through an innovative form of reproduction. As it transmits spawns implicitly and efficiently via the skin, the crocodile does not require sexuality to propagate and avoids the pain of childbirth. This mode of reproduction frees women from the vulnerability inherent in human reproduction. Moreover, the new mode transforms reproduction from passive to active, or even aggressive. Once procreation functions like a virus, multiplying through infection, it becomes a subjective choice rather than an obligatory and compelled labor.

Furthermore, considering that the crocodile reproduces via a viral dimension, sexuality and generative organs are delinked from reproductive functions and become expressive. In turn, the body is liberated from the restraints of organs, working independently without them. In this sense, the crocodile possesses "a body without organs," invoking the concept presented by Deleuze and Guattari. Moreover, the crocodile-human exemplifies their proposition of becoming-animal, which envisions a propagation "without filiation:"

¹² The English translation mistranslates “我可不是卵生的” as “I’m totally oviparous,” which expresses the opposite meaning.

How can we conceive of a peopling, a propagation, a becoming that is without filiation or hereditary production? A multiplicity without the unity of an ancestor? It is quite simple; everybody knows it, but it is discussed only in *secret*.... We know that many beings *pass between a man and a woman*; they come from different worlds, are borne on the wind, form rhizomes around roots; *they cannot be understood in terms of production, only in terms of becoming*. The Universe does not function by filiation. All we are saying is that *animals are packs, and that packs form, develop, and are transformed by contagion* (emphasis added, Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 241–42).

Deleuze and Guattari propose a reproduction and transformation through contagion, echoing the viral transmission of the crocodile's spawns. Further, like the crocodile living with its masquerade, Deleuzian becoming also exists as a "secret," whereas "everybody knows it." And it is because becoming "cannot be understood in terms of production" that all the disciplinary expertise is ineffective and no unanimous conclusion can be drawn.

Moreover, the reproductive logic of becoming refutes gender disparity, for "many beings pass between a man and a woman," which explains the ambiguity of the crocodile in the fiction. As the note narrates, "since their genders remain unknown, crocodiles all take the degendered address for the purpose of efficient communication" 因为性别未知，对于鳄鱼一律去性别化称呼，便利沟通和传播 (Notebook 2.8, Qiu 2017, 57; Qiu 2012, 52).¹³ Chi (2014) used to criticize that the novel is inherently patriarchal, for all its references to cultural notables, including Yukio Mishima, Haruki Murakami,

¹³ English translation by Bonnie Huie (Qiu 2017) with my modification.

Derek Jarman, and Jean Genet, are all males. Comparatively, no female/lesbian artists or writers are mentioned in the book. While Chi's critique is reasonable and insightful, Lazi's identification can be partially explained by her role as butch in the lesbian relationship (see Liou 1997). On the other hand, the gender identity in this fiction can also be interpreted through the lens of becoming, which crosses the border of women and men. In this light, it is the nonhuman identity of the crocodile that enables it to transcend gender boundaries, rendering its gender identities as unimportant. The focus on its species diverts people's attention and therefore opens up possibilities to surpass the binary gender system.

Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-animal is about radical liberation and forming cross-species alliances. In this context, the recognition of the crocodile-human as human is not the main concern. Instead, the human identity confines the crocodile, forcing it to hide in the basement and live in secrecy.

At the end of the novel, the crocodile makes a powerful decision to decouple from human society. It boldly steps out and reveals itself to the world via television. Then, it floats out to the sea in a fire, which symbolizes not just a suicide but also a significant departure from human society. This action represents an ultimate rejection of human identity and an embrace of deterritorialization, setting the stage for the possibility of reterritorialization and new becomings.

In this sense, the true power of the fiction extends beyond merely visualizing same-sex individuals or critiquing homophobia. It delves deeper, imagining the radical potential of being posthuman through queer reproduction and exploring the possibilities of being queer through becoming other species. The animality attributed to the crocodile-human not only represents discrimination, but also harnesses zoology to outline the potential for transcending the human and envisioning a radical liberation of the body, which can be achieved uniquely through queering.

In the same way, only if we read the work beyond the narrative of victimhood, shall the potential of queer reproduction shine in the novel. This perspective allows us to understand the story as a transformative exploration of identity, challenging the limits of human experiences and urging us to consider the radical possibilities that can arise from embracing the unknown and transcending conventional boundaries.

3. Queering Naming in Diasporic Writing

If the first chapter investigates the roles of animals as (fictional) entities in Chinese queer literature by authors from Hong Kong and Taiwan, this chapter explores how animals function symbolically. In particular, I will inquire about the ways that animals are represented as symbols to challenge the legitimacy of taxonomies and naming through Taiwan writer Pai Hsian-yung's 1983 novel *Crystal Boys* 孽子. Pai's work exploits "the name of animals" to substitute the "name of the father," in which the human and nonhuman animals ally in the symbolic order and open new space for queering love. Through this way, nonhuman animals challenge anthropocentrism and phallogocentric symbolocentrism, and consequently disavow the heterosexuality produced by the repressive law as the primary structure of desire.¹

In addition, this chapter examines how animality functions as a vehicle for queering that involves its sociohistorical particularities and geopolitics, as well as how queer undercurrents run unevenly in diasporic networks. Pai's writing on queer love, particularly in works such as *Crystal Boys*, *New Yorker* 紐約客 (1975), and *Even Trees Wither* 樹猶如此 (2002), were written during his diaspora. This could be interpreted as a manifestation of what Anne-Marie Fortier (2001) terms as "queer migrations." To be exact, while queer desire may not be the primary motivation for Pai's migration, the

