Dreaming of normal while sleeping with impossible: Introduction

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As Normal As Possible: Negotiating Sexuality and Gender in Mainland China and Hong Kong

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Abstract
Issues related to sexuality have emerged in China and Hong Kong in unprecedented ways in the past several years. The growth of religious fundamentalisms and global gay discourses, heightened media attention linking the rising AIDS figures primarily to the gay community, tongzhi activist movements, struggles and public demands of sex workers, have all contributed to this new visibility. In Hong Kong, tensions are rapidly rising within the growing impact of the religious neo-liberal front fueled with reclaimed (reimagined) post-1997 Chinese moralism vis-à-vis glocalized movements of sexual rights. Normative institutions for the regulation of sexuality including faith-based organizations and megachurches in Hong Kong and to a less successful degree in China, and government bureaucracies across the region, have adopted activist strategies to act in unprecedented unison, and with great speed, triggering waves of moral panic in their campaigns against sexual minorities and representations including but not limited to LBGTIQ and sex workers' movements, pornography and queer mainstreaming, in order to restabilize their stronghold and perpetuate their privileges. As a result, nonnormative sexual subjects and communities have been brought centre stage and often stigmatized together due to their "abnormal/shameful" gender identities, object choices and/or sexual practices, while tongzhi activists-often in alliance with other pro-sexual rights groups-are striving to fight back. There is a very urgent need for intellectual work to more acutely articulate, understand and analyze the complexity of the issues raised, the subject formations concerned, and the ways in which different norms line up and become synonymous with one another. This work will contribute to building situated knowledges that will strengthen the discursive power of non-normative sexual-subjects-in-alliance, enabling them to fight against the stigmatization and facilitate more visibility of variance and differences. This book showcases the work of emerging and established scholars - working mostly outside Euro-America-on contemporary tongzhi studies. As one of the first sustained collections of writings on non-normative sexual subjectivities and sexual politics in Hong Kong and China post-1997 published in English, many of the writers included here are uniquely first-generation. Unlike the Euro-American academia where gender (umbrella word including sexuality) and queer studies have been rapidly proliferating at the risk of becoming normalized, these fields are still marked in Mainland China and Hong Kong as territories for the impossible and unthinkable, inhabited by stigma, silence, risk and frustration. In most universities in China and almost all universities in Hong Kong, postgraduate students are guided away from working on topics concerning queer studies and/or sexuality; scholars are discouraged from pursuing or publishing research in these fields. As a result, queer studies scholars have produced relatively little scholarship outside the contexts of Europe, North America and Australia.

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American sleep experts are sounding an alarm over America’s sleep deficit. They say Americans are a somnambulant nation, stumbling groggily through their waking hours for lack of sufficient sleep. They are working longer days — and, increasingly, nights — and they are playing longer, too, as TV and the Internet expand the range of round-the-clock entertainment options. By some estimates, Americans are sleeping as much as an hour and a half less per night than they did at the turn of the century — and the problem is likely to get worse. The health repercussions of sleep deprivation are not well While “early to bed and early to rise” may not work well with the teen sleep rhythms, getting enough sleep can help you stay healthy. Unfortunately, late-to-bed and later-to-rise sleeping times are out of sync with early school starts. Combined with the pressures to study late, take part in extracurriculars, work, and spend time with friends, it’s no wonder that teens find themselves tired much of the time. Evidence suggests that sleep deprivation can be harmful to your brain and body. Too little sleep results in difficulty concentrating and learning.