



Atlas: The Archaeology of an Imaginary City (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

Kai-cheung Dung

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Kai-cheung Dung is an inventive and prolific author whose internationally-acclaimed, genre-bending work defies traditional acts of representation and narrative. This absorbing novel best exemplifies his versatility and experimentation, along with China's rapidly evolving literary culture, merging fiction, nonfiction, and poetry in a story of succeeding and failing to recapture the things we lose.

Set in the long-lost City of Victoria (a fictional world similar to modern-day Hong Kong), Atlas is written from the unified perspective of future archaeologists struggling to rebuild a thrilling metropolis. Divided into four sections—"theory," "the city," "streets," and "signs"—Dung's novel reimagines Victoria through maps and other historical documents and artifacts, much like Italo Calvino's, Jorge Luis Borges's, and Paul Auster's quasi-fictional adventures in map-reading and remapping. Mixing real-world scenarios with purely invented people and events, and incorporating anecdote and actual and fictional social commentary and critique, Dung's novel challenges the representation of place and history and the limits of technical and scientific media in reconstructing that history. Playing with a variety of styles and subjects, Dung creatively engages with the fate of Hong Kong since its British "handover" in 1997, which officially marked the end of colonial rule and the beginning of an uncharted future.

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