¹ On the mechanism that incest taboo and Lacanian law of phallus generate heterosexuality, see Butler 1999, 83. This chapter will also elaborate it.

experience of travel provides individuals like him with an increased opportunity to understand their oppressed desires and identities. In turn, this allows them to create and refine their queer works, which can be a form of self-exploration and self-expression. The diasporic position temporally distanced them from the repressive local culture of heteronormativity and the pressure from their family and acquaintance, creating a room of self-exploration and liberal expressions of same-sex desire. In the new geographical scale, "home" obtains its dual meanings, which refer to not only the family space where the "closet" situates but also the nationalist homeland. Consequently, the connotation of the "wild" is completed and refers to diasporic places of multiple languages and cultures. Pai's work illustrate how queer animality migrates and links the two spaces. In that sense, diaspora becomes a specific status that tolerates and even cultivates the visibility of queer desire in the Chinese sphere.

Finally, Pai's work, echoing Loh's painting mentioned at the beginning, forms a response to what Helen Hok-Sze Leung (2008) and Emily Wang (2018) argue about "queer undercurrents." How can nonhuman animals negotiate the borders between homeland and diaspora, the universal discourse of queer and its undercurrents, paternal law and a new community of queer love and friendship? Consequently, these inquiries embody Andrea Bachner's (2013) proposal that queer should be read as a process of queering, instead of a fixed state of "queerness," and answer her question that "What can the 'Sinophone' add to 'queerness?'" and vice versa (201).

3.1 Promoting a Nonhuman Queer Subjectivity: The Names of Animals in *Crystal Boys*

Around the same time as Loh's creation of "Baboon and Broccoli," Taiwan writer Pai Hsien-yung published his 1983 novel *Crystal Boys* (*Niezi* 孽子), the first same-sex novel in modern Chinese. It was the twentieth year since Pai went to the US, where he learned creative writing at the University of Iowa and then became a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Most Pai's landmark pieces, including his only novel, were written in the US. On the other hand, in this novel on the exiled gay adolescents in Taipei, the US and Japan play the roles of imaginary nations where these gay boys pin their hopes on finding a new home. As Michael Berry (2009) indicates, Pai's early works written in the US typically represent "a border crosser who clings to nostalgic images from home while on the other side," and *Crystal Boys* displays "more radical diasporic exile;" on the other hand, Pai's New York is described as a "promised land" for the exiled and escaped. Such a close relation between Taipei and the US in Pai's fiction demonstrates the significance of his diasporic status to the narrative about his homeland and the same-sex desire there.

Pai's own diasporic position mirrors the gay adolescents' exile in *Crystal Boys*, embodying another form of dynamics of moving between the two spaces of home and the "wild." In a sense, it is the wild that provides Pai a pivot to imagine his native soil and the gay characters in the novel, as Michael Berry argues, an imaginary place to flee to from their native homophobic lands.

Pai's migration in reality was motivated by various reasons, such as the rise of Taiwan's economy, the influx of American popular culture, and the tide of studying abroad in the 1960s Taiwan, as Michael Berry articulates. Inside the novel, the movement between the home and the wild is driven by the gay community's demand to explore their living space in resistance against the phallogocentric law. The dual efforts to escape home and build a new community beyond filiation inside and outside the novel promote the formation of new identical politics.

On the one hand, as Chang Hsiao-hung (2000, 239–44) articulates, Pai's creation of *Crystal Boys* challenges the literary heritage of the May Fourth and makes him stray from the orthodox literary history of modern Chinese. On the other, his writing provides a form of imagining a gay community in Taiwan's society and in Chinese. In Chinese/Taiwanese literature, it is the first time that a same-sex community is represented (Shi 2017).

Notably, contrary to popular opinions, the establishment of the gay community is not built on humanitarianism or compassion for sexual minorities. Rather, as Huang (2010) figures out, the politics of identity in *Crystal Boys* is rather based on the sharing sense of shame caused by the stigmatization of prostitutes. What Huang does not explain, however, is how the shame of same-sex desire facilitates the gay community in Taipei, while the traditional stigmatization against female prostitutes has not formed such a group identification.

Concerning the specific mechanism of identity politics and its particularity from most female heterosexual prostitution, I argue that *Crystal Boys* presents two betrayals of the father. The first betrayal establishes a new symbolic order in the name of Animals to challenge the Father's Law. By renaming themselves after animals, the New Park boys establish a quasi-family, gradually bury their memories of family names and connections with their blood family and obtain a new method of representing their subjectivities.

The queer quasi-family, based on such a principle, operates differently from the patrilineal family because it does not have a fixed order as its destination. Instead, it culminates in the second betrayal, resulting in the disintegration of the queer family and the separation from the quasi-father. Ultimately, the crystal boys depart from the gay community in New Park to pursue other pleasures in life besides sexuality. The global context and local queer predicaments create multiple movements between the private home and the public park, as well as between Taipei and the world.

3.1.1 The “Betrayal of the Father”

As Chang (2000) analyzes in their essay, Pai Hsien-yung's queer novel *Crystal Boys* is centered around the father-son relationship. The story begins with the dissolution of the father-son relationship and examines the quasi-family structure of a gay community that mirrors the hierarchical structure of a blood family, creating quasi-father-son relationships and quasi-brotherhoods within it.

What stands out in *Crystal Boys* is the use of animal names to construct the dialectics of kinship and queerness. This narrative strategy plays a vital role in broadening the discursive space and challenging the social repression of queerness. By employing animal names as a form of identification, the characters in the novel subvert traditional familial structures and create a new form of kinship that defies societal norms.

The novel begins with a father's scold who feels ashamed for his son's same-sex behavior in school: "YOU SCUM! YOU FILTHY SCUM!" 畜生! 畜生! (*chusheng*, *CB*, 13; *NZ*, 10).² Accompanied by the curse, the protagonist Li Qing (or A-qing) is expelled from his father's home and begins his wanderings on the streets of Taipei. The father and son do not meet again until the novel's ending, except that Li Qing sneaks home once while his father is out. Regarding Li Qing's life after this quarrel, the appellation of "scum" signifies a deprivation of his birth name and a renaming. Via his father's interpellation, Li Qing is symbolically exiled from the system of filiation to the "nonhuman" realm. Literally, the curse of *chusheng* 畜生 in Chinese refers to livestock, and it thus metaphorically refers to unethical people.

² For quotations of *Crystal Boys*, I will refer to both the English translation, Pai, Hsien-yung. *Crystal Boys*. San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1995 (hereafter *CB*), and its Chinese version, Pai, Hsien-yung. 白先勇. *Niezi* 孽子. Taipei: Tian xia yuan jian chu ban gu fen you xian gong si, 2008 (hereafter *NZ*).

After leaving home, Li joins the New Park community consisting of a group of gay adolescents, who make a living as same-sex prostitutes. It is also since then that Li Qing introduces his name as A-qing and hardly mentions his family name anymore. Later, A-qing acquires an animalic nickname, “a little hawk” 小蒼鷹, by which he further delinks with his birth name. Indeed, most boys in the small community have nicknames of animal metaphors that eloquently represent their personalities. In the very daily usage of these names, their relationship with their fathers is concealed and (apparently) forgotten.

Compared to their birth names, these postnatal names can better signify the characters’ features, given that these names are based on the other members’ knowledge of their habits, characteristics, and personal history. For instance, Iron Ox 鐵牛 is a strong and crude young man who stabs another teenager in a fight and is eventually sent to prison; Mousey 老鼠 is a craven thief who is always beaten by his brother; scavenger-like Raven 烏鴉 is Mousey’s violent brother who works as a bouncer in a female brothel, behaving like a scavenger in the patriarchal heterosexual system; Phoenix Boy 鳳凰/Wild Phoenix 野鳳凰 covers his chest with tattoos of three legendary animals, a phoenix, a kylin 麒麟, and a monoclonal; Dragon Prince 龍子 is described as the “[d]isowned son of a high-ranking official, tragic lover of Phoenix Boy” (CB, 10). Two exceptions are Little Jade Wang and Wu Min, whose fathers are rather absent. Little Jade’s father abandoned his mother during her pregnancy, and he thus uses his mother’s

surname Wang, instead of his father's name, Lin. In other words, the father's name has never dominated his name, but only stays in his mother's narrative.³ In comparison, Wu Min's father is in jail and depends on Wu Min's help. For Wu, his father has already lost his symbolic power, and thus there is no need to oppose his father.

Different from the patrilineal names, the animalic designations refer to the acknowledgment of the community members and the named subjects themselves. It transforms the process of naming from monodirectional power dynamics to mutual recognition, rendering it a series of negotiations. For this reason, these strangers in blood form a community of quasi-brotherhood. Moreover, these boys are under the management of a leader, Yang Jinhai (Chief Yang, *Yang jiaotou*), who serves as a pimp of the community. Beyond that, however, Chief Yang, as a middle-aged man much older than the boys, also takes the role of a quasi-father of these boys, calling these adolescents "sons," protecting them from police regulations, and planning for their future like a real father.

Similar to these exiled boys, Yang was also disported by his father after a falling out, because Yang withdrew a large amount of money from his father's bank account to treat his favorite protégé, primitive A-xiong, from a terrible traffic accident (CB, 21). A-xiong is a mentally handicapped aborigine teenager, who is regarded as an adopted son

³ Indeed, Little Jade is not content with his name. He told his friends, "My name's not Wang, that's my mother's name" (CB, 87).

by Chief Yang. In other words, Chief Yang breaks with his blood father for the adopted father-son relationship, betraying his original family.

Indeed, Chief Yang's self-given title of "head *jiaotou*" 總教頭, which refers to the chief martial arts coach in troops in the Song Dynasty, also implies his treachery of social norms. People of *jiaotou* are usually lower-ranking officers in charge of ten soldiers.⁴ In Chinese literature, the most famous head *jiaotou* should be Lin Chong, a fictional character in *Water Margin*. Lin is an exiled military officer in the *Song Dynasty*, who betrays the government for suffering from injustice and becomes an outlaw in rebel groups. Considering the allusion of *jiaotou*, in this light, Chief Yang metaphorically echoes Lin Chong's deeds. On the one hand, Yang is a leader of a marginalized group of dozens of boys, yet his power is limited and the boys often oppose to his advice, which indicates that he does not own the "real" father's power. That being said, as a quasi-father, Chief Yang is not a simple substitution for the blood father in the phallogocentric order. By contrast, his authority is easily and usually challenged by the "sons." On the other, resembling Lin, Yang also signifies a betrayal of the orthodoxy of (patriarchal) family and heteronormativity, serving as an outlaw of the phallic law.

These names circulated within New Park denote the characters' separation from their biological families and the reorganization of the gay community. The renaming of

⁴ See Xia Zhengnong 夏征农. "Jiaotou 教头." In *Cihai* 辞海, Ancient Chinese History:202. Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, September 1988.

the boys of New Park and Chief Yang, therefore, embodies what Žižek argues about the “betrayal of the father” in the symbolic order, a Lacanian “withdrawal from the symbolic pact, from the most fundamental alliance that links us with the father’s Name” (1992, 168). It is through their betrayal that the characters become Cartesian subjects “in an absolute void” (168). However, these crystal boys do not simply suspend as Cartesian *cogito*. Rather, they establish a substantive order in the name of Animals. Consequently, the betrayal does not merely lead to separations (from family), but also a new solidarity.

3.1.2 Wildness and Primitivity

Huang (2010) attributes solidarity in *Crystal Boys* to their common shame of being gay prostitutes. In Huang’s essay, the main resource of the shame derives from the stigmatization of prostitutes in Taiwan, which is also exemplified by the tragic life of A-qing’s mother. Particularly, Huang reveals the identical relationship between A-qing and his mother linked by sexual shame.⁵ However, Huang’s assertion more or less simplifies the mechanism of the politics of shame in *Crystal Boys*, for ignoring the distinguish challenges the New Park boys and traditional female prostitutes engender to patriarchy. Moreover, while shame plays a vital role in the New Park gay community, slut-shaming per se does not automatically promote a shared identity and social

⁵ As Huang analyzes, A-qing’s mother, as a “foster daughter” (*yangnu*) in the 1950s Taiwan, was doomed to be discriminated by the patriarchal Taiwan society. According to Huang, the “foster daughter” was prevalent in the first half of the twenty-first century in Taiwan, which was a result of the custom of “minor marriage” (*tong yang xi*). During this period, “foster daughters” used to be the majority of prostitute population.

community. And that is why female prostitutes in traditional frames can hardly form a community, even though there also exist quasi-family systems in traditional brothels.

Indeed, the solidarity of the group is rather based on their sharing “wildness.” At the beginning of the second chapter, the queer community is described as a “kingdom” deprived of social discrimination and full of wildness:

In this kingdom of ours there are no distinctions of *social rank, eminence, age, or strength*. What we share in common are bodies filled with aching, irrepressible desire and hearts filled with *insane* loneliness. In the dead of night these tortured hearts burst out of their loneliness like *wild animals* that have *broken out of their cages*, baring their fangs and uncoiling their claws as they begin a *frenzied* hunt for prey (emphasis added, *CB*, 30).

Primitivity as a core feature of the community is repeatedly emphasized through the words “insane,” “wild,” and “frenzied.” The novel, thus, associates the liberation of sexual desire with wildness, while social norms and blood families serve as “their cages” to domesticate these beasts.

What does primitivity or wildness mean exactly? First, as mentioned, it refers to a resistance to the phallogocentric order of the family. Second, as the nickname of “the primitive A-xiong” 原始人阿雄 implies, it refers to a pre-civilized status. A-xiong is a strong man of 6.25 inches (19.50 cm), while his intelligence remains as a three-year-old boy. All of his care and words are about food and eating, designating his oral fixation. Thirdly, wildness/primitivity points to the disordered and unstable life of these gay teenagers — not only does the wildness contribute to the New Park boys’ casual sex

with strangers as prostitutes, but it also hinders these characters from forming stable relationships. For instance, the novel characterizes Little Jade, another young boy at New Park, as “too wild to be tamed by Old Zhou,” his sugar daddy (*CB*, 25). The struggle of taming and anti-taming signifies a further escape from the quasi-father-son relationship built on desire and economic benefits.

In this light, Chang's (2000) analysis is partially questionable because it suggests a monodirectional movement from the phallic father to the "anal father," representing enjoyment and desublimation of the penis and heteronormativity, as the boys eventually betray the quasi-father and leave the queer community. While Chang acknowledges that Chief Yang and sugar daddies take the position of blood fathers in the form of anal fathers, the movement is more complex than depicted. The wildness and primitivity inherent in the boys complicate their choices. As Grandpa Guo, a gardener at New Park and owner of the Youth Photo Studio, tells A-qing after taking his photos for the Studio:

Go on, A-qing, now it's your turn to fly. It's in your blood. All you wild youngsters who've grown up on this island have that strain of wildness in your blood, just like the typhoons and earthquakes that are part of this island. You're a bunch of fledglings who've lost your nest, like a flock of sea swallows crossing the ocean, struggling to keep flying ahead, with no idea where you'll wind up... (emphasis added, *CB*, 81)

Grandpa Guo describes these gay adolescents as “wild youngsters” with a “strain of wildness in your blood,” in accordance with the typhoons and earthquakes in Taiwan. For this reason, these gay adolescents' life will not end at the taming of the

“anal father.” Rather, they will break up the principle of enjoyment and leave away from the new after. In this sense, in contrast to Chang’s argument, the boys of New Park do not simply disavow the blood relation or nationalism. Instead, they embody another way of weaving the ties of blood and nationalism through wildness. The characters, therefore, turn into nonhuman animals via renaming. In the rejection of the father’s law, a new version of fatalism is built on the principle of wildness.

Moreover, the usage of animalic nicknames and the acknowledgment of wildness respond to the curse of Li Qing’s father at the beginning. For one thing, the self-identification of animals reaffirms Li’s father’s interpellation of “scum”/*chusheng*, which defines people with same-sex desires as nonhuman beings. Once A-qing accepts his status as nonhuman and proactively turns away from “human” society, the symbolic power of the father’s name and the name given by the father is invalid. Literally, the word *chusheng* consists of *chu*, livestock, and *sheng*, born, and the word thus can be understood as “born by livestock” or “the son of domestic animals.” In comparison, the Chinese title of the novel, *Nie Zi*, contains a similar connotation, referring to “the son born by a concubine,” “unfilial son,” or “son of sin.” That being said, whether the son is interpellated as a *chusheng* or *niezi*, he is named by his (or his mother’s) position related to his father. His essential identity is based on his father’s very act of naming. Accordingly, the father’s “divine power of naming” alludes to the son’s “vulnerability to being named” (J. Butler 1997, 29). Taking their fathers’ expel as a starting point, the boys

of New Park are excluded by the anthropocentric phallic law and acknowledge their nonhuman identities.

For another thing, however, the self-given animalic names decline the father's interpellation of livestock by identifying themselves as "wild animals." By emphasizing wildness, the boys repeatedly declare their detachment from the original order and further reverse the insulting implications of *chusheng*/livestock. In other words, through the very adaptation and appropriation of the father's interpellation, these gay teenagers transform the phallic abuse into an approach of resignification, reclaiming their agency and reproducing their subjectivity.

3.1.3 Animals in Para-Narratives

Apart from the narrator's perspective, *Crystal Boys* employs multiple narrative lenses and paratexts, utilizing the photo studio, the album of paintings, martial-arts novels, and news to further articulate the animal metaphors and father-son relationship.

For instance, the images of these gay boys intrigue Grandpa Guo, a photographer who runs Youth Photo Studio, to record their young bodies. He photographs the boys and selects one to compile into his photo album entitled "Bird of Youth" 青春鳥集 (*CB*, 81). Guo compares these boys to "young birds" and deeply appreciates their vitality, which he hopes to "preserve" through his camera (72). Again, Guo emphasizes the power of wildness: "I just take pictures because I enjoy it. I like to

find subjects with spirit, people with character. Like these babies here in the park.

They may be wild, but they've got character" (71). In a sense, Guo's fetish admiration for youth also indicates a reverse of patriarchy, which manifests a fetish of elderly males.

Likewise, the Master Artist is taken with the primitivity of New Park boys and is enthusiastic about painting their bodies:

Iron Ox was standing there with his hands on his hips, chest exposed, his bristly hair combed straight up. His tight black denims, which showed off his rippling leg muscles, were riding low on his hips, girded loosely by a belt. He exuded an aura of primitive masculinity, and the Master Artist said that it was Iron Ox's body that put him in touch with the *primitive life-force* of our island, *like the howling winds of a typhoon*. There was a *terrifying natural beauty* in both. He'd painted several portraits of Iron Ox, referring to them as his masterpieces (emphasis added, CB, 101).

Resembling Guo's argument about the young people's wildness and energy, the Master Artist also links "the primitive life-force" with the natural phenomena of Taiwan, indicating their local identity. Ironically, Iron Ox is prisoned for stabbing someone in a fight. His primitivity violates the normal law but agrees with Guo and the artist's aesthetic principle.

In Book Three, Chief Yang opens a bar named Cozy Nest 安樂鄉, with the expectation of giving these boys legal jobs and identities. On the opening night of the bar, the Master Artist completes his portrait of Wild Phoenix/Phoenix Boy, a boy who perished in a love affair, and lends it to Yang to enhance the ambiance. It is a colossal oil

painting titled “The Call of Wildness,” which visually represents the boy as an animal and nonhuman subject:

A boy all in black stood in the middle of the street, his body elongated into a thin line. His hair was matted like the mane of a *lion*, completely covering his forehead. The eyebrows consisted of a single straight line, and his eyes, those strange eyes, seemed about to leap off of the canvas, like two dark *wildfires*. His face was triangular, his mouth tightly closed. The boy was barefoot, his shirt was open to reveal a savage tattoo on his chest. There was such a *violent aura* about him that you felt he might jump down out of the painting at any time (emphasis added, *CB*, 224-25).

While Wild Phoenix died a decade ago, the wild aura inherent in him remains and will never dissipate. For this reason, even though A-qing has never met Wild Phoenix, he immediately realizes the figure’s identity and blurts out, “It’s him!” (225). In comparison, the artist despises the college students, for “he gained no inspiration from their cultured existence” (224).

Phoenix Boy is a poor “wild kid with no father and no surname,” and his mother is a mute with low intelligence. Phoenix was born after five thugs raped his mother, and because of the derecognition of his mother’s father, Phoenix grew up in a Catholic orphanage (76-77). In this sense, Phoenix is also a boy hurt and excluded by the phallogocentric order. The strange and even horrific features in the painting — his “eyebrows consisted of a single straight line,” his “strange eyes” “like two dark wildfires,” his “triangular face,” his “tightly closed mouth,” his “barefoot,” and “a

savage tattoo on his chest” — all depict Phoenix as a nonhuman creature. It is the wildness that the painter appreciates well and grounds the aesthetics of the painting.

Besides the photo album and the huge oil painting, the third paratext is a fictional martial-art novel, *Revenge on Great Bear Mountain*, by Zhuge Jingwo. It is A-qing’s favorite, which narrates the separation and a series of conflicts between a father and son in late Ming China (around the 1640s-60s), when Manchu troops overthrew the Ming regime. In this novel, animalic names also play an important role:

A swordsman named Ding Yunxiang, whose nickname is the Flying Roc, leads his family and retainers out of the capital, but on the road his youngest son is lost.... Meanwhile, the youngest son has been captured by the Qing general E Ersu, and had his name changed to E Shun (CB, 241).

In this story, the father and the son are accidentally assigned to two different camps and confront each other in a battle after twenty years. After being adopted by Ding’s enemy, the birth name of Ding’s son is erased and replaced with E, which finally results in the battle between Ding and his son. Here, the story of name changing happens again and leads to terrible ethical predicaments. Finally, “Ding Yunxiang, the Flying Roc, traps his son E Shun and kills him with his own sword,” “sacrificing [his] own kin for the sake of honor” (267).

The play of names in *Revenge* echoes the naming in *Crystal Boys*. *Revenge* is a nonexistent novel imagined by Pai Hsien-yung, but the fictional author Zhuge Jingwo may be a reference to a character also named Zhuge Jingwo in *Legend of the Swordsmen of*

the Mountains of Shu (蜀山劍俠傳, 1932), a real martial-art novel. Moreover, the animalic names in *Revenge* — the “Great Bear Mountain” in the title and the protagonist’s nickname, the Flying Roc — allude to its intertextuality with *Crystal Boys*. Both the fathers in the two works are military officers, yet their sons cannot continue their pursuits. The hostility between Ding and his son in *Revenge* parallels the conflicts between the New Park boys and their fathers. Ding and his son’s rivalry is conducted by the political opposition between the two regimes, while the crystal boys and their fathers’ controversy are caused by sexual desire. Both situations are uncompromising with the father-son relationship. Consequently, like Ding who has to kill his son “for the sake of honor,” the fathers in *Crystal Boys* inevitably exile and symbolically kill their sons. That being said, the father’s honor in the symbolic order outweighs the sons’ pleasure and even lives.

3.1.4 The “They” versus Monsters: The Other End of the Nonhuman Axis

In order to stop the New Park boys’ prostitution and give them legitimate jobs, Chief Yang opens the bar, Cozy Nest, and asks the boys to work as waiters. However, the plan is soon interrupted by the heteronormative society, which indicates the intervention besides family. Like the interpellation of “scum” by A-qing’s father, a tabloid reporter names the gay teens as *yao* (“fairy, goblin, demon”). This report soon pushes the community from Cozy Nest back to New Park, smashing their wish to live in “human society.”

In his report for Shanghai Evening News, reporter Fan Ren introduces the bar by describing it as “a Den of Fairies” 妖窟 and a parodistic “Peach Blossom Spring” 世外“桃”源. Meanwhile, the boys are interpellated as “tranny” 人妖 (“human-devil”). In its conclusion, the report further discriminates the “fairies” from “humans:” “But fairies take different paths, and a den of monsters cannot exist in *human society* for an extended period of time” (282). Subsequently, the report attracts a deluge of heterosexual visitors to watch the “fairies,” and Cozy Nest is forced to close.

Different from the father’s exile, the pressure from the public discourse is anonymous and hidden. The reporter named Fan Ren 樊仁 is rather a shadow who cannot be tracked. Moreover, the name in Chinese shares the same pronunciation as the word *fanren* 凡人 (“common people, mortal, human beings”), indicating his opposition to the “fairies.” Thereby, through the opposite names of Fan Ren and fairies, the reporter artificially creates a spectacle to display queerness, and the gay boys are excluded from human society again. Accordingly, as a counterattack, these young men rename themselves as “carp fairy” (A-qing), “fox fairy” (Little Jade), “rat fairy” (Mousey), and “rabbit fairy” (Wu Min).

In a sense, the allusion to “common people” of Fan Ren’s name echoes Heidegger’s concept of “the they,” revealing Dasein’s existential conditions of being thrown into the world and encountering other beings. In this light, the second exclusion is different from the blood father’s exile because the subject’s position has shifted. If the

first exile from the blood family renders New Park boys Cartesian subjects in Lacanian and Žižek's sense as mentioned, then the second banishment drives them to become Dasein. The very interactions between the boys and the "they" are represented as their new names in the form of "animal-fairy." Weaving the insult and voyeurism into their being and names with a parodistic attitude, the exclusion and interpellation are not as traumatic as the father's curse. Rather, the renaming of fox/rabbit/rat/crap fairy means the realization of "being-with." Now, different from Cartesian subjects, these gay boys do not confirm their existence by themselves. Instead, they involve their relationship with the "they" in their names and calmly acknowledge that one's own Being in the world is Being-with.

Ironically, the disclosure and stigmatization from the "civilized" world will never eliminate wildness. Contrarily, as Foucault asserts in *The History of Sexuality*, sexual taboos indeed "incite, extract, distribute, and institutionalize the sexual discourse" (Foucault 1978, 33). By establishing perversions as prohibitions, power gains access to these secrets and enables society to "[speak] of it [sex] *ad infinitum*."

[W]hat distinguishes these last three centuries is the variety, the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for having it be spoken about, for inducing it to speak of itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it: around sex, a whole network of varying, specific, and coercive transpositions into discourse. Rather than a massive censorship, beginning with the verbal proprieties imposed by the Age of Reason, what was involved was a regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse (Foucault, 34-5).

In this sense, it is Fan Ren's report that lends the New Park boys new discourse to lengthen their animalic names, extending their imaginary space to identify themselves beyond the simple opposition between livestock (*chusheng*) and "human." Besides the symbolic order, Fan Ren also becomes a fuse to further liberate these boys from the quasi-patriarchal family led by Chief Yang. As mentioned, Cozy Nest is forced to close after Fan Ren's reports, and the crystal boys consequently "fly away" to their new path in life. Little Jade finally goes to Japan to search for his missing father; A-qing becomes a bartender with a decent salary in a high-class bar; Mousey is sent to a reform school, in which he learns dyeing and has chances to work in a dye plant in the future; Wu Min works as a waiter in a western restaurant (314). No one has to prostitute himself and can live independently without the assistance of "the father."

In a sense, their departure from Chief Yang's family designates a second "betrayal of the father", which discards the quasi-family based on the phallogocentric law. Even for Wu Min, while living with his fathers, his fathers' authority has already collapsed — his biological father released from jail can only lean on Wu Min in Taipei, and his sugar daddy's body is paralyzed after a stroke. Ultimately, they are no longer "the group of children who wander the streets alone in the deepest and darkest night but have no one to turn to" (NZ, 1).⁶

⁶ "寫給那一羣，在最深最深的黑夜裏，獨自徬徨街頭，無所依歸的孩子們。" My translation from Pai's dedication at the beginning of the Chinese version of *Crystal Boys*. Howard Goldblatt's English translation omits it for some reason.

3.1.5 Towards Nomadology and Diaspora

In accordance with Chris Berry's argument quoted earlier, Martin (2003, 19) also asserts that "the question of relationships with blood family sets these works [Taiwanese queer literature] apart from their Euro-American counterparts." For Asian queer subjects, indeed, queer practice does not have to be presented as a radical cutting off from their family and turning into a queer community. Rather, Asian queer discourse is based on its very close correlation with the blood family. Such a feature can also be traced in *Crystal Boys*. As mentioned, this fictional work is not simply about the "betrayal of the father" or the pursuit of pleasure in a gay community located in New Park. Instead, the family ethics in this work is more entangled.

Chief Yang's elder friend, Papa Fu, is a seventy-year-old retired military officer, who has driven his gay son to death. After losing his only son, Fu has been living in guilt and sadness for decades and volunteering in an orphanage as compensation. From Fu perspective, the novel narrates the feeling of a gay man's father:

"A-qing, you've been with me for several days now, and I feel like you're one of the family. Your father's alive, and I'm willing to bet that he's suffering on account of you right now. I had a son once, and, just like Wang Kuilong [Dragon Prince], he broke his father's heart, too. Tonight I want to tell you a story, a father's story

"All you kids know how to do is be resentful of your fathers, but have you ever thought about how much your fathers have suffered because of you, or how deeply? After the incident with Wang Kuilong, I went to see Wang Shangde, his father. His hair had turned completely white in less than six months,

snowy white... A-qing, how about your father? Do you know that he's suffering on your account?" (CB, 258-59, 264)

Touched by Papa Fu's experience and narrative, A-qing starts to understand and reconcile with his father psychologically. His resentment against his father is then turned into compassion and comprehension. A-qing reminds that his father actually shares the same fate of banishment as him, for his father was "drummed out of military service" (265). Similarly, A-qing was dismissed by the school (for his same-sex activity in the chemistry laboratory). That being said, A-qing is ironically very like his father in many senses, while the reason for his banishment is *nie* [unfilial 不肖/孝]⁷, which means "not like one's father." The father of A-qing utilizes the phallic law to disqualify his son, despite the fact that the law has already disqualified him.

The one-sided reconciliation relinks A-qing and his blood family, while he is extricated from his father's control. Likewise, Little Jade and Wu Min also reconstruct their relationship with their family under the premise of independence. (And the independence, again, is the result of their first betrayal of the father.) In this way, A-qing and his friends go towards nomadology.

A-qing and Wu Min identify themselves as nomads once in a chat:

⁷ On the discussions on *Crystal Boys* from the lens of unfilial ethics, see Shi (2017).

“Wu Min, are we Huns or what?” I shouted to him breathlessly as we ran along.
 “Huh?”
 “Didn’t you say we were nomads?”
 “Huns, I guess,” Wu Min laughed.
 “Who was the king of the Huns?”
 “Chan Yu.”
 “Then I’ll be Big Chan Yu and you’ll be Little Chan Yu.”
 Wu Min pulled up even with me, breathing hard.
 “Nomads look for a place with grass and water to make camp. What are we looking for, A-qing?”
 “Fairies!” I shouted.” (CB, 126)⁸

By identifying with nomads, A-qing and Wu Min accept that travel and change constitute their way of life. In this way, these boys transform the passive and reactive exile into a proactive and productive nomadism. Facilitated by the animality endowed by their self-given names, these gay adolescents accomplish their two betrayals of the father — both phallic and anal fathers, migrating between the home and the wildness.

Moreover, the dialogue above implies nomadism in the sense of nationality. Identifying themselves as Huns, A-qing and Wu Min redefine national identity and amputate their link to the Han nationality.⁹ Such a gesture metaphorically echoes Pai Hsien-yung’s position as a writer. On the one hand, as Chang (2000) remarks, Pai does

⁸ In Pai’s Chinese version, A-qing’s answer is “rabbit” 兔子, which, like “fairy,” refers to gay men insultingly.

⁹ The novel does not explain the ethnicity of these boys, yet there are more likely to be Han people. The Han people is the largest ethnic group in China, which makes up to over 90% of Chinese population. In any case, A-qing and Wu Min are not Huns in the contexts of their jokes. Indeed, Pai and his father’s family are from Hui group, yet neither his father nor Pai accept Islamism, which is generally regarded as the key feature of Hui. The slipping among the ethnicities of Hun, Han, and Hui, in a sense, also embodies the instability of the ethnical name as another form of the Father’s Name.

not follow the literary tradition of the May Fourth in relation to mainland China, as his previous generation of writers did. Rather, Pai blazes his trail to represent Taiwanese life. On the other, the identification of nomadic Huns accords with Pai's own diasporic position when writing this novel. Pai was born in 1937 in Guilin, Guangxi Province, China. He moved to Hong Kong in 1948 with family, and later to Taiwan in 1952. After graduating from Taiwan University, Pai flew to the US, earning an MFA degree from The University of Iowa and then serving as faculty at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB).

While Pai was already a writer when he was still in Taiwan, it was after learning creative writing in the US that Pai made tremendous progress in writing. *Crystal Boys* was created during this period when Pai was teaching at UCSB. Similar to the character Wang Kuilong in the novel, Pai has not seen his father again after leaving Taiwan. In this light, writing a Taiwanese gay community from the distance of the US, Pai is a nomad moving in between his homeland, Taiwan, and the US.

In the 1980s, along with economic prosperity and political reform in Taiwan, the structure of "family" was challenged. As Martin (2003) puts it:

It is the dominance of the ideologies of family in the cultural context of Taiwan and the tectonic shifts in the practices and meanings of "family" following the immense social upheavals of the past fifty years that compel these authors to explore homosexual identification in relation to the experience of blood family (19-20).

The global context, therefore, further promotes nomadology and influences the practice and discourse of queering in Taiwan. Regarding Pai's experience, it is only at such a distance and via such mobility that Pai had the opportunity to learn writing skills and create this first modern Asian gay novel, when same-sex desire was repressed by sexual taboos.

4. Conclusion

On May 17, 2021, the International Day against Homophobia, Beijing Queer Chorus¹⁰ released a series of bilingual short videos entitled *Rainbow Zoo* on the Internet. These videos feature choral shadow puppetry play, a traditional form of Chinese animation, to introduce nonhuman animals' sexuality. Each video focuses on one species, including the *Macrostomum hystrix*, Cabbage Butterfly, giraffe, penguin, gray whale, sea hare, and bonobo. By displaying the diverse sexualities of animals, Beijing Queer Chorus uses a non-anthropocentric perspective to explain diverse sexual habits and behaviors, implying that heteronormativity is artificially constructed by human society. Indeed, what these videos indicate is not only that heteronormativity is far from "natural" and only naturalized by the human. Beyond that, the videos also display the alliance between queer and posthuman discourses, through which queer desire could find approaches to be spoken out.

The narrative of these Zoo videos demonstrate that the connection between queering and nonhuman animals does not always lead to the stigmatization of queer individuals. Instead, it provides a new perspective for exploring the space between the dichotomy of human and nonhuman. This in-between lens allows for a more dynamic interpretation of queerness, offering possibilities for expanding our understanding of

¹⁰ (*Rainbow Zoo* n.d.)

desire and the body. Thus, once free from the constraints of anthropocentric perspectives, queering is enriched with greater mobility and potential.

This thesis, from this perspective, intends to explore such possibilities through Chinese queer praxes. In this work, “in-betweenness” is used in four ways to articulate the interactions between queering and animality. First, the works it investigates are mainly created by authors from Hong Kong and Taiwan, two places in between socialist mainland China and the outside world. These writers are thus deeply influenced by both China’s and other cultures, especially European and American cultures.

The first chapter starts with Dung Kai-cheung’s *Androgyny*, which imagines a rare reptile species witnessed by people from mainland China, Malaysia, Thailand, and the protagonist from Hong Kong. Taking the legendary lizard as a thread, it weaves people from different time and space, indicating Hong Kong as a crossing of multiple cultures and forming the mysterious characteristics embodied by the *Androgyny/Anzhuozhenni*. The second section of Chapter One explores Chiu Miao-jin’s *Notes of a Crocodile*, which designates the in-betweenness of Taiwan as a place that inherits Chinese culture while also increasing its communications with the world since the 1980s. The crocodile, as one of the protagonists, is from France, suggesting a connection to Chiu’s experience studying psychology in France. The second chapter examines Pai Hsien-yung’s queer novel that was engendered because of Pai’s diasporic experiences.

Secondly, "in-betweenness" refers to the ambiguity between fictionality and reality. The queer fictional works discussed in the first chapter invent two new species to articulate queer love, while the work in the second chapter take animalic names as a strategy to destabilize the phallogentric law. Lingering between the fictional/symbolic space and reality endows these authors with a vehicle for extending the discursive space and imagining queer dynamics.

Thirdly, in-betweenness means the fluidity of species and the instability of taxonomies. This challenges the traditional boundaries between human and nonhuman creatures and liberates the human body to its infinite potential. Dung's *Androgyny* and Chiu's *Notes of a Crocodile* both envision this species-crossing as an opportunity for female bodies to become queer and redefine gender relationships between women and men through reproduction. By breaking down these boundaries and destabilizing taxonomies, the in-between space creates new possibilities for queering bodies and desires.

Finally, the correlation between queering and animality in Chinese queer discourse has given rise to a specific "undercurrent" – one that does not necessarily involve a radical coming out or a complete break with the family, but rather a motion between social norms and the darkness of disordered wildness. For these subjects, family is never an absolute counterpart to queering, and "coming out" is not the only way to escape oppression against queer love. Rather, queer subjects, especially those

examined in the second chapter, continue to struggle with the desire to return home and explore the space between the home and the outside “wild.”

Through these perspectives, this study hopes to present a new vision for comprehending Chinese queer culture and, further, a possible angle to conceive posthuman queering in a broader sense.

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